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AAU vows to increase international collaboration

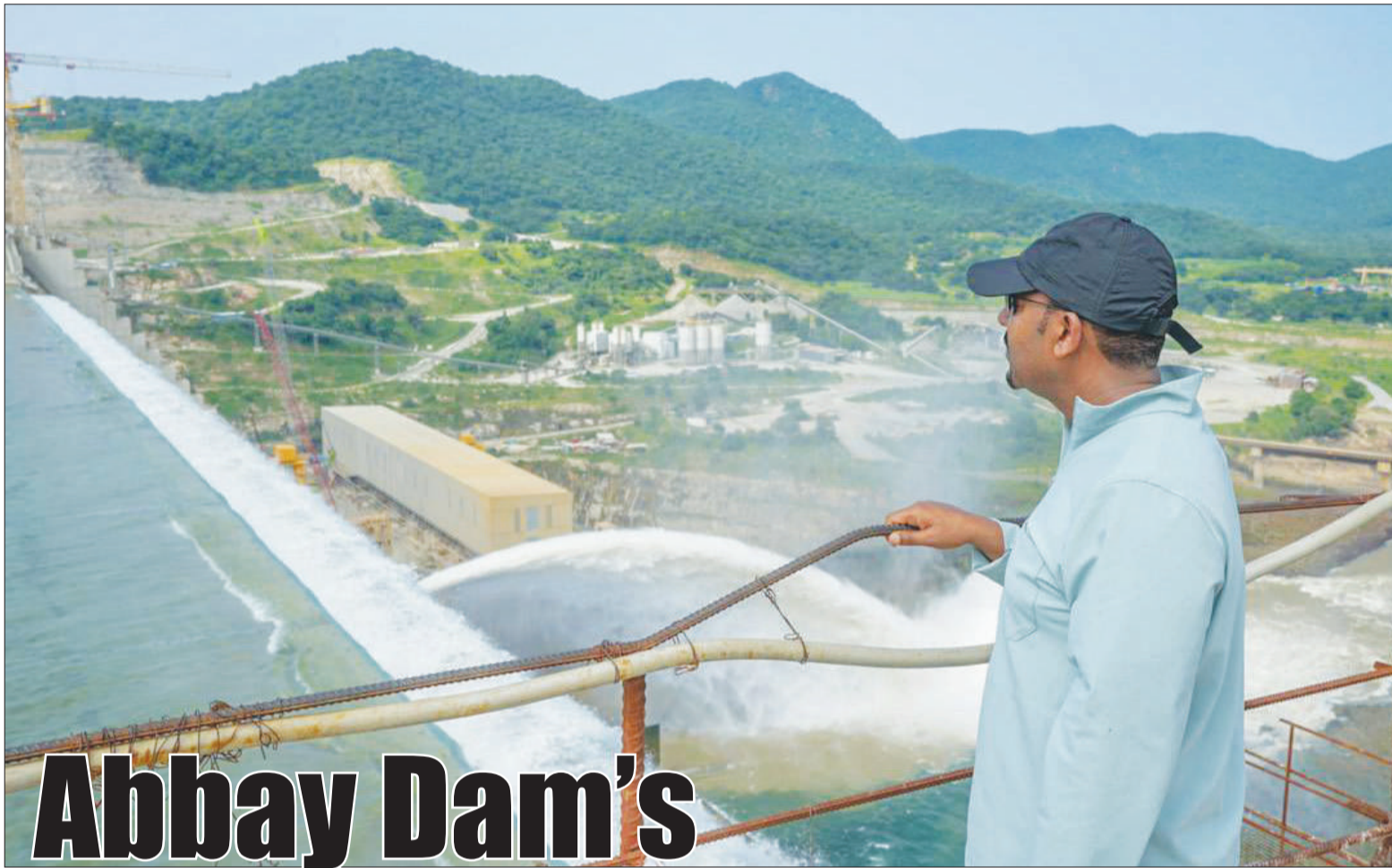
BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - Addis Ababa University (AAU) has vowed to further bolster collaborative activities and strengthen international relations with its counterparts across the world.

Approached by the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), AAU Acting President Samuel Kifle (PhD) said that it has been working to

see AAU vows to ... Page 3

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Abbay Dam's five additional turbines to go operational soon

BY MENGESHA AMARE

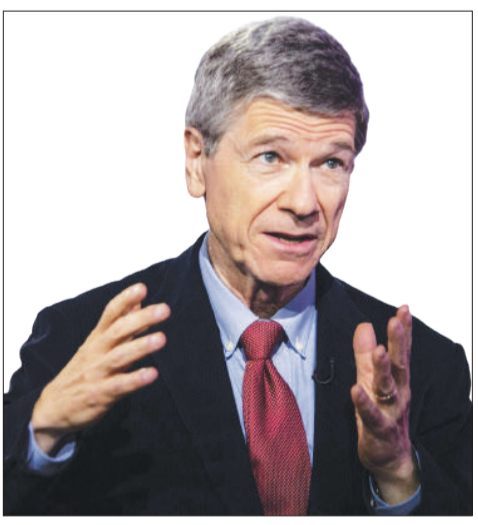
ADDIS ABABA- Relentless effort is being exerted to get additional five turbines of the Abay Dam operational in 2016 E.C., Abbay

Dam manager disclosed.

It is well recognized that Abbay Dam on which great hope is developed has completed the fourth filling; the turbines would start functioning soon.

Explaining about the progress of the Dam for officials, Grand Abbay Dam General Manager Eng. Kifle Horo stated that the construction of the dam is nearing completion.

see Abbay Dam's five ... Page 3



Jeffrey Sachs (Prof.)

BRICS to take center stage in Ethiopia's dev't

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopia's membership to BRICS bloc would be significant to add impetus towards its development activities,

see BRICS to take center ... Page 3

Ethiopia launches digital student ID system

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopia has launched a Digital Student Identification System (Student ID) as part of the initiative to digitize and modernize the education system.

Education Minister Prof. Birhanu Nega and Yodahe Arayaslase of the National Digital ID Program Manager announced the introduction of the Digital Student Identification System in a joint statement released last Wednesday.

The initiative marks a critical moment in Ethiopia's journey towards digitalizing and modernizing its education sector. The program helps the efforts to digitize and modernize the education sector, it was learnt.

According to the joint statement, the Digital Student ID creates a unified identity,



reduces redundancy and fosters coherence among students' academic profiles across all educational platforms.

As to statement to kick start registration

in 2023/2024, both institutions will be executing comprehensive operations in educational institutions nations wide.

see Ethiopia launches ... Page 3



Ethio Engineering Group

Gov't withholds public enterprises awaiting private sector to takeover

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA— The government leaned towards continue playing its trailblazing role in administering public enterprises as it is facilitating conditions they could be capacitated and takeover by the private sector, said Ministry of Finance.

It has been playing a strong protectionist role for public enterprises in various sectors including tourism, agriculture and industry.

Finance State Minister Eyob Tekalign (PhD) stated the engagement of the government in public enterprises is aimed at improving them and show directions for private sector to take over in the long run.

Public enterprises should perform exemplary activities to ensure an essence of corporate governance, he said.

He added that such enterprises should have a big dream of ensuring global competitiveness without relying on the government support.

Furthermore, the government will work to introduce new innovation, branding and ideas in various sectors, Eyob expressed.

It plays a critical role in achieving

development specifically in supporting domestic manufacturers and empowering institutions, other than taking over the role of private sector, he indicated.

In fact, the role of government should be showing development direction private sector to takeover various activities, he said.

Furthermore, it also provides incentives to entrepreneurs to play a decisive role in advancing the public enterprises through promoting innovation, the State Minister noted.

For him, the profitability of Ethio Engineering Group (EEG) is a showcase for the achievement of the reform agendas as it is among the recently reformed successful public enterprises.

The government applies liberal model in some sectors, believed Fitsum Assefa (PhD), Minister of Plan and Development.

“There would be a time in which the government abandons its public enterprises ownership as per our growth level,” she said.

Hence, creating market and technology linkage with small and medium enterprises is critical to advance the public enterprises and privatize them in the long run, she noted.

College says injecting new blood to health institutions

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA— Kea-med College stated that it is supplying train medical manpower to health sector as well as empowering women in widely joining the medical health profession.

“The college has trained and supplied nearly 19,000 students to the medical sector in the nation since its inception. Only this year, the college graduated about 481 students in degree and Masters Level in Adult Health Nursing, Public Health, Reproductive Health Specialty and Nursing and Health Officer. More specifically, the college graduated mainly women to empower women that lay great foundation for families and contribute the national development goals,” said College President Mahder Ziqu.

As to her, apart from its training endeavors, the college has ventured towards alleviating the medical oxygen shortage that has been evidenced since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic by establishing two medical oxygen plants in Debre Birhan and Debre Markos with an outlay of over 80 million Birr.

Kea-med is playing its great role in addressing the gap witnessed in the health sector via training manpower in medical and business related fields keeping the appropriate policy formulated by the government, she noted.



Mahder Ziqu

Moreover, the college has also prepared itself to launch more than ten medical oxygen plants in various regional administrations of the country, she added.

She further stated that the college has planned to open new campuses in Addis Ababa and it is currently under preparation to start a Medical Doctorate program next year.

The college President extended her gratitude to governmental and non-governmental organizations that have supported the college to register growth through various means so far, and the college was established in 2002, as to her.

Bureau licenses investors registering over 11.4 bln Birr

• *Creates over 12,000 jobs*

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA— Somali State Investment and Industry Bureau announced that investors who have made over 11.4 Billion Birr are licensed to start working in various investment fields to create some 12,243 jobs.

Having a stay with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Bureau Investment Promotion and Expanding Director Abdilaziz Ahmed said that the number of investors who received new investment licenses in the fiscal year is 367, of which 37 are natives of the state living in foreign countries. Compared with what was planned, the outcome is quite greater following the

peace prevailed in the state and the favorable investment condition.

As to him, the Bureau has been carrying out various activities to ease the problems they face when they have come to the state and engage in investment, to help Diaspora service providers come in one center.

It is being done to provide investors with a birth certificate and to communicate with various executive offices so as to provide them with efficient services. Similarly, investment implementation guidelines and regulations in the state have been revised with a view to facilitating the service in the future.

He further stated that the bureau has carried out various activities to increase the capability of

manufacturing industry in the auspicious of ‘Ethiopia Produces’ campaign. In this regard, the Bureau discussed range of ideas with some 40 stakeholders including relevant bodies drawn from federal institutions and investment executives in the state. In a similar way, discussion has been held in four zones in the state, which are directly and indirectly supporting the investment sector.

Abdilaziz also pointed out that an activity has been done to complete the necessary infrastructure to hand over the industrial sites to the investors. The bureau will prepare additional industry villages in the state. Discussions were held regarding the way in which investors can benefit out of the project financed by the Development Bank.



Abdilaziz Ahmed

Ethiopia, China strengthening cooperation in technology education

ADDIS ABABA (ENA)- Ethiopia and China have been strengthening their ties by increasing their cooperation in education of technologies through Luban Workshop, Chinese Tianjin University of Technology and Education said.

The government of China launched the Luban Workshop in 2021 at the Federal Technical and Vocational Training Institute (formerly known as the Ethiopian Technical University) in Addis Ababa with the aim of providing high-end technical skills training to help college students meet the requirements of the emerging global market.

The workshop was established by the Chinese Tianjin University of Technology and Education (TUTE), under the guidance of the Ministry of Education of China.

It is positioned in the field of artificial intelligence and provides undergraduate trainings majoring in manufacturing technology, electronics and communication technology, electrical and control technology, among others.

The Luban workshop in Addis Ababa serves not only Ethiopia but also for East Africa region too, it was indicated.

The African and Arab media delegates visited Tianjin University of technology.

During the visit the university officials gave briefings about the university and its cooperation with other countries through the Luban workshop project.

Prof. Lv Jingquan, the Vice President of the university and the main founder of the Luban workshop brand explained about the innovative practices of the workshop.

The vice president told the Ethiopian News Agency (ENA) during the occasion that the friendship between Ethiopia and China is everlasting and now established strong diplomatic cooperation in various areas.

The Luban workshop project is among the strong cooperation areas where the two countries work together in the area of education, he added.

Cultivating technical and skilled talent manpower for the industry is key and the cooperation of Luban workshops between the two countries serves not only for Ethiopia but also for East Africa region too.

He noted that "We hope that through the headquarters of the African Union we can serve the entire Africa continent. The Engineering Practice Innovation Program Research and Promotion (EPIP) model is now applied well in Ethiopia."

According to him, currently students of east African countries are going to Luban workshop in Ethiopia to receive vocational and technical training. Countries in the region have now expressing desire to establish the Luban workshop by benchmarking Ethiopia.

Professor Jingquan appreciates the Ethiopian labor and skill minister for his commitment to support the project and promote EPIP.

It is indicated that the Ethiopian Luban Workshop offers over 600 class hours of various courses at all levels to vocational colleges in East African countries, cultivating and training 350 local teachers and students, and increasing its influence.

As of august 2023, Tianjin University has opened more than 20 Luban workshops in more than 20 countries.

The aim is to cultivate innovative and talented teachers, who are familiar with Chinese technology and promote international products.

Tianjin University of Technology and Education is a college that was established in China in 1979, its main goal is to train teachers for vocational education.

Ethiopia launches...

The Ethiopian Herald has learnt that successful pilot projects were conducted to register higher education students, ensuring that the system is both efficient and effective ahead of its broader launch of the new system.

Both the Ministry of Education and the National ID Program are optimistic about the effectiveness the project for transformation and exhort all parties involved in education to fully embrace this ground-breaking change, the statement indicated.

Moreover, the Digital ID system, anchored on advanced technology, greatly amplifies the security of storing and accessing personal information, it said while adding that the system ensures the utmost protection of data, drastically minimizing any threats or chances of unauthorized breaches.

Educational institutions, ranging from grade school to universities, can expect a more streamlined approach in handling administrative responsibilities, particularly in areas like admission, examinations and record management, according to the statement.

The statement further stated that this is more expected to be reflected in key engagements such as the Fayda based licensing and national examinations rollout resulting in secure and smooth delivery across the country.

The system's seamless also ensures smooth digital integration, allowing students to effortlessly tap into online resources, e-learning platforms, and a plethora of digital academic services, it was stated.

Abbay Dam's ...

The dam comprises left, right and middle sections and the left and right sections will reach 635 to 645m stages, and only 9 to 10 meters is required to complete the left and right sections.

Some 20 meters is left to complete the middle part of the dam, and this part will be accomplished after one year.

Mentioning the process of undergoing electromechanical installation, he said that the dam is now generating energy using two turbines, additional five turbines would be added during the 2016 fiscal year and these units would be operational soon.

As to him, the Abbay Dam will have a total of seven units this New Year.

"What is remaining is to construct a bridge to connect the left and right parts. The left and right will reach at 645m after four months," he added.

It is to be recalled that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) announced the completion of the fourth round filling of Abbay Dam on Sunday and congratulated Ethiopians as well as underscored that Ethiopia has started works to make proof that it is undefeatable nation and has the ability to accomplish all its desires.

"The unity of citizens must be replicated once again in due course of emancipating the nation from poverty and underdevelopment," the premier said.

AAU vows to...

expand the already existing ties and cooperation with international universities mainly in the areas of education, promoting academic collaboration, scientific research, facilitating cultural exchange and deepening friendship for mutual benefits.

The old and new proclamation gives autonomous right for state universities to cooperate and work together with their counterparts across the globe. The very nature of universities is creating linkage with international universities or their counterparts, he said.

To have a strong international relation and cooperation with its counterparts, it requires further expanding international relation, he stated.

Hence, the university will design systems to retain scholars as well as facilitate foreign serving scholars to contribute and serve their country in their field of expertise.

Education fee fairness wouldn't be violated due to self-autonomy. The new structure or reform of the university would eventually enable the establishment of a competitive,



Samuel kifle (PhD)

sufficient and independent university. Furthermore, it would enable the university model in wealth utilization, and generation, he noted.

Recently, AAU has become the first autonomous university in the belief to ensure academic freedom and to carry out teaching and research activities more effectively without political or administrative interference.

BRICS to take center...

an American economist said.

In his interview with foreign media, the noted American Economist Prof. Jeffrey Sachs said the enlargement of the bloc would have a paramount importance particularly to developing countries, including Ethiopia to boost its astonishing diplomatic ties with other north east countries.

The economist further remarked that Ethiopia, with 120 million people and significant culture, has been a very fast growing country for the past 15 years.

Marking the firm bilateral relation between Ethiopia and China, he said China is and will be a best strategic ally to the former in the fields of massive hydropower construction and railways that help make a visible difference.

"The criterion for BRICS enlargement principally and systematically is important to member countries," he added.

Mentioning the principal role that China is undertaking, the economist remarked that in the next 20 years, Ethiopia along with its partners will be the most influential and the fastest economy.

"China's special focus to Ethiopia and other

members in the bloc would create a suitable ground to entertain their sizable ancient civilization and cultures. Besides, it would be to realize its strong national visions of development and strong partnership," he underscored.

He also indicated that China is forging economic cooperation to Asian countries, Southeast Asia, African countries, West Asia, Gulf countries through its enormous initiatives including belt and road initiative.

Moreover, China would be a strategic partner for the bloc through finance provision, infrastructure development, networking, ports, energy and many others.

It is also indicated that BRICS as a group worked on sectoral cooperation in many areas such as science and technology, trade promotion and facilitation, energy, health, education, innovation and others.

"Representing 40% of the world's population, BRICS would be playing a pivotal role and contributing significant role to the world economy and agreement is reached to expand by another 400 million people and 5% of the world GDP," it was learnt.

Opinion

Abbay Dam: A new chapter for progress, cooperation

BY MENGESHA AMARE

The use of all sources of water like surface water, groundwater, water out of basin, and rainwater, etc. as a whole should be Ethiopia's prime priority to declare economic independence. Having passed a number of years yelling at citizens and severely hurting their heart, Abbay has started compensating Ethiopia and Ethiopians for the better. Ethiopia's economy is now constantly rising. Its industrial demand for water resources is also increasing in the process of economic growth.

Not only is the construction of the Grand Abbay Dam the pride of Ethiopia and a viable means for economic growth, but it is also of instrumental in reinvigorating the regional integration and economic progress in the continent. In the use of water resources, it is necessary to implement scientific methods to enable water resources sustainable exploitation.

Unequivocally, as a result of the rapid economic growth and the huge demand for various resources by industry across the nation, the development of resources like water assets must be increased. When industries are using water resources, they have to adopt scientific methods and use water resources reasonably, and the concept of sustainable use of water resources has emerged. That is why Ethiopia has since long back capitalized on the grand dam and gets it operational upon completion of its filling.

As the maximum use of water resources in the process of utilization enables water resources to reduce the damage to the surrounding environment, the government of Ethiopia has planned to build some 40 islands around the grand Abbay Dam. This is another vital advantage for Ethiopia and Ethiopians apart from securing energy for industries, factories and household consumption.

As far as the focus of the Ethiopian government is concerned, the management of water resources and the government has established a series of policies and regulations to effectively supervise and manage a series of procedures in the exploitation and utilization of water resources. Without any doubt, water resources are very important in the process of economic development in Ethiopia these days as it is widely witnessed in many countries of the world.

All kinds of industries are inseparable from water resources in the development process. Yes, having sufficient water resources supply is significantly useful in greatly promoting the development of country's economy, and water resources are also indispensable in citizens' lives.

Needless to state, Ethiopia's demand for water resources is extremely large, but the supply of water resources is often in short supply. To solve such a problem

emanating from shortage of water and energy secured from it, damming water resources especially great rivers needs to be well capitalized. The best remedy to address all the problems emanate from water assets is now widely regarded as an effective utilization of the grand Abbay Dam, too.

Yes, Grand Abbya Dam's fourth filling has been recently concluded and many turbines will start providing the country and its citizens with electrification. Undeniably, the Dam is the son of all citizens of Ethiopia ranging from a daily laborers to high profile investors as every one of them have been contributing the effective completion of the dam.

Not only will the Dam help the nation promote and record a range of socio-economic development, but it is also be a good bond to cement all riparian counties in particular and the entire continent and neighboring global states in general. Whenever the country tries to utilize energy for industries using water resources, it needs to pay due attention to the protection of water resources as haphazard industrial use would cause great damage to the water resources and related developmental endeavors. Here, the government must formulate corresponding water resources management rules to restrict certain industrial activities in the development and utilization of water resources for the durable water resource energy utilization.

Be that as it may, the utilization of water resources and water security in Ethiopia are critical to the stability of the region. For the ecological security, Ethiopia has improved its status, and for the quantity security of water resources, the country has relatively safe water utilization for its socioeconomic conditions without leaving a significant impact on the downstream nations. If this is so, the downstream riparian nations have to cooperate with Ethiopia since Ethiopia has never had negative intention to harm its sisterly neighboring countries.

True, water security refers to the acceptable level of water-related risks that can meet the living environment and economic development needs of the society while supporting national security, human health and ecosystem services. This is practically seen in due course of exploiting the benefits of the Abbay Dam.

The continent of Africa sees water as one of the most important security issues in the world and suggests that water security is a necessary condition for achieving social well-being and economic development. The Dam can be a living proof in this regard.

As the rapid growth of population and economy leads to a further increase in demand for water resources, Ethiopia has to work from dawn to dusk to be a nation of its dreams through water resource utilization.

Of course, it has started doing so, but a long journey remains to be trekked. The contradiction between supply and demand of water resources has become the main bottleneck restricting sustainable development of a national social economy, indeed. Water is used for a variety of productive, environmental and social purposes, which provide societies with a range of values.

Agricultural production is the main consumptive use of water nationally, regionally, continentally and even globally accounting for a great share of water use. Hence, agriculture is the main target for policies aimed at enabling the transition towards greener economies in the water sector in this great nation and water tower of the African continent.

Traditional approaches to water resource development have been based on the mobilization of surface and ground water resources aiming at augmenting supply and expanding services. In the 21st century, national and regional governments have embarked on huge investments for the development of large-scale hydraulic infrastructures, such as, dams, irrigation schemes and groundwater extraction projects.

Recognizing the fact that water resource development incorporates mobilization of natural water resources for productive economic and social uses, Ethiopia has been well capitalizing on effectively using its water resources.

A better understanding of the economics of water resources can enable policy-makers to appraise the social costs of allocating water in the agricultural sector, the biggest water user of course.

It is well recognized that contributing over 86 percent of water share to the Abbay River/River Nile, Ethiopia has never benefitted out of its water resources. However, these days the country has been celebrating the rebirth of the river and praising its commitment to serve its nation and fellow citizens.

The resultant benefit of agricultural development from water resources requires an organized move and through considerations including participation of a wider range of expertise, stakeholders' involvement, coordination and trade-offs, and awareness of appropriate geographic, social and political scales. These changes have implications for how resource allocation and planning is controlled. As the Grand Abbay Dam will be quite instrumental in helping Ethiopia declare economic sovereignty, everybody has to work hard make the vision of the nation a reality.

The promotion of water development and politically sustainable institutional reform to deliver a long-last and resilient green economy for water has these days received due attention across the nation.

Water resource is also a kind of

comprehensive natural resources which has a variety of values and can supply with the water needs for many sectors, which involves economy, resource, science and technology, ecosystem and environment. Hence, sustainable utilization of the Abbay Dam is a better form for the water resources and islands at its vicinity have to be well focused on.

The comprehensive utilization of the Dam in the country should emphasis on the comprehensive development and utilization of the various types of natural resources which need water or energy comes out of it. Yes, establishing a perfect and reasonable water resources developing system would be a means to come up with a favorable economic, social and ecological benefit and may improve the economic, social and ecological environment in the nation.

For instance, farming development must take the road of water-saving agriculture. There are all kinds of water bodies in the small watershed, such as rivers, lakes, rainwater, among others have to be developed so as to effectively utilize the water sources via constructing viable dams like the Abbay Dam.

Hence, since the development of the ecological forestry and improving the rate of vegetation coverage to retain the water is well known for growth and progress, Ethiopia has started constructing eco-friendly seashores and islands around the Dam. This scheme also helps prevent water loss and soil erosion for the forest land related to forest coverage and the height of the leaf canopy.

Making full use of the water resources, developing forestry and increasing the farmers' living standards without destroying the existing ecological environment around the Dam is now bearing fruits as the Dam has started operation.

In sum, wide-ranging utilization of the water resources in Ethiopia has to be well dealt with as the country has been traveling on the right track to bring about real change in all aspects. The use of surface water, groundwater, and water from irrigation has to widely be used for promoting production and productivity.

This really requires systematic move keeping and allocating water sources including engineering measures, biological measures and agricultural practices, etc. The dam filling would also be instrumental in promoting Ethiopia's economic progress. The dam is going to be a source of cooperation instead of confrontation, as the water resource suffices to quench the thirst of downstream nations, Egypt and Sudan.

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

Editorial

Opinion

Towards benefits commensurate with potential

As a country of over a 100-million population, Ethiopia has to implement an economic development program that can rapidly develop its economy through creating massive job opportunities, and maximize foreign currency earning through value addition, among others.

Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy in Ethiopia. In addition to being a source of revenue and means of subsistence for households, it also plays a considerable role in creating jobs, too. Hence, industrializing the sector will have a multiplier effect on the economic benefit for the country. Industry has also a lot of benefits in the economy. It helps in adding value, creating more benefit from the value chain and widening options for exportable items.

All these opportunities are widely available in Ethiopia. It is well known producer of cash crops like coffee, tea, sugarcane, cotton, fruits, vegetables ... etc. So far it earns a limited amount of revenue from export of these cash crops. For instance it has earned about USD 1.4 Billion from the export of coffee grain annually for the last couple of years. As compared to the potential of the country to produce, add value and export coffee, this is a very small figure. The same is true in the case of the other items. The country is not earning adequate amount of revenue from its agro industrial potential.

Therefore the government needs accelerate its works in the coming years to maximize the benefits from the sector by promoting both the productivity of the agricultural sector and expanding agro industry and agro processing sector.

The development of agro-industries presents Ethiopia with an opportunity to accelerate economic development and achieve its overall industrial development goals. Accordingly, the government has been streamlining the development of Integrated Agro-Industrial parks in various parts of the country. This being an encouraging step, the works have to continue further in facilitating the operation of the IAIPs by strengthening the market linkage with local suppliers through promoting farmers and pastoralists unions, stretching infrastructure for smooth communication and transportation, among others.

In addition to boosting the volume of productivity, there is a need to work aggressively in improving the quality of the country's agro-industrial outputs. Standardizing the quality of the produces is the best way to guarantee competitiveness in export market. To this end, the government needs to work on attracting as many foreign investors in the field as possible so as to contribute in harnessing the countries agricultural produces with innovative and state of the art technology and skills.

Emerging economic opportunities like membership in BRICS should also take into consideration. For instance, the country's membership in BRICS can respond to the quest for huge amount of funding to expand infrastructure, facilities and financing for the sector.

Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular have not benefited from their resources. There are ample beautiful expressions that help us understand the wealth in Africa in a concrete way. For instance, many call the continent as "the treasure chest of resources," but paradoxically, Africa is also a continent whose people are still languishing in poverty. In this regard, Ethiopia's practical steps of luring FDI, knowledge and finance need to be more strengthened. This could leave lesson for the rest of the continent to detach from abject poverty.

What makes a country's membership in BRICS advantageous?

BY MAHILET GASHAW

Discussions and debates have emerged regarding potential African representation in the BRICS bloc. Ethiopia, being one of the fastest-growing economies in Africa, has been mentioned as a potential candidate for membership.

Ethiopia has been experiencing impressive economic growth over the past decade. Its investment in infrastructure development, such as roads, railways, and industrial zones, has attracted international attention. Joining BRICS could enhance trade and investment opportunities with the member countries, leading to further economic development for Ethiopia.

Being a member of BRICS would allow diversifying its trade partners beyond its traditional markets. The combined economic strength of BRICS countries represents a significant potential market for countries goods and services. Expanding access to these markets could reduce dependence on a few trading partners and foster economic resilience.

BRICS nations have shown their strong interest in enhancing cooperation with African countries. Membership in BRICS could offer the opportunity for countries to engage in collaborative projects and benefit from knowledge-sharing and technical assistance in various sectors. This could aid countries efforts to address developmental challenges and achieve its socio-economic objectives.

Joining BRICS could boost geopolitical influence on the global stage. BRICS member countries collectively hold considerable weight in international relations and often advocate for emerging economies' interests. As a member, a country could have a platform to voice its concerns, participate in shaping global policies, and have stronger bargaining power in global negotiations.

It's important to note that joining BRICS is a complex and carefully evaluated decision. Our country Ethiopia, like any other country, would need to assess the potential advantages and disadvantages, consider its domestic priorities, and evaluate the compatibility of its economic and political systems with those of the existing BRICS members before considering membership.

Joining BRICS can bring various economic advantages to members. BRICS nations have a combined GDP of over \$16 trillion, presenting newly joining members with a significant market for its exports. Joining BRICS would provide countries with improved access to these emerging economies, facilitating increased trade and export opportunities.

Membership in BRICS can attract increased foreign direct investment from the member countries. BRICS nations possess substantial investment capabilities and being part of the group enhances countries visibility as an investment destination. This would bring in more capital, boost domestic industries, and create employment opportunities.

BRICS nations have consistently invested in infrastructure development within their respective countries. Ethiopian, with its focus on infrastructure development, can leverage BRICS membership to access funding, technology, and expertise. This would aid in improving transportation networks, power supply, telecommunications, and other critical infrastructure sectors.

BRICS countries have made significant progress in technological advancements across various fields. Joining BRICS would open avenues for technology transfer and knowledge sharing. Ethiopia could benefit from technological

advancements in agriculture, renewable energy, health care, manufacturing, and other sectors, enhancing productivity and competitiveness.

By joining BRICS, Ethiopia can foster regional cooperation and partnerships. Collaboration with other member nations could lead to joint ventures, research collaborations, and knowledge exchange. This can contribute to the development of regional value chains, economic integration, and the sharing of best practices.

BRICS nations have established institutions like the New Development Bank (NDB) and Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) to support infrastructure financing and provide financial stability. Ethiopia's membership in BRICS would enable it to access funding and financial assistance from these institutions, facilitating economic development and stability.

As a member of BRICS, countries can engage in dialogue, knowledge sharing, and policy coordination with other member countries. Participating in BRICS summits and forums would allow countries to contribute to shaping policies that promote sustainable economic growth, trade liberalization, and inclusive development.

It is important to note that joining BRICS requires careful consideration of the country's economic and political conditions, alignment with BRICS principles, and the potential challenges and opportunities that membership entails.

Countries may potentially gain several political advantages by joining BRICS becoming a member of BRICS would elevate countries geopolitical status on the global stage. It would give the country a stronger voice in international affairs and provide opportunities to engage in multi-lateral negotiations and decision-making processes.

BRICS nations have vast economies, and joining the group could unlock opportunities for economic cooperation and trade with these influential countries. Ethiopia can benefit from increased investments, technology transfers, and access to new markets, potentially accelerating its economic growth.

BRICS nations have established development banks like the New Development Bank (NDB) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). By joining BRICS, countries may gain access to financial assistance, loans, and technical expertise for infrastructure development projects, such as transportation networks, energy facilities, and industrial zones. BRICS countries are known for their willingness to invest in emerging markets. By joining the group, Ethiopia can attract foreign direct investment (FDI) from BRICS nations, supporting its efforts in various sectors, including agriculture, manufacturing, and services. This investment can contribute to job creation, technology transfer, and economic diversification.

BRICS nations often engage in knowledge exchange and capacity-building initiatives. Ethiopia can leverage this network to enhance its educational systems, research and development capabilities, technological advancements, and skills training programs. Such collaborations can have long-term benefits for the country's human capital development.

Ethiopia's alignment with BRICS can foster closer ties with other African nations. As the only African country in BRICS, Ethiopia can play a pivotal role in promoting regional integration, advocating for African interests within BRICS discussions, and leading collective initiatives for peace, security, and economic development in Africa.



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

Business & Economy

Revitalizing Tigray investment via combined effort



Mekelle Industrial Park on the verge of returning to full operations – photo google

BY BACHA ZEWDIE

It has been repeatedly stated that events related to the war in the northern part of Ethiopia were an obstacle for the investment sector. The suspension of Ethiopia's "AGOA" related to the war and the pressure of the international media are among the challenges that tested the investment sector. The Tigray region, which was the main war zone, suffered multiple casualties. The region's investment sector is one of the most affected sectors by the war.

Tigray Region Investment Commission Commissioner, Daniel Mekonen, pointed out that the war has caused huge human and material damage in the region. Thus, a lot of effort is needed to revive the investment sector. According to him, following the relative peace in most areas of the region, efforts are being made to revive the existing investment activities.

To achieve this, there are several questions that need to be answered. Among the demands raised by investors are shed rent and interest cancellation, loan and foreign exchange provision, compensation payment, expedited business and work permit service and tax relief.

"It is known that most investors work with loans. This loan is counting interest every day. Because of the war, the investor did not use the money. Therefore, the investors are asking for cancellation of interest and debt and for compensation to be paid to them," he said, pointing out that the investors' demands should be answered in order to stimulate the existing investment and attract new investors.

He said that there should be an official call for foreign investors to return to their jobs and in this regard, the Ethiopian Investment Commission and the Industrial Parks Development Corporation have greater responsibility. Pointing out that one of the issues that play a major role in stimulating investment in the region is the task of amending investment laws and preparing new guidelines, Daniel explained that this task mainly concerns the federal government.

"Investment laws are carried out according to the laws of the federal government of the country. Therefore, the responsibility of

amending and preparing these laws is the authority of the federal government."

As he said, before the war, there were investors who were given tax breaks. However, due to the war, the investors did not take advantage of this tax break. Since the task of granting tax relief is the responsibility of the federal government, it must respond to investors who request the extension of tax relief.

Foreign investors mentioned the need for work permits for the professionals they bring in from abroad, and they say that there are many challenges faced by investors in obtaining work permits and importing investment resources. Therefore, he pointed out that simple, fast and convenient procedures should be established to facilitate these activities.

Recalling that the federal government had prepared clear guidelines for investors who were injured due to problems caused in various areas due to the political crises in the country in the past, he explained that investors in the Tigray region are also raising this question. Local investors are also asking for compensation for their destroyed properties. Compensation and other incentives given to properties destroyed in other regions should be implemented in Tigray as well, he said.

According to the investment commissioner of the region, it should be known that the development of Tigray means the development of Ethiopia. The gold and sesame produced in the Tigray region contributed greatly to the country's foreign exchange. Thus, supporting the investor in Tigray means supporting Ethiopia; stimulating the economy in Tigray is stimulating the economy of Ethiopia.

"The region's investment has contributed significantly to job creation, technology transfer and foreign exchange earnings. Therefore, a solution should be given based on this idea. Failure to do this has prevented the region's investment activities from progressing as expected," he said, explaining that the sector needs an urgent solution.

He pointed out that the measures taken by the National Bank will allow investors who are in financial trouble to get new loans and extend the loan repayment period and will

give relief to investors. "There are laws, support frameworks and procedures that the federal government should improve based on the damage that has been done. But they are facing many hurdles as they are not fully implemented. A legal framework is needed that can repair the damage done. In general, a detailed system that can compensate the damage should be prepared," he said.

Daniel further said that while the responsibilities of the federal government are maintained, the region is making efforts to fulfill its responsibilities in order to stimulate the region's investment sector.

Budget is becoming a big problem. The region was at war and was not collecting taxes. Even the subsidy from the federal government is not sufficient for the salaries of government employees. Cities cannot currently pay compensation and provide land to investors. Therefore, there is a big problem in giving new land.

"Despite these problems, we are calling for investors because we believe that the regional government should pay great attention to investment. Although most of the investment laws concern the federal government, we are trying to improve the laws of the state which can be improved at the state level. We are making the investors who come with machines get land directly. We are clearly transferring the lands for which compensation was paid before the war," he explained.

One of the industrial parks in the war zone is the Mekelle Industrial Park. The Head of Marketing and Communication Department of the Industrial Parks Development Corporation, Zemen Jonedi, previously explained to Ethiopian Press Agency that the corporation had no information about the Mekelle Industrial Park for two years. Following the Pretoria Peace Agreement, a group of experts formed by the Corporation went to Mekelle and observed the condition of the park. As a result, the park was not looted or vandalized. Therefore, works are being carried out to quickly put the park into operation. It was possible to talk to the eight investors who were in the park by phone and e-mail; Joint discussions will be held soon.

Explaining the steps taken to alleviate the

problems of the industrial park and the ongoing solutions, he said, a committee led by the CEO of the corporation has been established and started work to find investors and convince them to start working. In order to find out the condition of the workers who were working in the park and to prevent the investors from having problems with the supply of workers when they start work, a consensus was reached by discussing with the labor and social affairs sector of the Interim Regional Administration (IRA) of Tigray.

The process of solving the transport problem was also facilitated through discussion with the transport office of the interim administration. Discussions have been held to eliminate power, data, and voice interruptions, and work is being done to resolve the problem in a short period of time.

Many international experiences can be presented as evidence that post-war economic construction, especially the management and leadership of the investment sector, requires a different approach. Economists also recommend the need to implement a post-war investment management system that takes into account the existing conditions in order to revive the investment sector damaged by the war and to be in a better position than the previous performance.

In this regard, it is important to speed up the development of the investment sector of the Tigray region and the construction of the national economy by preparing and effectively implementing post-war investment stimulation strategies that can guarantee the revival of the investment sector after the peace agreement signed between the FDRE government and the TPLF.

Daniel said that the Tigray region follows a different system in terms of post-war investment management. "The post-war economic recovery system has many applications. Investment requires peace, finance, infrastructure, market linkages... A legal framework is needed that can repair the damage done. The federal government must fulfill its responsibilities so that the post-war economic recovery system can be effective," he said.

Art & Culture

Always be yourself!



BY SENAIT G/HIWOT

Some people tell you to be different things from their experience which might sometimes be helpful but you definitely do not have to change your core values.

I am not saying you do not have to grow as a person but it should be at your own pace and your own comfort.

Some people tell me to be more of what they think is a better quality For example; am an introvert and they tell me to be an

extrovert, which doesn't suit me and isn't my core value.

I like spending time by myself more than socializing, I like writing, listening to music, watching movies and taking a walk by myself which most people at my age think is mundane because they are extroverted and like to socialize, go to parties and stuff...

I tried to be like others because I listened to people which didn't work out for me... my energy was drained and I was depressed.... So I did was what I was comfortable doing and avoided the rest.

Then, I started to become more efficient, happy and successful... I kept on expressing my feelings with poems and articles like this which makes me feel good and I focused more on academics...

I just love the way my life is right now and I don't want to change any bit of it by listening to others.

Some say "why aren't you married yet ?or why don't you have a child?" which I don't plan to recently. People may be nosy but if you know yourself well that is all that matters.

Some people like to read but as a writer I don't read a lot. I just listen to podcasts and stuff and for some time I thought I should read more like others but that wasn't my style.

The more I tried to be like others the less satisfied I became and the more I adhered to my qualities the happier and more creative I became.

So for me success is becoming my authentic self than being pretentious and copying others.



New Year— a harbinger of hope

*I feel happy and ecstatic
My mind doesn't seem to be weak
It is one of those lovely times
Where I am happy to be alive
Everything makes sense to me
I love my life, it sets me free
It's new year now& wishes are made
I want this to continue till the end
Even though there may be dark times
in life
I will stick to it with strife
Because of moments like this is life!*

A song of life

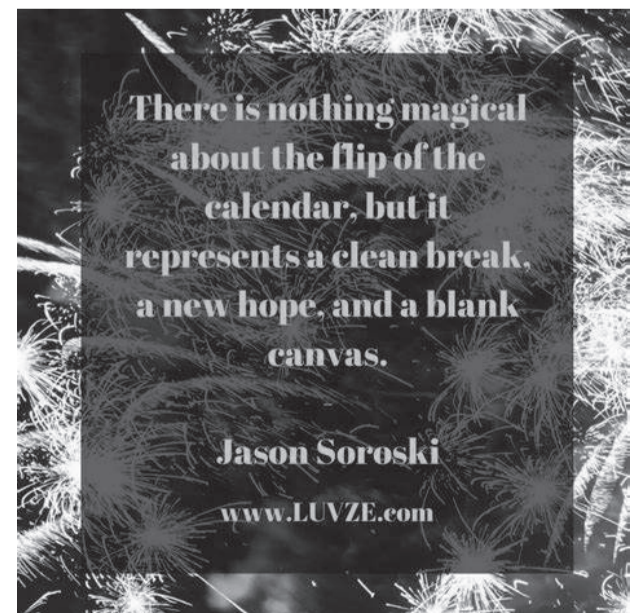
BY SALOMEJA NERIS

*My life is a windstorm, unleashed and unbounded,
It sweeps like a falcon expanses of field!
My life with the echoes of spring is resounding,
My life is a mad dream I'm destined to yield.*

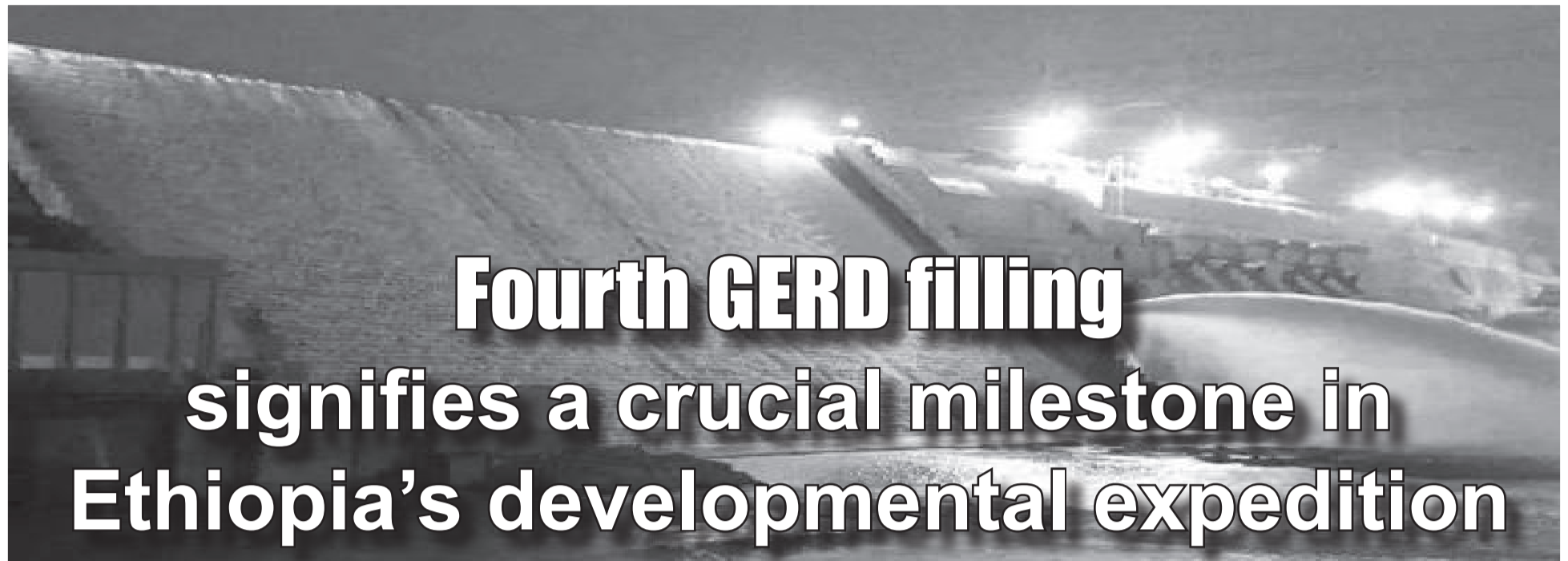
*And yet I love life, full of vigor and fire,
As much as a wild meadow flower loves spring.
I love joy of life with a burning desire
And like only youth can to joy blindly cling.*

*O earth, my beloved and bountiful mother!
You dress up in flowers, at times in blood too.
Who'd change your sweet charms for the Garden of Eden?
I dread to imagine my life without you!*

*I love you, big world, ever bustling, beguiling!
You'll tear me, perhaps, like a beast of the wilds.
I'll die all the same at the sun broadly smiling,
And sunbeams will shine in my eyes.*



Indepth



BY ADDISALEM MULAT

The recent completion of the fourth round filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) marks a significant milestone for Ethiopia. It is regarded as a big win for Ethiopia, affirming their strength as a nation and the country's commitment to achieving ambitious development goals.

The dam signifies Ethiopia's self-reliance and ability to embark on mega-infrastructure projects without external assistance or influence. It also demonstrates the independence of the country proving that Ethiopia can meet its people's energy needs without relying on other countries. Besides, the flagship project represents Ethiopia's determination to accomplish its development goals.

The dam's construction represents a much-needed boost in the country's efforts to achieve its national development goals. The dam is expected to provide much-needed electricity to millions of Ethiopians who live in darkness. There is no gainsaying the fact that the country has been striving towards rapid industrialization in recent years, and the dam will play a pivotal role in the country's industrialization drive providing affordable and reliable energy.

The dam has the potential to become a major source of revenue for the country with Ethiopia having the opportunity to export surplus electricity to the region and beyond earning more foreign exchange. Needless to say, the dam's construction exemplifies Ethiopia's achievements in the field of mega-infrastructure construction, with the country becoming a symbol of modernization and development.

The country is attracting both local and foreign investors who view the country as a haven for investment, with numerous opportunities in different sectors, including renewable energy and manufacturing. In addition, the dam will help in strengthening economic integration across the region. By generating large amounts of electricity, the project has the potential to bring about regional economic development, with countries in the region accessing cheap and reliable energy, which, in turn, promotes investments and economic growth.

The GERD has been a source of pride for Ethiopians with the dam being a powerful

symbol of the country's sovereignty, self-reliance, and determination to achieve its development goals. The project is expected to bring significant economic and social benefits to Ethiopia, with the country cementing its position as a major player in the region.

The dam has been a triumph of perseverance in the face of unrelenting external pressures. Ethiopia's resilience in the face of numerous challenges has demonstrated the country's ability to rise above external factors and achieve its objectives. What's more, the project is a testament to Ethiopia's resolve to become self-sufficient and rely on its ingenuity and resources. The country has taken this route believing that becoming more self-sufficient will yield significant dividends in the long term.

The dam also highlights the transformative power of mega-infrastructure projects. Infrastructure development can serve as a significant catalyst for economic growth, regional integration, and political stability. The dam serves as a powerful symbol of what can be achieved when nations come together to pursue common goals.

The GERD is just one aspect of Ethiopia's greater development agenda, a journey that still has a long way to go. Now is the time for Ethiopia to cement its position as a hub for investment and innovation, leveraging the GERD to spur development across various sectors of the economy. The project is a testament to Ethiopia's commitment, resilience, and its desire to achieve economic growth and development.

Ethiopia must remain vigilant in safeguarding the project's gains, ensuring equitable distribution of benefits while embracing the project's potential for regional integration. As Ethiopia continues on its development journey, the GERD will remain a powerful symbol of what can be achieved when a nation resolves to pursue its development goals with determination, resolve and a long-term vision.

The GERD is a vital component of the broader African Union's Infrastructure Development Plan aimed at improving the continent's connectivity. One of the most salient benefits of the GERD is economic integration. The construction and the operation of the dam will require a significant amount of technical and human resources, making it a valuable prospect for job creation, skill development, and technological advancement in the region.

The GERD's construction has also elevated Ethiopia's reputation in Africa and globally. Ethiopia now stands out as the leader in driving Africa's infrastructure development dreams forward. The GERD's construction has highlighted the importance of developing infrastructure projects as a viable sector for regional integration and collaboration. The project has proven that infrastructure development can serve as a catalyst for regional integration.

The GERD construction highlights the need for coherent strategies geared towards bringing about collective development and growth that the African continent has yearned for decades. It is a significant step towards realizing the continent's aspirations of becoming self-sufficient and globally competitive, and the future looks bright.

The GERD project is a critical infrastructure project that will provide Ethiopia with ample electricity, boost economic growth and regional integration, and contribute to the development of the African continent. It is crucial that all parties involved seek a peaceful and negotiated resolution to the GERD issue. Ethiopia has repeatedly acknowledged that it has no intention of causing harm to downstream countries or their populations and has always stressed the importance of reaching a mutually acceptable agreement on the use of the Nile waters.

Although a lot of controversy has surrounded its construction, the dam's significance cannot be undermined. The GERD is expected to provide cheap and abundant electricity, which will not only improve the living standards of Ethiopians but also propel the country's economic growth. With widespread electrification, businesses will be able to operate efficiently, leading to an increase in employment opportunities and income levels.

The GERD will provide a reliable source of domestically generated energy, helping to stabilize Ethiopia's power supply. Ethiopia is also positioning itself as a major exporter of electricity, with potential export markets including Kenya, Djibouti, and Sudan.

It is also an emblem of Ethiopia's journey to self-reliance and economic development. Although the dam's construction has been a costly and lengthy process, it reflects the country's determination to harness its natural resources and embark on a path of sustainable development.

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam

(GERD) is a project that ensures the mutual benefits of the regional and riparian countries, Foreign Affairs Spokesperson Meles Alem told Ethiopian News Agency.

Meles said that the dam has great significance for regional integration.

According to him, the dam is a power plant built with the wealth, knowledge and labor of Ethiopians who have been steadfastly struggling for the accomplishment of the project.

The dam has addressed the quest of a generation and the successful completion of the fourth and final round filling of GERD is a gift for Ethiopians on their New Year, the spokesperson elaborated.

Meles noted that Ethiopia has been under immense pressures because of the dam; but succeeded in overcoming challenges by firmly sticking to principle and commitment.

Even if the dam is being built by Ethiopians internal capacity and in their sovereign territory, the benefit of the dam is beyond the nation, the spokesperson underlined.

As a demonstration of one of the benefits of the dam, he cited the power integration works Ethiopia has been pursuing with the neighboring countries that will in turn strengthen economic integration.

In addition, the dam has huge benefits in protecting for the lower riparian countries from sediment, floods and ensuring sufficient water flow, Meles said.

Hence, he underlined that the dam is a project that should be a source of cooperation instead of conflict as it ensures mutual benefits for regional and lower riparian countries.

The fourth and final round filling has been conducted based on the policy of sovereignty of Ethiopia and to enable 65 million citizens access electricity, Meles noted.

Recalling that Ethiopia had not signed any agreement regarding Abay River, the spokesperson added that the country will not be stopped from its development efforts by those one-sided colonial era agreements.

Meles, who said that Ethiopia enjoys good relationship with the riparian countries beyond the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, stated that Ethiopia will further strengthen collaboration with the countries on development and shared benefits of the respective peoples as well as regional issues.

Law & Politics

Ethiopia's diversified, inclusive diplomatic engagements

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

Ethiopia has made significant strides in improving its diplomatic activities through a combination of proactive engagement, strategic partnerships, and the pursuit of peaceful resolutions. These efforts have not only strengthened Ethiopia's position on the global stage but have also contributed to regional stability and development.

By establishing diplomatic ties with more countries, Ethiopia has opened up avenues for economic, cultural, and political cooperation, as well as strengthened its voice in international forums. Besides, the country has placed great importance on building strategic partnerships with key players in the global arena.

Ethiopia has shown dedication to promoting peace and stability in the region through its involvement in conflict resolution efforts. The country has actively participated in mediation and peace building initiatives in neighboring countries. Its commitment to peaceful resolutions has not only helped alleviate human suffering but has also enhanced its reputation as a credible and reliable partner in promoting regional stability.

Ethiopia has prioritized diplomacy as a tool for sustainable development. The country has actively engaged in global initiatives addressing poverty, climate change, and other pressing challenges. In addition to these efforts, Ethiopia has invested in capacity-building programs to enhance its diplomatic capabilities.

The country has emphasized training for diplomats, fostering a new generation of skilled negotiators and representatives. This investment in human resources has empowered Ethiopia's diplomatic corps to effectively advocate for the country's interests and actively contribute to global discussions on various issues.

Ethiopia has been proactive in extending support and solidarity to fellow African countries. The country has provided humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping troops to nations facing crises, demonstrating its commitment to regional solidarity and cooperation. Through these efforts, Ethiopia has built strong relationships with other African countries, fostering a sense of unity and collective progress.

Ethiopia has diligently worked towards diversifying and broadening its diplomatic engagements in bilateral, regional, continental, and multilateral venues. This commitment to inclusivity and collaboration has not only strengthened Ethiopia's global standing but has also fostered mutual understanding, cooperation, and shared prosperity. By actively engaging with a wide range of nations and international organizations, Ethiopia has demonstrated its commitment to fostering meaningful relationships and addressing global challenges collectively.

In bilateral engagements, Ethiopia has sought to deepen its ties with various countries across the globe. The country has proactively engaged in diplomacy, trade, and investment activities, recognizing the importance of building strong partnerships for economic

growth and development. Bilateral dialogues have enabled Ethiopia to tap into diverse knowledge, expertise, and resources from different nations, fostering innovation, technology transfer, and infrastructure development.

Through its membership in the AU, Ethiopia has played a crucial role in strengthening regional cooperation, peacekeeping missions, and conflict resolution. By engaging in regional dialogues and initiatives, Ethiopia has successfully addressed shared challenges such as climate change, migration, and security threats. These collaborative efforts have fostered a sense of unity and common purpose among African nations, leading to increased stability and socio-economic progress.

As the host country of the AU headquarters, Ethiopia has provided a platform for dialogue, negotiation, and consensus-building on matters of pan-African interest. Ethiopia's active involvement in the AU's decision-making processes reflects its commitment to championing the aspirations, interests, and rights of African nations. By actively engaging with a broad range of nations, Ethiopia has expanded its economic and trade relations, attracting foreign direct investment and boosting its export capabilities.

Ethiopia's journey towards diversified and inclusive diplomatic engagements in bilateral, regional, continental, and multilateral venues has brought about significant positive changes for the country and its global partners. Through forging strong bilateral relationships, engaging in regional and continental initiatives, and actively participating in multilateral forums, Ethiopia has successfully positioned itself as a respected player on the world stage.

One of the key factors contributing to Ethiopia's inclusion in the BRICS group is its impressive economic growth. The country has been consistently achieving high GDP growth rates, making it one of the fastest-growing economies in Africa. This economic progress has been accompanied by investments in infrastructure development, agriculture, and manufacturing sectors, which have further enhanced Ethiopia's image as an attractive investment destination.

Ethiopia's proactive approach to regional stability and conflict resolution has also earned the trust of the international community. The country has played a pivotal role in peacekeeping missions, particularly in neighboring countries. Its commitment to upholding peace and security aligns with the objectives of BRICS, where member nations aim to foster a peaceful global environment.

In an interview he gave to The Ethiopian Herald, Melaku Mululem, a researcher on International Relations and Diplomacy in the Institute of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia expounded upon the extensive diplomatic efforts and endeavors Ethiopia has put forth in order to join the BRICS group. As he explained, the country has had to engage in rigorous competition with many African nations in order to secure its place in the group.

According to Melaku, Ethiopia's government has played a crucial role in facilitating access



to this elite group through various diplomatic activities. These efforts have included intensive engagement with other nations, extensive negotiations and discussions, as well as other important diplomatic activities aimed at securing Ethiopia's rightful place among the world's most powerful and influential countries.

He emphasized that gaining membership in the BRICS group would be an extremely noteworthy accomplishment for Ethiopia, as it would provide the country with a wealth of crucial benefits and opportunities for both its citizens and its government.

"Key advantages of membership in this influential organization could include closer partnerships with other world powers, strengthened trade relations with other nations, access to valuable resources and important information, and enhanced levels of political influence and social prestige on the global stage," he added.

Membership in the BRICS group would not only benefit Ethiopia's relationship with Egypt but also enhance its soft power and acceptance on the world stage. The ability to meet with Egypt at various BRICS stages could potentially lead to increased harmony between the two nations. Additionally, acceptance into this prestigious group would boost Ethiopia's standing in the global community.

According to the former Ethiopian Ambassador Tiruneh Zena, the constructive non-aligned diplomatic principle that Ethiopia has been pursuing for many years has earned it trust and acceptance, according to information obtained from Ethiopian news Agency.

Ethiopia has been taking a non-aligned position and implementing constructive principle in its diplomatic activities, following the division of the world into two camps after the Second World War.

Non-alignment is an independent policy which originated after the war and does not associate itself with the blocs.

Ethiopia, which is the founder of non-alignment, adheres to its principle of neutrality in its relations with other countries, the former ambassador noted.

Neutrality does not mean having no position or a group of non-aligned countries with no position, Ambassador Tiruneh stated, adding that such countries do have position but do not simply support one or the other.

He stressed that the principle of constructive non-aligned diplomacy Ethiopia is currently following has enabled it to establish diplomatic relations based on cooperation with all countries of the world.

The Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, Ambassador Meles Alem, in his bi-weekly press briefing conducted recently disclosed that the Ministry is working towards a more diversified and inclusive diplomatic engagements in bilateral, regional, continental and multilateral venues.

Addressing local and Addis Ababa-based correspondents, Amb. Meles said, the Ministry's focus area in the 2015/2016 EFY is the diversification and inclusivity of its holistic and cross-cutting engagements in the areas of aviation, sports, cultural and people-to-people diplomacy.

In this regard, the Spokesperson stressed the fact that diplomacy is not a reserve of career diplomats only rather the wider public. As such, the Government is working on building the capacity of Foreign Service personnel while capitalizing on merits and professionalism to increase the efficiency and efficacy of the conduct of the nation's diplomacy and foreign relations.

Speaking of the current state-of-affairs, the Spokesperson noted, the Ethiopian Government is committed to furthering the post-conflict peace consolidation efforts in tandem with the implementation of transitional justice and national dialogue mechanisms. The concerted efforts in this regard are geared towards sustainably protecting our national interests and expanding the sphere of Ethiopia's influence in global affairs, he added.

Ethiopia's main foreign policy imperative in the Horn of Africa is ensuring peace and stability as well as economic integration buttressed by people-to-people and infrastructural linkages.

Parallel to its active engagements in regional affairs, Ethiopia is also committed to championing Pan-African ideals in such a way that African problems could be solved through African mechanisms, Ambassador Meles told journalists.

In the Middle East, the Spokesperson disclosed, the Government is working closely with countries of the Gulf to further boost the multifaceted relations, especially in the areas of trade, investment and job opportunities for our nationals in those nations.

Women in Focus

Home is where the heart can laugh without shyness

BY ELIZABETH MENGISTU

“Of all the things you experienced at home, which memory makes you homesick the most?” I asked one of my friends who recently came from Rome, Italy to Addis Ababa to spend the New Year with her family.

“Each and everything,” she replied simply, stressing on her words and fixing her eyes on me.

“When you are living in a foreign country, no matter whether you are leading a comfortable life or not, every single thing brings back a lot of memories and takes you back to your homeland. Especially, during the arrival of holidays, your mind starts to be stuffed with a pile of memories which make you feel a kind of nostalgia. The time you used to spend with your family, friends, relatives, colleagues, the tantalizing aroma of the food, the drink, roasted coffee, church rituals that are carried out on the eve and the actual day, the preparations and the gatherings, the best wishes; each and everything come flooding back to your mind one after the other,” she said in a manner trying to see the scenes with her mind's eye.

A decade and plus years have already elapsed since Bizuayehu Tilahun has left her birthplace and settled in a foreign land Rome, Italy. And as she always utters, though she settled in another country and started leading a good life, her heart and mind is always at her home country, Ethiopia.

“Do you believe, even the crowded roads and busy marketplaces I was familiar with, the long lines I waited for taxis, and all the holiday preparations I used to perform during the arrival of holidays and on the actual day at home, and the like, disturb me a lot whenever holidays come, ” she said with mixed feelings.

In fact, though the level of distress is different from person to person, it is common for most people to feel homesickness during holidays as we apart from the people who are nearest and dearest to us and the settings where we developed a sense of belongingness.

Artist Martha Mengistu, residing in Sydney, Australia, is the other one who shared her feelings in this regard. As to her, when holidays are approaching, all minor things that she did not give them due attention while she was at home started to magnify themselves and let her desire to get back hometown straightaway. Even things that were pleasing in normal days turned out to be her source of discontent.

“When holiday arrives, we try to celebrate it in a manner similar to home. We cook *Doro Wat*, bake bread, prepare coffee and brew



nonalcoholic homemade drinks that are similar to *Tella*. We also invite guests; we eat, drink and chat. However, no matter how hard we try, we cannot bring holiday's vibe similar to that of home,” she said.

The varieties of music aired around holiday times and special programs presented through various channels at home, including YouTube, have the power to influence one's mood and bring back past experiences and memories, especially on those who are residing abroad, she remarked.

According to her, because almost all of the responsibilities of holiday's preparations fall on them, and their attachment along with their family is too strong, the memory stamped on their mind is bigger. And when moved to other countries, it can trigger a stronger sense of longing and homesickness.

A Social Psychologist residing in London Redeit Feleke agrees with this idea. According to her, humans as social beings, enjoy social gatherings and spending special events with friends and families. No matter

what their economic or social status is, people tend to enjoy time with families, friends, and neighbors who share the same cultural backgrounds. Owing to this, it is natural to experience some type of stressful feelings for the reason they separated from the people and places they were once familiar with.

Particularly, when a holiday is just around the corner, most of them can feel loneliness and stress as holidays bring back old memories. More Ethiopians residing abroad are seen experiencing holiday blues during the holiday season. This is because of the fact that the cultural and religious practices that come along with holidays may take them back to their good and bad reminiscences.

What is more, during holidays, women's roles are wide-ranging. From shopping to cleaning, from cooking to serving, they exert utmost energy to make holidays more enjoyable and unforgettable. This in return can have greater pressure to cause one to recall past experiences, feel a strong sense of longing; and even the other way round, to be missed by their family members, she

added.

“In my opinion, women, due to their delicate nature, their strong bond with their family and the reason they took the lion's share in the preparation of holiday, the extent of their homesickness is higher,” she pronounced.

Mental Health Science Researcher, Eng. Wondimu Negash on his part said that feeling a strong sense of longing or nostalgia for one's birthplace, family, or home country during significant times, such as holidays, is a common human experience. This emotional attachment and longing are often attributed to several psychological and neuroscientific factors, for instance cultural significance, social connection, emotional experiences, psychological discomfort, among others.

According to the researcher, many cultural traditions and celebrations are deeply rooted in specific geographic regions or home countries. These traditions often carry a strong emotional attachment; and being away from them during significant times can evoke feelings of homesickness and nostalgia.

“Holidays and special occasions often involve spending time with family and friends. When people are separated from their loved ones, they may experience feelings of loneliness and a desire to be with those they care about most,” he reiterated.

As to him, our brains are wired to form associations between certain places, people, or objects and the emotions we experience in their presence. Over time, our birthplace, family, and home country become strongly associated with positive emotions, making us yearn for them when we are separated. Equally, psychological comfort or familiar environments and people provide a sense of psychological comfort and security. Being away from these sources of familiarity can lead to discomfort and a desire to return to the known and predictable. However, it should be known that the intensity of these emotions can vary greatly from person to person. Some individuals may experience a more profound emotional attachment than others, influenced by their personal experiences, upbringing, and cultural background.

Underscoring that neuroscience research continues to explore the neural underpinnings of attachment, nostalgia, and the impact of cultural and familial ties on emotional experiences Eng. Wondimu said that studies have shown that brain regions like the hippocampus, which is involved in memory consolidation, and the amygdala, associated with emotional processing, play roles in these processes.

However, the field is complex and emotions are multifaceted, so there is ongoing research to deepen the understanding of these phenomena, he concluded.

Society

Revitalizing Diasporas' participation in national dev't



BY TEWODROS KASSA

According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report, the Diaspora community investments are providing additional capital, technology, norms, and networks that are critical for economic and human development in different countries. In doing so, the diaspora-investment enterprises create more employment in rural and underserved areas and may thus have important effects that go beyond the direct comparison of created jobs.

Further than this, they can have an above-average employment rate of women and youths. Thus, giving due attention to Diaspora investments is important to facilitate potential job opportunities and supporting national development endeavors.

Accordingly, Diaspora investments are seen as an untapped source of capital and particular development effects are expected. The Diaspora investment may have a better impact on development in localities of origin than other forms of foreign capital. In addition, the Diaspora community investments at the homeland are indeed the low-hanging fruit for a country in the effort to obtain Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

The Ethiopian Diasporas community has been actively participating in supporting the efforts of nation building through various ways. The Diasporas contributed a lot in mobilizing financial support towards the accomplishments of different mega projects including the construction of the Abay Hydroelectric Dam. The Diaspora community also plays a commendable role through knowledge transfer and supporting the needy through in-kind support.

Recently, the Ethiopian Diaspora Association (EDA) disclosed that a number of activities have been carried out to create a platform in a bid to enhance the Ethiopian Diasporas community participation and mobilize to a common goal on given national issues.

Association Vice president Demeke Negasa told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the newly elected leadership of the Diaspora Association represents all citizens and serves the community without any discrimination.

The movement of the Diaspora community to have a common position and stop standing for opposing views on national issues is becoming effective.

As to Demeke, many people from the taskforce called Washington DC came to an agreement during the so far discussions. Following this, the Head of the Taskforce is being elected as a Diaspora Association Representative at the Washington branch due to the current leadership. This taskforce provided the Federal Police Hospital with computers thereby shifting from opposing views to assistance providers.

He pointed out that the Ethiopian Diaspora Association is the guarantor of the nation and it is rather free from politics, religion and ethnic matters. In this regard, the representatives of the association have been discussing with the Ethiopian embassies found in various countries and encourage the Diaspora community to serve the common interests of their homeland.

He further stated that the Association has been carrying out various activities to correct the participation of the Diaspora community over the past one year. Accordingly, the Diaspora community gave over 7 billion Birr to the construction of the Dam a year ago.

However, the participation of the Diaspora community had diminished due to the presence of irresponsible leaders last year. To improve the Diaspora community participation in the national interest, the newly elected leader was appointed through the democratic system last year.



Moreover the association announced the issuing of a 'Tombola Le Hagere' lottery for Diasporas aimed at boosting the Diaspora community contribution in the homeland. Such initiatives are ideal mechanisms to create easiest platforms for the Diaspora community to participate in the national calls and expand Diaspora's involvement in home country's development.

The first-of-its-kind fund-raising scheme dubbed Tombola le Hagerie would be launched in the coming September to galvanize the Diaspora's involvement in home country's development, the Ethiopian Diaspora Association (EDA) said.

In a press briefing given recently, EDA members stated that consolidated efforts have been carried out to enhance the participation of the Diaspora in national development goals.

Speaking at the occasion, EDA Chairperson Kidist Leulseged said that the association has given due attention to support Ethiopian Diasporas to play a key role in supporting development back in their home country. The lottery is one of the components that the association plans to enable Ethiopians living abroad to contribute to Ethiopia's progress.

In addition, the association would launch the "Diaspora Village" project in a bid to allow Ethiopian Diasporas acquire houses with affordable prices. The association is now negotiating with relevant government

bodies to obtain the plot needed for house construction, the chairperson added.

The association also revealed its plan to finance local development projects by the revenues that would be secured from lottery sales. "The number of Ethiopian Diaspora is expected to hit 10 million. Undoubtedly, this large number of Diaspora has the ability to supplement developmental and societal issues back home. We have also planned to execute more projects that could maintain the Diaspora's positive contribution for Ethiopia."

"We have many members who are in the highest academic and professional positions in their countries of residence. Accordingly, we want to capitalize this immense knowledge and expertise by inviting them to teach Ethiopian university students and have prepared several experience sharing events to this end," he added.

Mentioning the enormous amount of foreign currency the country secured from remittance, he indicated that the association has given prime attention to encourage Ethiopians living abroad to send back money through legal channels and avoid illegal brokers.

In sum, efforts are underway to mobilize the Diaspora community to actively engage in national calls and contribute to the motherland. More importantly, the Diaspora community is also expected to show more participation in building social facilities such as schools and health institutions through various fundraising systems by doing so to address the challenges of the rural community.

Meanwhile, last Thursday, September 7, 2023, management board members of the Ethiopian Diaspora Association attended the inauguration ceremony of the Ethiopian Federal Police Heroes' Center, constructed by the Ethiopian Federal Police for heroes in leadership and members of the police and injured while they were on duty. At the ceremony, the Ethiopian Diaspora Agency received a recognition certificate and a trophy for computers donation provided by the association to the Federal Police from Diasporas residing in North America.