



# The Ethiopian Herald

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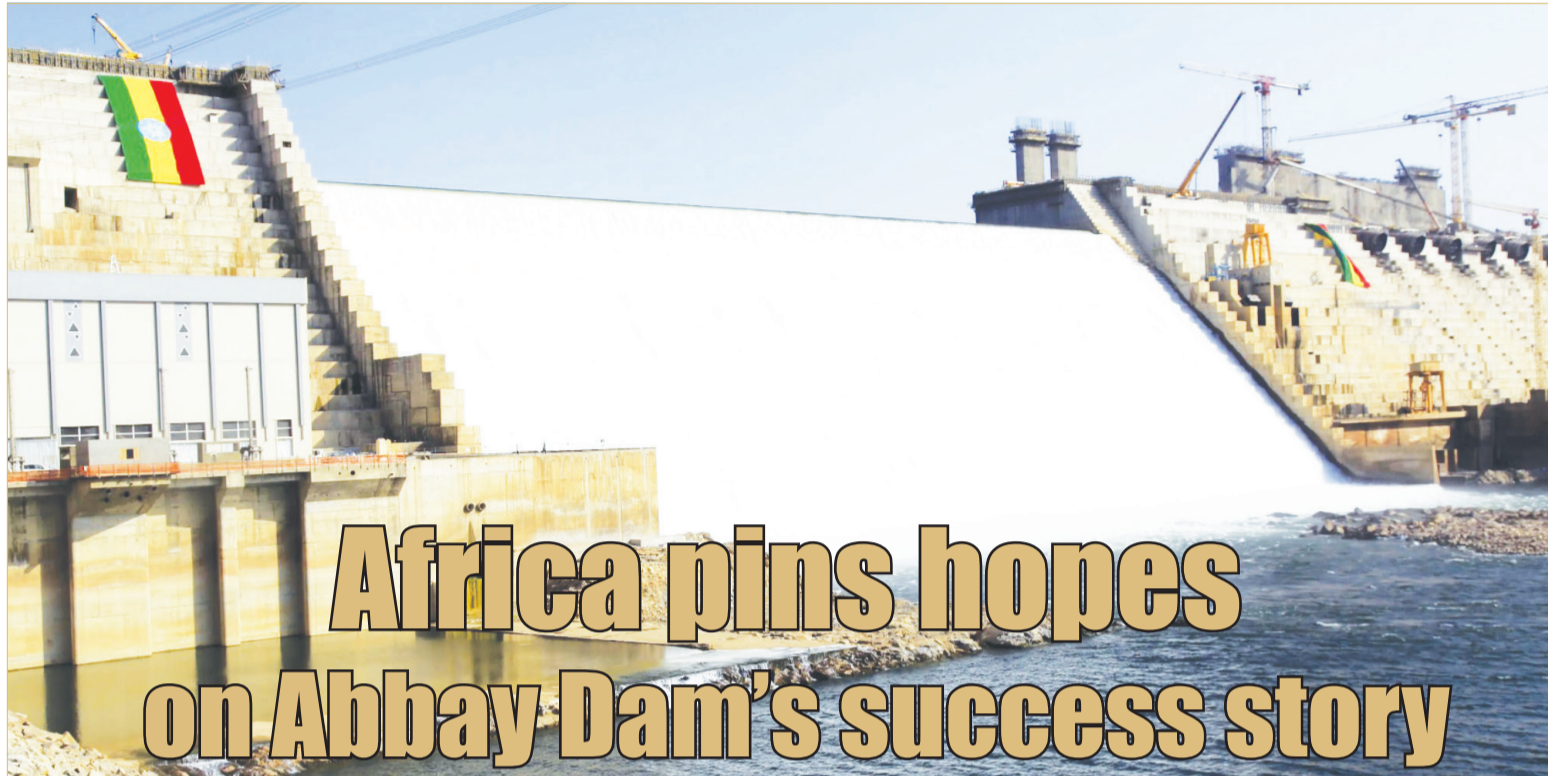
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## Africa pins hopes on Abbay Dam's success story

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA** - The successful completion of the fourth round filling of the Abbay Dam is an injection of development opportunity to African countries, a noted political analyst said.

Speaking at a webinar discussion held to celebrate the fourth round filling of Ethiopia's iconic hydro-dam, Political Economy Analyst Lawrence Freeman stated that the dam's filling is the second good news heard after BRICS accession. Last August, the BRICS leaders extended an invitation to two additional African countries namely

Ethiopia and Egypt to become members of the economic bloc.

As supposed to join BRICS in January 2024, the two countries, along with South Africa would increase the continent's representation in the bloc to three. "Similarly, we are seeing

See *Africa pins ...* page 3

## Addis opens first elderly care center

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** - Addis Ababa Mayor Adanech Abiebie inaugurated yesterday a first-of-its-kind elderly care center at Lemi Kura Sub City of the metropolis, which was constructed in an outlay of 634- million Birr.

Speaking at the ceremony, Mayor Adanech noted that the center, which was financed by Sunshine Philanthropy Foundation, is unique in its kind and equipped with modern facilities and amenities. The center was erected on 30,000 square meters of land that the city

See *Addis opens...* page 3



Seleshi Girma, State Minister of Tourism

## Ethiopia expects WTD to stimulate tourism industry: Ministry

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

**ADDIS ABABA** - World Tourism Day (WTD) celebration plays a significant role in supporting the efforts that have been geared towards motivating the tourism

See *Ethiopia expects ...* page 3

## G-77 Summit to open avenue for elevated Ethiopia-Cuba ties

### ● Ethiopia to reopen Embassy in Havana

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

**ADDIS ABABA** - Cuban Ambassador expects Ethiopia's participation in the upcoming Group 77 plus China Summit in Havana that will also take his country's relations with Ethiopia to a new level.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Ambassador Jorge Lefebre Nicolas noted that the two-day Summit is expected to be held under the theme "Current Development Challenges: Role of Science, Technology and Innovation."

In the Summit, Cuba would hand over its presidency to other member states and the participants are expected to further strengthen partnership via deliberating and

passing important decisions. "We want to maintain the group and we are going to discuss important issues including conflicts and the global economic crisis."

According to him, the presence of China in this group gives some economic power as the latter is one of the most important investors in the Global South. G-77+ China is a very significant platform for negotiating with the United Nations (UN) and the main objective of the group is to support each other and put forth their position in the UN.

Mentioning the two countries strong partnership in many fields including the development of innovation and technology, the Ambassador expressed optimism that



Ambassador Jorge Lefebre Nicolas

See *G-77 Summit ...* page 3

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# News



## University expands access to community services

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA** - Arba Minch University has increased access to community services that have been categorized as Research and Center of Excellence by the Ministry of Education.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, University President Damtew Darza (PhD) said that the University is conducting researches and implementing community based projects in the areas of engineering, health, agriculture and mining.

The University undertakes viable researches and projects on water resources to provide the community with safe water, he said.

“The water pipeline installations of Sawula town and Peacock hydro-electric dam, for example, are being constructed by our experts,” he mentioned.

The University is also constructing solar power stations in collaboration with Gamo and Gofa zones. “High Schools and Health Centers are most beneficial of the solar energy we have constructed so far,” Damtew noted.

Currently, it is recruiting medical specialists and other health professionals to be assigned to the University’s referral hospital that will be operational after a few months, according to the President.

“The human resource structure has also been completed. Medical equipment including nursing care beds have been made ready,” Damtew expressed.

He further said the medical college of the University has been working to support the Arba Minch Hospital by deploying some of its health experts.

On the other hand, he said, the Agricultural Science College of the University is extending agricultural support to apple and *Enset* producers.

Moreover, according to the President, the University is supporting community members who need legal assistance as it has provided about 1000 justice seeking people with free legal services, he stated.

## Ethio telecom eases business to young entrepreneurs

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

**ADDIS ABABA** - Ethiopian young entrepreneurs are striving to start new businesses using the opportunity that Ethio telecom facilitated them through handing over mobile shops on September 8th, 2023 - as part of the national Benevolence Day.

The beneficiaries are now working on creating, expanding and starting better businesses in the areas they will be engaged.

Among these beneficiaries is a young handicap man goes by the name Wubshet Chala. He passed through thick and thin to get such opportunities created by Ethio Telecom. “I was idle for the last four months since I haven’t had a job. Besides, I felt demoralized in such an idle period,” he said.

Wubshet is excited to have the chance to make better business at center of city. “My two friends and I have planned to start mobile center in the newly shop granted by Ethio telecom recently,” he expressed.

Another beneficiary of the opportunity, Tigist Temesgen, on her part said that she can’t wait any longer to begin business and be effective through utilizing the chance created by the company.

Tigist and her friends have planned to run a clothing business and develop it into a higher level since they have an ample experience in the past.

“We will make a better business and try to create job for others at the same time expanding the business since we have a chance to get loans without collateral,” she said.

The beneficiaries believed that apart from securing jobs, they will also earn extra income by working as a legal agent of telebirr - a mobile money service developed and was launched by Ethio telecom.

It was last week that the state-owned operator Ethio telecom has given over 8.6 million Birr worth 30 portable shops to 90 youths organized themselves in association in Kirkos Sub- City aimed at creating jobs and devising as source of income for the youth.



## Agreement made to provide civil servants with Digital ID

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

**ADDIS ABABA** - The Ethiopian Federal Civil Service Commission has partnered to launch Digital ID as the primary identification for civil servants.

The agreement was signed by National Digital Identity Program, Technical Director Eyob Alemu and Civil Service Commission, Information Management Executive Bruk Yirga (PhD)

Technical Director of National Digital ID Program, Eyob Alemu said that the agreement will enable all government employees to have a digital identity. It aims at reshaping the integration of technology and the civil service system by ushering in the Digital ID as the primary identification credential for civil servants. It also solves the problems seen in employment and helps overcome the malpractice observed in the sector.

The Federal Civil Service Commission and the National ID Program have jointly stressed that this initiative is a monumental step in Ethiopia’s digital transformation. Beyond technological assimilation, it represents the dedication to sculpting a more secure, transparent, and proficient system tailored for the civil servants at national level.

During the agreement, Civil Service



Commission, Information Management Executive Biruk Yirga (PhD) said that one of the important features of this collaboration is the provision of top-tier identification mechanism of civil servants through the Digital ID. The Digital ID will be a vital enabler of the civil service commission towards an improved human resource management across the nation.

As of the inception of such a streamlined system, it can effortlessly oversee various processes, dramatically curtailing bureaucratic inefficiencies and creating a less permeable environment for corruption. Such a direct and transparent approach resonates with the commission’s principle of good governance and emphasizes its

unwavering commitment to upholding the highest standards of integrity, Biruk said.

To solidify the benefit of this digital transformation, the Federal Civil Services Commission has decreed that all federal civil servants based in Addis Ababa undergo registration for their Digital ID at their assigned nearest bank or NIDP’s registration centers. All relevant details surrounding this registration drive will be duly communicated to their respective institutions. This registration will gradually expand to all other states in Ethiopia. This endeavor not only streamlines the identification process but also elevates the authenticity and credibility of the credentials held by its civil servants, said Eyob.

# News

## ERCS, UK seal 413 mln. Birr grant agreement

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

**ADDIS ABABA** - The Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS) and the United Kingdom (UK) signed a 413 million Birr grant agreement yesterday with a view to alleviating the challenges of vulnerable communities.

During the partnership ceremony, ERCS Board President Abera Tolla said that this partnership would usher in a significant difference in embracing humanity and reach the livelihoods of many individuals via creating ripples of positive change that help resonate into the future.

He further remarked that for the ERCS, this support fortifies their resolve to place humanity at the forefront and is also a testament to making a meaningful impact on the livelihoods.

Stating the current humanitarian crisis, he said that the status and magnitude of the crisis has been beyond the capacity to timely respond. Hence, this partnership would mark a significant milestone and reflects the shared commitment of both nations to improve the lives of the most vulnerable segments of the society in Ethiopia.

“The UK has through this partnership located a generous 5.9 million pounds; approximately 413 million Birr to the Association, out of this, some 3.4 million pounds will be given to the ERCS to provide in-country humanitarian assistance in health and WASH,” he remarked.



Moreover, the British Red Cross and the Netherlands Red Cross have been offering their technical expertise and operational support to deliver this ambitious program, he said adding that not only is this support a financial assistance but it would also help make a real difference in the lives of the needy.

Stating the accessibility of the British Red Cross (BRC) worldwide, the British Ambassador to Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to AU Ambassador Darren Welch on his part said that this first partnership split between ERCS and British Red Cross and ten vehicles would help reach the existing strange problem to the

people in need and get swift humanitarian response.

He said: “The UK funding coupled with ERCS’ impressive reach and BRC’s technical assistance is set to make real impact on the lives of Ethiopia’s most vulnerable communities.”

The Ethiopian Crisis 2 Resilience program has been engaging in various facets of hand humanitarian work, disaster management and response to health services health and water, sanitation, and hygiene restoring and community-based initiatives since its inception, in 1935, it was learnt.

## Ethiopia expects ...

industry, disclosed Ministry of Tourism.

The country has finalized preparations to host World Tourism Day in South West Ethiopia. Hosting the Day helps the State to introduce its abundant historical and natural attractive sites, State Minister of Tourism, Seleshi Girma said.

Since September is eventful month and considered as month of tourism due to its attractive seasonal shift, it would bring about a great opportunity to celebrate the World Tourism Day thereby enhance the tourism sector, Seleshi stated in an interview with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA).

It is in September that the country celebrate New Year, Meskel (the finding of the true cross) and Irreechaa (thanks giving festival), which helps to significantly increase tourism flow, as to him.

The State Minister indicated that the latter two festivities are more of religious and street holidays so that increase the flow of local tourists.

In addition, the coming months are also expected to attract more tourists due to the Christmas and Epiphany celebrations, he added.

Seleshi expressed that the government has been undertaking several activities to stimulate the tourism industry.

Several rehabilitation activities are also being undertaken by identifying tourism sites that had been affected by the conflict in the northern part of Ethiopia, he noted.

Accordingly, tourist attractions located in Tigray mainly in Axum and Shire, as well as Afar state have been made open to tourists.

“Tourism is not the responsibility of a sole institution, it requires an integrated effort. Thus, everyone should take responsibility in building nation’s image. It is important to be the ambassador for the country in introducing and sustaining the values of the country”, he underscored.

## Africa pins hopes

that the Abbay Dam’s filling as a big injection to get new power, new energy that Africa desperately needs. These two events together are great development opportunities for the continent.”

According to him, East Africa in particular badly needs the operation of Ethiopia’s mega dam as the region has no sufficient energy for hospitals, schools and industries. As nothing can be functioned without energy, the dam’s filling is a major step forward not only to Ethiopia, but the region too.

There is a new dynamic in Africa and each country should compromise subjective factors to attain development in the ever-changing global order. “African countries

have to spur their resources to energy and infrastructure development so that they can tap the continent’s industrialization opportunities.”

Freeman further noted that poverty and hunger in Africa can also be reduced if all countries meaningfully invest in development projects and critical infrastructure.

Apart from Ethiopia, the Abbay Dam has the potential to expand irrigation farming into the rest of the continent and enhance agricultural product and productivity. “We may now only conceive Ethiopia but Africa would become a net food exporter using energy and irrigation.”

Mentioning the massive electricity penetration that is required to agricultural mechanization, the analyst indicated the dam’s filling is instrumental to Ethiopia’s plan to reduce the surplus labor force in the sector.

For researcher on Nile River utilization Mekdelawit Deribie, the dam’s water preservation project could help downstream countries to have constant water inflow throughout the year.

The dam filling is a natural phenomenon that takes place each year in the rainy season and it should not be a source of dispute and confusion, the expert emphasized.

## G-77 Summit...

Demeke’s visit would give additional impetus in the cooperation. Two months ago, Ethiopia and Cuba started capacity building cooperation that would help the latter to utilize its immense water resources.

At the sidelines of the Summit, Ethiopia’s Embassy would be reopened in Havana.

The Group of 77 at the United Nations is a coalition of 134 developing countries designed to promote members’ collective economic interests and create enhanced joint negotiating capacity in the UN, it was learned.

administration offered free of lease.

According to her, the administration paid prime attention to make Addis a livable place and has out various human-centered projects including children and elderly care centers as well as running the school feeding among others. These activities aim to ease the rampant cost of living in the capital.

Adanech extended special admiration to the Sunshine Investment Group for its contribution to various development programs in Addis Ababa in particular and across the nation in general. “Addressing societal challenges should not be left to the government and private businesses are expected to uphold their efforts to discharge corporate social responsibility.”

Sunshine Investment Group Founder Samuel Tafese said for his part that the center has a capacity to accommodate 750 senior citizens who

## Addis opens first elderly...



have been in difficult situations upon becoming fully operational. For the time being, the center is accepting 80 elderly people.

Samuel further highlighted that his company has been supporting Ethiopia’s development activities and has a big portfolio in the real estate sector and roads construction. The company has also been hugely engaged in philanthropy and has built schools for economically challenged families in Amhara, Oromia, Tigray, and other states.

“The school that we have built at the cost of 54 million Birr will be inaugurated soon at Debre Berhan town of the Amhara State and it is expected to enroll over 400 students.”

The elderly care center is equipped with modern facilities for various income-generation activities including craft workshop and urban farming as well as medical unit and cafeteria among others, it was learned.

# Opinion

## National dialogue paves the way for mutual understanding, peaceful coexistence

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

In its modern history since the dawn of the 20th century, successive governments governed the country by imposing their own wills. The first modern and secular constitution was introduced by imperial government in 1930. The then members of the elite class such as Girmachew Teklehawaryat, Negadras Tesema Eshete and others played pivotal role in preparing the constitutional documents. They adopted some ideas from the Japan constitution which modernized that country and enacted by the Meiji dynasty.

However, in that time, almost 99 % of the population was illiterate and had no awareness of the constitution and constitutionalism. In addition, it was perceived that the King was an elect of God if the public faced grievance due to maladministration, it was considered that happened as punishment by God. The public never dared to question the King but expected the creator to relieve them from the burden, no matter what.

Though the constitution expatiated about the separation of power among the three branches of the government, the king had an absolute power both to appoint and relegate Ministers and other higher officials. There had been various hot debates on the improvement of the land holding system in the parliament but the members of the senate who were selected and appointed by the emperor, intending to protect their own economic interests, rejected the land holding reform agenda.

Land was owned by a few landlords and families of the emperor and the majority of the population was tenants with no land ownership rights and greatly suffered from exploitation and oppression of the feudal system.

The legislative body enacted laws but only it was endorsed by the consent of the emperor. In the later decades of the emperor's ruling, the expansion of Education enabled the creation of an elite group who were aware of their rights and duties; hence, began to raise questions about the nation's future and political reform.

But as an old monarchial system with absolute power, instead of giving response to the questions raised by elite groups, it ignored the matter, and even took repressive measures against the elite group. In 1955, when Eritrea was federated with Ethiopia with its own better constitution prepared by the United Nations, the monarchial government was forced to amend and improve the first constitution but similar to the previous one, it gave absolute power to the monarchy.

Getting desperate by the unwillingness of the monarchial system to reform the political system five years later, the two brothers, General Mengistu and Girmame Neway, staged military coup which ultimately failed to topple the monarchial rule.

Girmame Neway, which took his Master's Degree from the USA criticized the feudal land holding system and at various occasions explained the fact that it is impossible to attain economic progress unless a land tenure system of a country sees improvement.

The military coup and the emperor's response to it clearly indicated that the then system was reluctant to carry out reforms. At some point, it also highlighted as peaceful and legal means to improve the system was impractical. And the public's grievances remained unaddressed. Not only that but it also laid bare as the constitution was only meant to serve the ruling class to oppress the majority of the population. Further, it showed that the emperor had no vision to the betterment of the nation and the people's fate. Thirteen years later, in 1974, the Ethiopian revolution broke out. In its initial phase, the revolution was purely a civilian movement which used civil disobedience as means of struggle to overthrow the monarchial system but months later, the military council established by few officers derailed the peaceful revolution in to one of the greatest violence. The old monarchial system met its demise by unconstitutional means. The military council known as Derg arrested and killed the imperial regime's officials without due process of law.

The military government led by Col. Mengistu Hailemariam ruled the country without constitution for 13 years. The public aspiration for the establishment of the political system based on the rule of law had then evaporated.

Arbitrarily arrest and extrajudicial killing became the order of the day. Though the Derg allowed some socialist political parties to function legally during its formative years, it eventually swept them. Some of the party members were arrested and killed. For the first time in the nation's history, due to fear of extrajudicial arrest and killing, hundreds of thousands, particularly the elite class, migrated to Europe and USA. Losing the well qualified personnel in such number was a great damage for the poor country, Ethiopia.

Rights such as freedom of expression, the rights to association and to elect and to be elected were denied. The nation got immersed in a protracted civil war that broke out in the northern part of the country.

The war incurred the nation heavy cost in terms of finance, human life and robbed off the youths' hopes. Only in the final years of its tenure, the Derg conducted a pseudo election with very small public participation and using a partial election board. The only outcome of the election was changing Mengistu's position from the chairman of the Derg to the President of the Ethiopian People's Democratic Republic and the military council to civil cabinet without changing the personnel.

Similar to the imperial regime, the fate of the Derg was doomed to fail. It then got removed by the unconstitutional means. The winner of the civil war, EPRDF, assumed power in 1991. Right after assuming of power, it arrested the former government officials of Derg. In its earlier time, it established provisional government and later it established transitional government which lasted for four years.

The EPRDF, regime for the first time, allowed opposition parties to operate in the country. It also introduced laws which legalized free press. Besides, it showed tolerance to pluralistic views but as time passed, the rights granted by the law were diminished.

In the last hundred years, though there were changes of governments, there was no political continuity. The aspiration of the public for peace and stability for many decades was never realized.

There was huge gap between what the people paid to attain democracy and the achievement obtained in this regard. The political and economic woe the nation faced today is the legacy of the past misdeeds of governments and other non-state actors and healing the wound committed in the past needs national dialogue.

Cognizant of these facts the current government showed commitment to conducting dialogue among the various sections of the society. To this end, it established the National Dialogue Commission, allocated budget, provided offices and appointed officials.

Recently, the National Dialogue Chief Commissioner, Professor Mesfin Araya briefed members of the House of People's Representatives and other stakeholders about the commission's activities since its establishment. In his performance report, the chief commissioner said that several key activities, including the setting up of secretariat of the commission have already been carried out with a view to commencing the national dialogue.

The commission is working to launch national dialogue in the coming months after completing its first and second phases of activities as well as starting the

third phase.

According to the chief commissioner, the commission has designed procedural systems to help identify participants, recruit moderators and facilitators of the dialogue as well as organize training, gather and develop discussion agenda. Several discussions have been conducted on the procedural systems with the pertinent stakeholders, including regional and city administrations, it was learned.

Efforts have been made to give equal participation and voice to the cross section of the society during the course of the dialogue, he stated.

All segments of the society, including farmers, pastoralists, experts, women, youth, religious institutions, political parties, teachers, people with disabilities, members of the diaspora, among others, will be given equal opportunity in the course of the dialogue.

Concerning the issue, Tagesse Chafu, Speaker of the House of People's Representatives, lauding the ongoing activities of the commission to realize the agenda, said that the national dialogue is one of the priorities of the government. The speaker stressed the need to strengthen media and communication activities regarding the works of the commission in order to reach the general public across the nation.

It is to be recalled that the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission was established by the House of People's Representatives on the 29th of December 2021.

As it is understood, Ethiopians have their own culture and traditions which have been in use as tools to realize reconciliation and resolve conflicts. But after the advent of modern administrations and legal systems, the traditional methods of resolving conflicts have dwindled. Using violence to do away with problems never helped the country over the decades. The only avenue to peace, equality and development is dialogue.

Other African, Latin American and Asian countries' experience indicates that political problems which lasted for generations can be resolved only through dialogue and embarking on the path to peace and stability would be possible. And to that extent, looking the matters optimistically is essential.

In this regard, religious leaders, senior citizens, the media and the like should exert their energy for the successful accomplishment of the national dialogue.

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

# Editorial

## Abbay Dam: Source of electricity, fraternity

The construction of the Abbay Dam has reached 92 % while the filling of water has been carried out successfully for the 4th time so far. This means the dam can be said nearing its completion without causing any of the feared problems that are repeatedly raised by lower riparian countries. It has proven false all these claims.

Abbay is the longest river in the world and stands second in water volume. If properly used, it can help develop agriculture and fishing, and generate electricity. However, Ethiopia has been suffering from poverty despite having this globally abundant resource at its disposal.

The country has suffered from both food insecurity as well as energy poverty. Indeed harnessing such a big water body requires a huge sum of capital. It is difficult to afford for a country like Ethiopia. Ethiopia has managed to get financial and technical support to exploit other rivers. Yet it was not able to secure funding for it due to the trans-boundary nature of the river.

Therefore it has to coordinate the efforts of people to contribute money as it is a matter of life and death. While doing this, the government has been doing all the necessary diplomatic works to explain the true purpose of the river and that Ethiopia intends only to use the river water without causing damage to the water share or interests of the downstream countries.

However, more than securing the huge amount of money for the building of the dam, handing the complaints of some of the lower riparian states was more challenging. Ethiopia has never concealed its interest in using the river. Furthermore, it has been engaged in constant discussion with the lower riparian states repeatedly since the launching of the construction of the dam.

Through signing the Declaration of Principles agreement (DoP) Ethiopia has reaffirmed its stance to wisely utilize the resources for mutual benefit and with due responsibility to the concerns of the downstream countries. It has also engaged in continuous dialogue with the countries with the mediatory role of the AU and friendly countries.

A couple of years ago, the dam started generating power with two of its turbines using the already collected water in the reservoir. By now, it is planned to generate power using an additional five of the turbines which means a lot for the country.

In addition to adding supply to the energy needs of the country, it is also an indicator that both the construction of the dam as well as the filling of water in it have been executed with due care and responsibility so that all the fears expressed before cannot hold water.

Thanks to the wise leadership of the government and the unwavering commitment of the people, the highly anticipated and iconic dam has attained more than 90 % of its construction level which can be considered almost complete. As it has withered away the fear of creating disaster, it will surely serve in the future as a source of cooperation among all the riparian.

So far, Ethiopia has been exporting some amount of electric power to neighboring countries, like Sudan and Djibouti during the evening. This has contributed somehow to fostering the relations between Ethiopia and the neighboring countries in addition to addressing the energy needs of the neighboring countries.

Hence the dam will join the other hydropower plants in the country to promote the supply of clean and affordable energy as well as to cement the existing strong diplomatic and economic ties between Ethiopia and neighboring countries.

# Opinion

## Making the education drive anew

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Needless to state, quality human resource would magnetize development and progress across the nation. Ethiopia is more than any time else determined to come up with sustainable growth and development in all aspects. So the saying goes, "Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today," Ethiopia has started expanding education bedecked with the required quality with a view to producing competent, responsible, productive and ethical posterity in the years to come. The pivotal scheme recently introduced to ensure quality education in the county has been bearing fruits.

Since the loopholes for cheating are firmly shut, as learnt from the various steps taken regarding the national exam in various universities, students ranging from lower grades have started studying hard to evaluate themselves at what level they are.

The education sector in the New Year will receive a fresh quality control and would trek on the journey to register new remarkable outcomes as the nation has shown firm commitment in due course of ensuring quality education.

Such a viable step would undoubtedly help the nation come up with the required human resource who can take over the nation with its future, condemn corruption and maladministration as well as irresponsible shrug. Yes, education in the country will gain a good start this year since a lot has been done to do so.

Ethiopia has thus capitalized on a broad philosophy and fundamental principles amplifying that education should involve close partnership between pupils and educators. Such an appealing move also advocates education should be personalized to meet students' desire with curricular design and course structure.

Education and development are closely related endeavors, indeed! This is the main reason why Ethiopia always says education is the key instrument in fueling development. The world is being changed at a steady pace in all aspects through intensifying quality education. The change is quite conspicuous in the area of education particularly in information and communication albeit educational modification has never been easy.

The fast and globalized world we are in entails new knowledge, skills, attitudes and values from the part of the individual. It is therefore with this objective in view that the curriculum, which is a reflection of a given country's education system, must be responsive to these changing conditions.

As this great nation—Ethiopia—has achieved remarkable progress in terms of access, equity and relevance, vigorous efforts have also been made to improve the quality of education in the country.

The quality framework covers pre-primary, primary, general secondary and preparatory levels of education, and even the tertiary levels ones.

Quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all are central to ensuring a full and productive life to all individuals and to the realization of sustainable development in the country. True, as quality education is hampered by the lack of trained teachers and adequate school facilities, it is quite indispensable to much more capitalize on all these decisive inputs. Achieving this goal will require intensified efforts targeting at vulnerable population segments.

It is because of education, that human beings have been able to explore the vastness and versatile nature of the universe and the mystery of its existence in particles.

In the year to come in Ethiopia it is inevitable that the focus of educational interventions will increasingly focus on improving the quality of education instead of merely expanding access to help it make a difference in the sector.

It is also crucial to remember that effective education is not simply about getting children into school colleges and universities; it's rather about ensuring their engagement, understanding, and truly learning once they are there. As we shift our focus from access to quality, there is a dire need for a multi-dimensional approach that addresses the various obstacles in relation to all facilities required for well-organized educational process.

Progress in access to education has not been matched by improvements in the quality of teaching if the country doesn't do something now revolving around quality to reap positive returns tomorrow.

No doubt, quality education is the combination of skills, knowledge and attitudes, which all pupils need for their personal development, and to be active and integrated citizens in society. These skills are also the key that allows them to continue learning and to achieve more advanced competences. Hence, quality education has to incorporate and recognize good command of medium of instruction, communication, mathematics, knowledge of the physical world, social and citizenship, cultural and artistic, learning to learn, digital and personal autonomy and initiative.

Education is said to be a better safeguard of liberty than a standing army, indeed! Yes, when it is coupled with quality it could be the most effective means of achieving sustainable development and change. Here, everyone has a role to play in improving the quality of education to meet the ambitions of the nation.

In sum, as education peculiarly quality one is a critical component which extensively contributes to the human development indices, and is one of the most important ways to attain what a nation and its citizens aspire, the sector must be given due emphasis.

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



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# Business & Economy

## Ensuring food security in East Africa: a focus on *Enset* Crop

BY LAKACHEW ATINAFU

*Enset ventricosum* is the edible species of the separate genus of the banana family, thus named 'false banana', but the *Enset* fruit is not edible. Variation within the species to altitude, soil and climate has allowed widespread cultivation in the mid-to highlands of western Arsi-Bale, the Southern Peoples Nations Nationalities Regional State (SPNNRS), and western Oromia including West Shewa, Jima, Ilubabor and Welega.

Three *Enset* derived foods are popular but the most common is Kocho. Although contribution to nutrition is considerable, a formula for its inclusion in the food balances needs to be determined. Anyone who travels in the *Enset* growing area would conclude that *Enset* is a major part of the food production/consumption system of the area but quantification of its complex production mechanism has eluded statistical measurement.

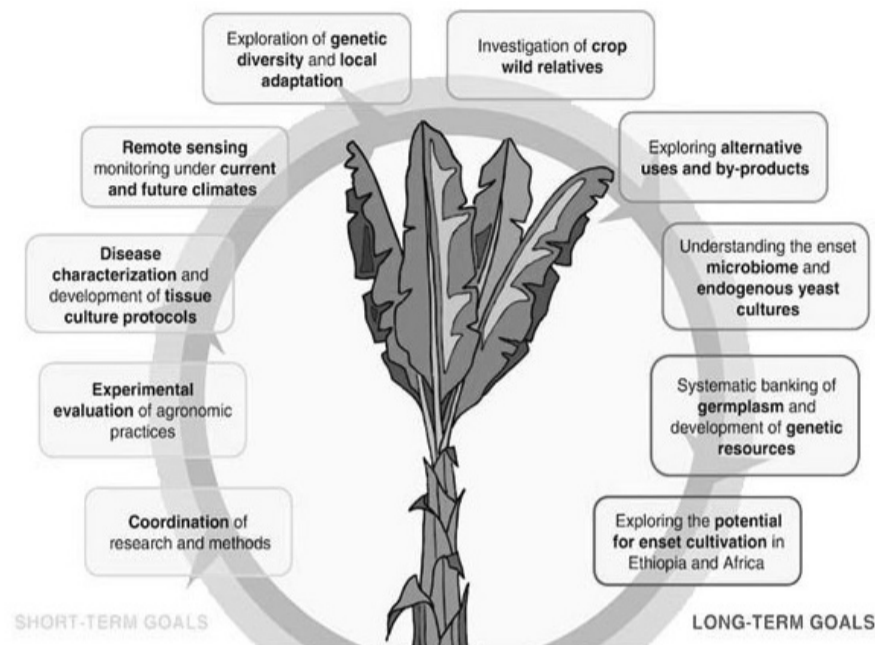
Kenyan scholars are advocating for the promotion of food security measures in East Africa, with a particular emphasis on the cultivation and utilization of the *Enset* crop. This approach involves the use of drought-resistant cultivars, changes in sowing time, cultivation of new crops, efficient use of fertilizers, and improved agronomic water use efficiency. These strategies are crucial for adapting crop plants to reduce the risks associated with climate change.

To address the issue of food security, Kenyan scholars emphasize the need to scale up the production of *Enset* in East Africa. Sylvester Anami, a senior researcher at the Institute of Agricultural Technology, Biotechnology Research Institute, Jomo Kenyatta University, expressed admiration for the technological advancements made by Arba Minch University in Ethiopia, which have enhanced the production and value addition of *Enset*-based food products. Anami believes that these technologies will contribute to Ethiopia's self-sufficiency in food production and recommends their adoption in other East African countries.

Denis Mutiso, Program Director of the International Organization for Girl-Child network in Kenya, stressed that Africa is currently facing the challenges of climate change. Given *Enset's* ability to withstand harsh climatic conditions, Mutiso suggests expanding its cultivation in East Africa to ensure food security.

He emphasizes the importance of making *Enset* available across the continent, as its nutritional content is particularly beneficial for women and children. Mutiso also acknowledges the role of climate-resilient food plants in addressing Africa's food self-sufficiency challenges.

Kenyan agricultural scholars consider Ethiopia's *Enset* crop as a viable solution to mitigate the impact of drought in East Africa. *Enset*, which serves as a staple food for over 20 million Ethiopians, is well-suited to cope with harsh climates.



Therefore, the scholars advocate for its widespread cultivation across East African countries.

They propose collaborative efforts in *Enset* growing and promotion, highlighting the potential benefits it can bring to the region. In line with this, Kenya and Ethiopia are establishing a partnership for agricultural development. Jomo Kenyatta University and Arba Minch University have agreed to conduct joint research on *Enset*, aimed at introducing and advancing its production in Kenya. Through technology sharing and innovation, the goal is to facilitate the preparation and utilization of *Enset*-based food products.

Denis Mutiso, further views, *Enset* as the next super food that should be introduced throughout the continent. Given the challenges posed by climate change, Mutiso emphasizes the importance of harnessing the benefits of *Enset* to overcome hardships.

With its drought resilience and environmentally friendly nature, *Enset* has the potential to contribute to food security in Africa. Mutiso recommends promoting production mechanisms for *Enset* across the continent.

Adisu Fikadu, Senior Biotechnology Researcher at Arba Minch University highlights the potential of the *Enset* crop to alleviate hunger in drought-affected areas. Its ability to grow in arid regions makes it a strategic crop for food security programs. Fikadu recommends that the government actively support *Enset* cultivation and facilitate its export to other countries.

In Ethiopia, two major approaches for achieving food security are enhancing agricultural productivity and asset building/Productive Safety net Program (PSNP). These approaches aim to address the root causes of food insecurity and the associated social and economic challenges in the country.

Many scholars agree that addressing global food security and environmental protection is a pressing concern, particularly in light of climate change uncertainties. Climate change is predicted to have adverse effects on

plant physiology, soil fertility, microbial diversity, and ultimately food production. Ensuring global food security and safety requires intensive research efforts across the entire food chain, starting with crop production and nutritional quality. Ongoing efforts focus on improving crop yields, enhancing stress tolerance traits, understanding root/soil interactions, and improving soil properties.

To boost productivity, production, and foreign currency earnings for Ethiopia and other agrarian nations in Africa, several strategies can be implemented, according to documents.

One is investment in agricultural infrastructure. Improving agricultural infrastructure is crucial for enhancing productivity. This includes investments in irrigation systems, rural roads, storage facilities, and processing units. These infrastructure improvements enable farmers to access markets more efficiently, reduce post-harvest losses, and enhance overall productivity.

Since finance is the core engine to carry out any production, adequate access to finance is essential for farmers to invest in modern inputs, equipment, and technologies. Governments and financial institutions, thus, should develop targeted financial services, such as agricultural loans and microfinance, tailored to the needs of small-scale farmers. Additionally, promoting financial literacy programs can help farmers effectively manage their finances and make informed investment decisions, it is underlined.

Utilization of technology is the order of the day in this ever changing global situation. In this regard, encouraging the adoption of modern agricultural technologies can significantly improve productivity. This includes promoting the use of high-yielding crop varieties, precision farming techniques, efficient irrigation methods, mechanization, and digital farming technologies. Providing training and extension services to farmers on the proper use of these technologies is crucial for their successful adoption.

Increased investment in agricultural research and development is essential for developing improved crop

varieties, resilient farming practices, and sustainable agricultural solutions. Collaborative research efforts between universities, research institutions, and farmers can lead to the development of innovative and context-specific solutions for enhancing agricultural productivity and food security.

Climate change adaptation is also essential to a crop to be productive. Given the challenges posed by climate change, it is crucial to prioritize climate change adaptation strategies in agriculture. This includes developing and promoting climate-resilient crop varieties, implementing climate-smart agricultural practices, and improving water management techniques. Investing in climate information services and early warning systems can also help farmers make informed decisions and mitigate the impacts of climate change on agricultural productivity.

Increasing productivity and production without strengthened market linkages would be wastage. Thus, developing robust market linkages and value chains is essential for farmers to access markets, receive fair price for their produce, and enhance their income.

Governments can support the establishment of market infrastructure, facilitate market information systems, and promote farmer cooperatives and producer organizations. Additionally, promoting agro-processing and value addition activities can help create additional income-generating opportunities for farmers.

According to the research documents, capacity building and knowledge transfer is a strategy that enables the farmers to augment their production. Enhancing their capacity through training programs, workshops, and knowledge-sharing platforms is crucial for improving agricultural practices and productivity. Farmer field schools, extension services, and farmer-to-farmer knowledge exchange programs can facilitate the transfer of best practices and innovative techniques among farmers.

All the strategies, to be effective, must be supported by enabling policy. Governments should develop and implement supportive policies and regulations that prioritize agricultural development, incentivize investment in the sector, and protect the interests of small-scale farmers. This includes ensuring access to land, water, and inputs, as well as implementing measures to mitigate market risks and price fluctuations.

By implementing these strategies, countries in East Africa, including Kenya and Ethiopia, can make significant progress in ensuring food security, improving agricultural productivity, and mitigating the impacts of climate change on agriculture. The cultivation and promotion of crops like *Enset* can play a vital role in achieving these goals, given their resilience to harsh climates and nutritional benefits, according to experts in agronomy.

# Art & Culture

## The 'Arada Boys', Subculture, Artistic Creativity

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

A subculture is defined as “an identifiable subgroup within a society or group of people, especially one characterized by beliefs or interests at variance with those of the larger group.” A subculture is a modern phenomenon that arises within the established public culture either as an artistic expression or a faith movement with its own rituals and practices carried out by its members.

A good example of subculture is the reggae movement in Jamaica that has emerged as a movement for peace as expressed in songs and lyrics with distinctive styles and ways of artistic expression as well as distinctive rituals and ways of life. The Rastafarian movement has its own cultural expression that has grown out of Jamaican mainstream culture and spread around the world. “Members of a subculture are typically defined by their shared identity, shared meaning, stratification, resistance and marginalization.”

Another example of subculture is cultural groups that represent the marginalized and minority groups. Subcultures may not be permanent features of public culture or a crystallized into permanent movements. They are often transitional, fads and lifestyles that can come and go when change fashions. The hippies, hipsters, hip hop, punks and others; These movements often originate in one country or one part of the world and spread to other parts as their influence and followers grow.

Subcultures can also disappear when other subculture groups emerge with other and more attractive expressions of subculture. Subculture is not confined to arts or music. There is also what they call academic subculture often initiated by college students whose main interest or objective is academic excellence and alternative ideas to the traditional or mainstream academic traditions.

The Amharic term *Arada* denotes at least three things. It is at the same time the name of an old market, known as *Arada Gebeya*, which was located right where the Addis Ababa City Administration building stands. *Arada* also means a smart and fast guy spending time around the *Arada* area which is located somewhere within the perimeters of Piazza. *Ye'Arada Lij* therefore means a boy or a young man who was born and grew in the *Arada* area and is generally known for his courage, compassion, friendliness, playfulness, love for women and for booze often indulging in drunken brawls in bars and alehouses.

The term or name *Arada*, it seems, is changing its meaning with changing times and circumstances and assumes sometimes positive qualities and at other times, negative traits of character. *Ye'Arada Lijoch* can be translated as The Children of *Arada* or as natives of *Arada*. I had once penned a collection of short stories entitled



“*Ye'Arada Lijoch*”. It is my maiden work and featured a day in the life of a homeless boy around Piazza.

The story is about a bunch of homeless children who roam around Piazza, which is often mixed up with *Arada*, and among them was an urchin called Belihu, who joins the children the moment he left his home due to the cruelty of his step mother. She often beat him and forced him to go hungry, and spends time with his homeless and hopeless peers. Luckily, Belihu landed a job as a helper aboard a *wiyiyit* or an old taxi and when night fell he went to look for a place to spend the cold night with the help of his friend who took him near the St. George church where they managed to find a corner.

Belihu's first night in Piazza was terrible as he witnessed the cruelty of another tough guy who is considered the “ruler of Piazza” by his merciless treatment of homeless children and collected cents and dimes from them through coercion and beatings and terrorized the urchins who willingly or unwillingly submit to his brutality. Behailu is a victim of such miserable circumstance and one night as he witnessed the tough guy beat another child who refused to pay his “due” after working the whole day.

It was too much for Belihu to witness such an act of ferocity and he rebelled by defending the poor chap who fell on the ground under the first strike from the so-called tough guy. Belihu was not only courageous enough to defend his friend but also took him to another corner in Piazza after leaving the place where the tough guy was the virtual ruler. In this way, he came to the rescue of his poor friend while at the same time serving as a good example of to the rest of the boys who had no guts to protest against their powerful companion.

The setting for the short story was *Arada* or Piazza and the idea for the story came to me one day as I travelled aboard one of the now extinct *wiyiyit* taxis where the helper was a little boy of seven or eight. I was struck by his short height and his childish face that radiated the purity of his innocent

soul and the courage he mustered to face the adversity of city life at such a young age. When I sat down to write the story, what came to my mind was his face, his smile, and the courageous comportment in general.

Let me stop at the story here and return to the other *Arada Lijoch*, or the boys of *Arada*, the grown up young men who were the feared and venerated residents and actors of the backstreets of Piazza. By the way, there is a song sung by the hip-hop artist Lij Michael, in his last album that features the nature of the modern *Arada Lijoch* whom he described as lovable, kind and always flashy in their best costumes. The song is a eulogy to the old *Arada Lijoch* who are not around now and are forgotten by most surviving members of the old generation.

By the way, *Ye'Arada Lijoch* may be taken as members of a cultural or music subculture nowadays merged with hip-hop and other music styles. The *Arada* culture started with young boys who are now in their sixties and seventies. They are often nostalgic of their lives and times they consider glorious and were filled with adventures, music, dance and oftentimes beer hall brawls and sometimes gunfights. Fights often started over claims of possession of the prettiest girls around what is traditionally known as the *Wube Bereha* or “the Desert” neighborhoods north of what are now Piazza.

Subcultures are often associated with youth cultures. There was at one time in Ethiopian musical subculture what is known as the ‘The Twist’ generation or the generation of young people of the 1960s who were fond of Twist dancing, Elvis Priestly-style. This style spread like bushfire around the world and caught the imagination of young people everywhere. One of the most prominent Ethiopian singers of that generation was of course Alemayehu Eshete who imitated not only Elvis's mannerisms on and off stage but also his hair style and dance improvisations. Even after the end of the

Twist era, Alemayehu continued to reflect the dominant style of the era in his songs and dances.

Now, we are in the midst of the Hip-Hop and Dance Hall era. “Hip Hop is a genre of music most often characterized by a strong, rhythmic beat and a rapping voice track.” It all started back in the 1970s in New York among Black and Latino youths. There are many hip-hop groups in Africa and Ethiopia who have mastered not only the melodies and mannerism, the costumes and hairstyles as well as the lyrics of the hip hop era. Their songs and rhythms consist of short verses, often one word stanzas mixed with techno and pop melodies.

It is interesting to note that most of the pop music culture around the world in general and Africa in particular came not from within the continent but were imported from abroad and particularly from the West and the US. This point was recently given emphasis by an African writer on culture when he said that, “For a long time, most of the inspiration for contemporary Nigerian pop culture references in fashion, film or music has been derived from Western sources, often the US.”

Although the source of Hip Hop is the West, African musicians are trying to blend it with Afro-music, jazz and pop as well as traditional beats that resemble the new wave. One can see this trend among Hip Hop groups not only in Nigeria but also in southern Ethiopia where traditional dance and beats are similar to the original Hip Hop music. There are also various Hip hop groups in other parts of Ethiopia that try to adapt the new wave to their traditional music with impressive success. What Ethiopian Hip hop musicians so far lack is the ability and boldness to carry their creativity to the international music arena where they could enjoy fame and fortune. The new *Arada* boys of Piazza would indeed be more than happy to see them move and shake the international music scene with local adaptations

# Science & Technology

## 5G network: a New Year gift for Addis Ababa

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

The fifth generation network (5G) characterized by the fastest speed (up to 10 Gbs), low latency (less than 1 ms) and massive communication capability (up to 1 Million connections within 1 km<sup>2</sup>), can unlock blazing fast speeds in more places, real-time responses and massive connectivity, according to Ethio Telecom. With such high speeds, superior reliability and negligible latency, 5G will impact industries such as mission critical services requiring real time decisions, manufacturing plants, self-driving vehicles and other smart technologies making them all a reality.

The successor of the 4G network, 5G networks can provide data speeds at least 20 times faster than 4G and are seen as important for emerging technologies enabling communication and interconnectivity between smart devices. The 5G network is developing at fastest rate in the world and telecom operators are expanding the services for their customers.

Continuing its efforts in enhancing and modernizing telecom services in Ethiopia, the giant telecom operator in Ethiopia-Ethio Telecom, announced the launching of pre-commercial trial 5G network services on May 2022 in Addis Ababa and then in Adama City for the first time. After over a year successful pre-commercial deployment of the 5G service in Addis Ababa, on the eve of the 2016 Ethiopian New Year, Ethio Telecom officially switched the 5G commercial network in Addis Ababa on September 09/2023.

Introduced in 2019, 5G network have over 1.3 billion connections in 110 countries globally. Now, 254 different telecom operators are providing the 5G network in the 110 markets for their customers. At the end of 2023, the 5G connections are expected to grow from 1.3 billion to 1.5 billion subscribers. And by 2025, the 5G connections are projected to grow to 2.5 billion users and the number of countries deploying 5G network to increase in to 140.

In Africa, 16 different countries deploy 5G networks and currently a total of more than 11.2 million customers are utilizing 5G network in Africa. This number is projected to grow into 115 million by the end of 2026, according to Ethio Telecom CEO. Considering the development of latest technologies, as part of its endeavors to expand telecom services and realizing the government's digital transformation in Ethiopia, Ethio Telecom has continued advancing its services. As part of its efforts, the company has officially launched the 5G commercial network in Addis Ababa. It is also expected to expand to different parts of the country in the coming months.

Ethio Telecom expands 3G and 4G networks throughout the nation effectively. For the past three years, Ethio Telecom extensively worked on expanding 4G network into different parts of the country. Currently, according to Ethio Telecom CEO Frehiwot, from the total internet customers



in Ethiopia 66 % internet users are using the 4G network while the rest 34 % are utilizing the 3G network. Frehiwot added that, Ethio Telecom has continued expanding the 4G network to reach all areas.

Parallel to expanding the 4G network, Ethio Telecom switched the 5G mobile network service in Addis Ababa to upgrade the network in the capital to the latest one after over a year pilot program. During the pilot 5G launching program on May 2022, Ethio Telecom Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Frehiwot Tamru said that after the end of the pilot program, the service will first be available in the capital Addis Ababa, before eventually spreading to other parts of the country.

Keeping the promise, Ethio Telecom switched the 5G commercial connections in 145 sites of Addis Ababa this week. The 5G service is expected to provide customers with best-in-class solutions to improve their experience and allow enterprise customers to boost productivity and enhance operational efficiency.

During the official 5G commercial network launching ceremony, Frehiwot said that Ethio Telecom is upgrading services and deploying latest technologies to provide advanced services for its customers. "Today, we officially launched the 5G commercial service in 145 different sites in Addis Ababa as a gift of the Ethiopian New Year and we

will work to expand the service to other parts of Ethiopia next," she stated.

According to the CEO, this groundbreaking technology promises to transform business activities in the capital. Launching and expanding 5G network is among the annual business plan of the telecom company. As to her, the demand of data and internet service is growing in Addis Ababa and in other parts of the country and considering the growing demand; Ethio Telecom is striving to meet the customers demand with continuous upgrading of its services and by introducing latest technological advancements. "The launching of the 5G commercial network is among Ethio Telecom's initiatives to meet its customer's demands in the capital and the advanced network would facilitate business activities," she added.

As to the CEO, the 5G service has tremendous significance for smart home, health services, hospital management, smart agriculture, smart education, smart industry/mining, manufacturing, smart airports and travel services, smart transportation and logistics, digital shopping, broadcasting and entertainment, as well as cloud-based 5G gaming.

To utilize the 5G services, 5G-supporting mobile devices and handsets are required. Customers have to own 5G-supporting devices to utilize the 5G network. According to Frehiwot in addition to providing the 5G

services, the company is working to expand the 5G-supporting mobile devices. Ethio Telecom is selling mobile devices which support 5G networks.

The CEO stated that currently from the total 81.8 million connected devices, 42 % is smart phones. And at this time, according to the connected devices, over 630 thousand customers have mobile devices that can afford 5G network.

The launch is part of the telcom's new annual business plan that aims to expand networks amid growing demand for data and internet services. The number of its data and internet subscribers is projected to grow by 21% to 41.17 million this year from 33.9 million.

"In our annual business plan, we announced to expand 4G network and to launch 5G networks. As part of our plan and keeping our promise, we launched the 5G network in 145 sites in the capital in the new year eve," Frehiwot stated. "Now those customers with 5G network enable devices can use the 5G network in the capital," she stated.

According to the company, the data traffic is growing at high rate. Currently, the daily average data traffic is 2,087 GB. "The daily average data traffic five years ago was only 53 GB and currently it exceeds 2,000 GB per day. Anyone can simply understand the growth," she stated.

According to the company, Ethio Telecom is working to realize the country's digital transformation agenda by deploying the latest technologies and providing digital solutions to positively impact the day-to-day life and business activities of its customers across Ethiopia.

Ethio Telecom has been a pioneer telecom service provider in Africa, serving the nation since 1894. The company has continuously introduced the latest technologies to support Ethiopia's socio-economic development, playing an enabling role in the overall progress of the nation. With its "beyond connectivity" motto, the company is playing a vital role in accelerating the realization of Digital Ethiopia 2025 strategy and the new network would facilitate online services and introduce smart activities.



# Society

## Joint efforts to improve immunization, ensure societal health



BY TEWODROS KASSA

Currently, our planet is striving to maintain a healthy and productive generation. A society that is insulated from health disorders is a showcase of healthiness. In this regard, more activities have also been done in eradicating and eliminating several vaccination-preventable diseases worldwide. For instance, the wiping out of Measles and Polio from several countries of the world is considered as the fruit of cooperation and involvement of all actors in the sector.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), immunization is a global health and development success story, saving millions of lives every year. Vaccines reduce risks of getting a disease by working with your body's natural defenses to build protection. When you get a vaccine, your immune system responds.

While observing the activities regarding the aforementioned issue, which is currently visible on the ground, perhaps rural areas seek further attention to address limitations of vaccination access to children. Making available the required amount of medicines is the formidable task to enhance children's access to vaccination upon their age intervals. Setting a strategy and a platform targeting effective, healthier and a bright future generation are vital to support the country's future development and prosperity. Stressing the healthiness of the successor generation, on which a productive human power relies on, is fundamental.

In this piece this writer tries to cast light on the performance of the nation along the line of maintaining equity and quality immunization.

Recently, the Ministry of Health in collaboration with pertinent stakeholders held a sensitization workshop with national and regional public relations and communication directors and media professionals in Adama City on vaccination.

The workshop aspires to ensure equity and quality of immunization in Ethiopia through creating active public mobilization and awareness creation. In this case, the role of communication experts and media professionals is said crucial to sensitize the public about the importance of vaccination for children and adults during a period of pandemic.

At the workshop, the trainers also



underscored the significant contributions of civil society organizations to address vaccination challenges to deliver the service across the country.

On the occasion, communication experts, journalists, and all the participants have raised the current performances of the nation regarding mobilizing the public and increasing the active involvement of the media towards deepening the awareness on the significance of immunization, among the public. They as well raised issues regarding promoting strategies focusing on equity and quality of services of immunization.

Opening the conference that is organized to promote the national immunization status of the country, Ministry of Health Vaccination Expert Tseganesh Gedilu said that active public mobilization is fundamental to ensure societal health.

As to her, any misleading information regarding vaccination should be curbed through creating effective communication among public relations experts, communicators, and the media professionals.

Ethiopia has realized the millennium health sector goals of minimizing infant mortality ahead of time, three years earlier. The Ministry's effective and vast work targeting the health sector transformation enables the achievement of providing quality and equity services countrywide.

Thus, the active involvement of all sector actors and stakeholders in the provision of health facilities, supporting and availing

immunization centers nationwide is pivotal. The active mobilization of health sector practitioners on protection centered immunization enhances the realization of effective health service in the country. To thwart the bottlenecks of widening immunization to the pastorals and vast rural areas, civil service organizations play a dominant role.

She emphasized that effective public mobilization and awareness creation activities are tangible to the nation's immunization coverage and convincing the society to be forthcoming in taking the responsibility and letting children get vaccinated on-time. Thus the Ministry has set a platform of rippling more children immunization programs countrywide.

Moreover, having similar panel discussions and research in the area plays an indispensable role to strengthen pertinent stakeholders' coordination and participation. The deepening of civil societies, private organizations and the public awareness towards letting children get vaccinated on time is also essential and plays a significant role in meeting the Ministry's vision.

Expanded Program on Immunization Expert with the Ministry Alemayehu Ayele (MD) on his part said that immunization is one of the most cost effective and successful child survival interventions. As per the World Health Organization (WHO) recent estimate, in the world, over half a million children die every year as a result of vaccine preventable

diseases.

The need to further vaccinations is important to ensure societal health along with ensuring every child's right to grow healthy. Immunization is the safest and least expensive method to avoid child death.

He emphasized that in spite of the all-rounded efforts made in improving immunization coverage and utilization there exists a disparity of immunization coverage related to geographic, wealth, education and other markers. The reason for such disparities may not be mainly because of the absence of health facilities. It results from cold chain related problems at health facility levels, such as availing of vaccines on time and in the right quantity that especially affects vaccine service uptake in difficult and hard-reach areas.

According to him, doing consecutive discussions on averting problems in the health sector and consolidating stakeholders' ties and coordination should be made a point to further outreach equity and quality immunization services nationwide.

In sum, increasing immunization coverage, addressing bottlenecks of the sector as well as availing medicines highly rests upon the commitment of the government, pertinent sector's actors and every individual. Working to ensure equity and quality immunization programs in the country would play a tangible role in rendering the nation's future rosy.

# International

## Death toll in Libya's Derna flooding could reach 20,000: Mayor

BY STAFF REPORTER

Thousands remain missing as rescuers struggle to get to Derna, the city hardest hit by floods unleashed on Sunday by Storm Daniel.

Residents of the devastated Libyan city of Derna desperately searched for missing relatives as rescue workers appealed for more body bags, after a catastrophic flood that killed thousands of people and swept many out to sea.

Swathes of the Mediterranean city were obliterated by a torrent of water unleashed by a powerful storm that swept down a usually dry riverbed on Sunday night, bursting dams above the city. Multistorey buildings collapsed with sleeping families inside.

Spokesperson of the interior ministry Lieutenant Tarek al-Kharraz on Wednesday told the AFP news agency that 3,840 deaths had been recorded in the Mediterranean city so far, including 3,190 who have already been buried. Among them were at least 400 foreigners, mostly from Sudan and Egypt.

Meanwhile, Hichem Abu Chkiouat, minister of civil aviation in the administration that runs eastern Libya, told the Reuters news agency more than 5,300 dead had been counted so far, and



said the number was likely to increase significantly and might even double.

Derna Mayor Abdulmenam al-Ghaithi told Saudi-owned Al Arabiya television the estimated number of deaths in the city could reach between 18,000 to 20,000 based on the number of districts destroyed by the flood.

Derna resident Mahmud Abdulkarim told journalist Moutaz Ali in Tripoli that he lost his mother and brother, after failing to evacuate in time from their first floor apartment following the collapse of a dam.

“She refused to leave her place ... didn't imagine the situation would be horrible and told him [Abdulkarim] it was just ordinary rains,” Ali reported, from an event organised for Tripoli's Derwani community.

According to Abdulkarim, when his mother and brother did decide to finally leave their apartment, they were swept away by the floodwaters once they reached the streets to flee.

Mabrooka Elmesmary, a journalist who managed to leave Derna on Tuesday, describes the city as a “disaster on a

massive scale”. “There is no water, no electricity, no petrol,” she told Al Jazeera. “The city is flattened.”

Apartment buildings with families inside have been swept away, she said. “There's a wave of displacement as people are trying to flee Derna but many are stuck because a lot of the roads are blocked or gone,” Elmesmary said, adding that some families have been taking shelter in schools.

Officials have put the number of missing at 10,000. The UN aid agency OCHA said the figure was at least 5,000.

The beach was littered with clothes, toys, furniture, shoes and other possessions swept out of homes by the torrent.

Streets were covered in deep mud and strewn with uprooted trees and hundreds of wrecked cars, many flipped on their sides or onto their roofs. One car was wedged on the second-floor balcony of a gutted building.

The devastation is clear from high points above Derna, where the densely populated city centre, built along a seasonal riverbed, was now a wide, flat crescent of earth with stretches of muddy water gleaming in the sun. Buildings were swept away.

Source: Al Jazeera

## Rescue efforts

Rescue teams have arrived from Egypt, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey and Qatar, said Derna mayor al-Ghaithi

“We actually need teams specialised in recovering bodies,” he said. “I fear that the city will be infected with an epidemic due to the large number of bodies under the rubble and in the water.”

Al Jazeera's Charles Stratford, reporting from Benghazi, said a field hospital was part of Qatar's contribution to this “seemingly growing international aid effort to Libya”.

“This is one of three Qatari military ... cargo planes expected to arrive in Benghazi today,” Stratford said.

The aid also includes “medical equipment, medicine, food, tents”, Stratford said. “All the aid here is going to be taken to Derna as quickly as possible.”

Moreover, Al Jazeera's Malik Traina, reporting from Tripoli, said there has been an outpouring of support from Libyans themselves from across the country.

“We haven't seen this type of unity for many years here in the country,” Traina said.

Large government convoys with equipment from western Libya have arrived in the east, he said. Volunteer convoys with

assistance are also heading towards the east.

“We're seeing also now volunteers and people giving whatever they can – water, food, medicine, whatever supplies they can.”

Rescue operations are complicated by deep political fractures in the country of seven million people that has lacked a strong central government and been at war on and off since a NATO-backed uprising that toppled Muammar Gaddafi in 2011.

An internationally recognised Government of National Unity (GNU) is based in Tripoli, in the west, while a parallel administration operates in the east, including Derna.

Criticism of local authorities in eastern Libya, including those in Derna, has emerged with some saying that locals were not informed that they had to evacuate before the torrent of water flowed through the city.

However, al-Ghaithi insisted on Wednesday that residents were informed ahead of the flooding.

“We undertook all the precautions and informed the ... the inhabitants of the areas the disaster could have taken place, we created an emergency room .. the security forces carried out their duty,” he said.

Source: Al Jazeera

## Climate finance: nearly US\$3 trillion needed to implement Africa's NDCs

BY STAFF REPORTER

**NAIROBI (KENYA)** -- This figure was discussed at the eleventh Conference on Climate Change and African Development (CCDA11) during a session on climate finance, moderated by Harsen Nyambe of the African Union Commission.

There is a substantial financial gap in climate finance in Africa. Yet climate disasters cost between 5 and 15% of GDP each year. According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the implementation of African Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) requires nearly \$3 trillion, including about \$2.5 trillion between 2020 and 2030.

With the support of developed countries and the private sector, Africa must take ownership and define its energy transition to meet these challenges. The continent has abundant renewable energy resources, potential for green

hydrogen production, essential minerals for renewable energy products, and natural capital for carbon sequestration.

Jean-Paul Adam, at the Office of the Special Advisor on Africa (OSSA) said ECA has worked closely with member states to support the green transition through efforts such as the Sustainable Debt Coalition (SDC), and emerging debt-for-nature swaps to close the financial gap. Africa's rich marine ecosystem is also at the centre of concerns, with initiatives such as the Great Blue Wall, which promotes sustainability and job creation.

Stephen Funso of the African Development Bank (AfDB) stressed that adaptation is a priority for Africa. The AfDB's approach is to increase resources for priority sectors. According to Stephen Funso, the Bank will continue to strengthen and mobilize resources in each country. To finance resilience, innovative solutions are the key priority to engage the private sector.

Source: UNECA



# This is Ethiopia

## 'Toki Bea': New Year festival of the Dawuro people

Photo: Dawuro Zone Government Communication Affairs Department



BY LEULSEGED WORKU

Ethiopia is one of the diverse nations where various cultural and religious activities are entertained widely.

Especially, when the three months rainy season concludes and the new sunny bright season approaches, various cultural and religious festivals take place to mark the end of the old year, welcome the New Year and express gratitude to the Creature for all the blessings He has given.

Among the many festivals carried out openly on the streets, 'Hoya Hoya, Sheday/Ashenda/Ashendiye/Solel, Shinoye and Gobe as well as Irreechaa festivals are some.

Impressively, all these festivals are marked between the months of August and September following the coming of the New Year and marked with a sense of solidarity, togetherness and unity.

'Toki Bea', the New Year festival of the Dawuro people, is also celebrated with various activities in Tarcha Town, Dawuro Zone of the South West Ethiopia Peoples' State.

Speaking on the occasion, State's Deputy Chief Administrator Eng. Negash Wagesho (PhD) said that 'Toki Bea', is a manifestation of unity and solidarity, Dawuro Zone Government Communication Affairs Department reported.

According to him, Ethiopia is a country endowed with various heritages which

make the country one of the desired tourist destinations. These unique cultures and heritages that have significant social and cultural benefits are also found in various areas of the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' State; and in return, the endowments are the blessings and the beauty of the State.

The "Toki Bea" festival is one in this regard. The festival is celebrated every year among the people of Dawuro to say goodbye to the old year and welcome the New Year, to express best wish that the coming year to be a year of wealth and peace and happiness.

Stating that the "Toki Bea" festival is a manifestation of unity, solidarity, inclusiveness, peace and reconciliation, Eng. Negash indicated that various works are being done to promote the untapped culture and history of the State following the initiative of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. The young generation should preserve and promote the culture passed down from the ancestors in different ways.

"This festival is a manifestation of togetherness. It is a platform to bring profound reconciliation, to share what we have, and extend blessings, the New Year to be a year of abundance for all from people to animals by undertaking symbolic activities."

As he stated, preserving and developing the culture that our ancestors delivered to us; and to pass it on to the next generation should be the responsibility of all of us.

Thus, the Deputy Chief Administrator urged the cooperation and togetherness witnessed

in 'Toki Bea' festival to be repeated in other development endeavors too.

The Zone's Chief Administrator, Desta Demisse, on his part said that the Dawuro Zone is blessed with various natural and man-made unexploited resources. Among these assets, the 'Toki Bea', festival, which is the manifestation of Dawuro people's identity, is the one.

During 'Toki Bea' festival, elders resolve differences in a peaceful way and reconcile, Mothers, by joining hands, preserve and hand over to the generation. And this generation is duty bound to keep and deliver these ages old values to the next generation.

"We have to preserve and pass on to the next generation the culture that our forefathers and mothers handed over to us," State's Culture, Tourism and Sport Bureau Head Fantahun Belate said on his part.

According to him, through preserving and developing culture and heritages, it is possible to accelerate Ethiopia's socioeconomic growth; thus, he urged all stakeholders to play a role in preserving and promoting culture.

"Toki Bea" is a festival that is celebrated among the community of Dawuro at the end of the rainy season, Kiremt and the beginning of the sunny, bright season, Bega, since ancient times, in the month of Pagumen. It is a time that the community celebrates it by counting each and every blessing God has given them; it is also a time that they extend their gratitude to Him for letting them to stay in peace. They pray that the incoming year may bring peace,

love, and prosperity from family to the whole country.

Being with this same spirit, the festival will be celebrated warmly and with great joy by lighting torches, eating and drinking together, and chatting happily.

In his research paper presented at a panel discussion in relation to 'Toki Bea' festival, Expert at the Dawuro Zone's Culture, Tourism and Sport Department Tayu Genbato said that culture, not to be eroded; but to grow accordingly, needs the required care and attention.

"We have to take care of and preserve our unique and impressive cultures that are the manifestations of our identity and we inherited them from our forefathers," reiterated.

This year's 'Toki Bea' festival was celebrated in Tarcha Town on the 2nd of Pagumen, the 13th month in the Ethiopian calendar (September 7, 2023). At the event, including Deputy Chief Administrator of the State, Eng. Negash Wagesho (PhD), states' senior government officials, zonal and district structures, and invited guests took part.

The day was celebrated in all woredas and zones with various events in a manner demonstrating the culture of Dawuro people and keeping its originality. What is more, a consensus was reached to work together, promote the festival, and celebrate it warmly and make it a public and national festival, as per the Dawuro Zone Government Communication Affairs Bureau report.