



The Ethiopian Herald

Vol. LXXX No 005 16 September 2023 - Meskerem 5, 2016

Saturday

Price Birr 10.00



Abbay Dam symbol of mutual growth in HoA: MoWE

BY YOHANES JEMANEH

ADDIS ABABA – The progress in the construction of Abbay Dam could be taken as an epitome of mutual growth in the Horn of Africa (HoA), the Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE) said.

MoWE Minister Habtamu Itefa (PhD) told FBC that the dam which Ethiopia is constructing with own finance is laudable as it is meant to benefit all the stakeholders and integrate the region.

Ethiopia provides renewable energy to Sudan, Kenya and Djibouti at an affordable price and there is also a plan to export

power to South Sudan. “Our green energy sources including Abbay Dam have greatly interconnected the country with its neighbors,” he added.

Ethiopia has been working to finalize its mega dam complying with international laws in terms of equitable and reasonable utilization of cross-border rivers and without causing significant harm to the Nile downstream countries. “The

See Abbay Dam... Page 3

Qatar expresses keen interest in elevating energy cooperation with Ethiopia

• Emphasizes inter-parliamentary relations

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – Qatar considered Ethiopia among its strategic partners in Africa and desired of elevating the partnership in various frontiers notably water utilization and energy, the country’s ambassador disclosed.

Qatari Ambassador to Ethiopia Hamad Mohammed Al-Dosari along with the Ethio-Qatar Parliamentary Diplomacy Friendship Group recently visited the exhibition hosted by the Ministry of Water and Energy at the Science Museum.

Ambassador Hamad told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the two countries’ partnership will continue to be strengthened in various fields of mutual significance including

See Qatar expresses ... Page 3



Ambassador Hamad Mohammed Al-Dosari

AGI CONSTRUCTING THE FUTURE AFRICA
Abyssinia Group of Industries

Manufacturer of Rebars, Angles, Channels, Flat Bars & Round Bars. Introducing cut & bend service for rebars.

Contact & Address
Tel: +251 116 63 97 55/ 251 116 63 51 22/25
Mob.: +251 962 009 072/ +251 949 440 868
+251 911 45 9790
E-mail: sales@agiethiopia.com
4th Floor, Dabi Building, Bole road Addis Ababa Ethiopia

ቡርሶ ላሙት ጸረ ስብሰባ

©©©

20th African Fine Coffee Conference & Exhibition and 1st African Coffee Week

ETHIO 24

Authority eyeing global coffee market entry strategies

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA-The Ethiopian Tea and Coffee Authority (ECTA) said it has set meticulous strategies to penetrate the global coffee market

See Authority eyeing... Page 3

Jimma farmers' avocado export burgeons fast

News

Commission continues identifying participants for Dialogue's agenda

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA-The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) stated that it is going to identify participants for agenda setting purpose in Addis Ababa and Gambella today.

During its press briefing yesterday, ENDC Commissioner- General Prof. Mesfin Araya noted that through participant selection of the agenda setting, which will be held in two phases, from 1900-2140 representatives would be selected.

He said each (119) district will at least assign from 16-18 representatives for agenda setting process at city administration level.

The people that are said to take part in agenda setting would be selected by participants that had attended the three days training that the commission provided for representatives from various community members such as CSO, religious leaders, political parties, merchants, teachers, youth and women, drawn from 119 districts

Photo: Gebabo Gebre



recently.

Thus, these participants, with the follow up and coordination of the commission, have then selected over 10,000 representatives. The Commissioner mentioned that agenda setting participants will be selected out of

the 10,000 people.

Therefore, the selection will be held in two phases in which the first 60 districts would choose the three representative from each community members on Sept 16, 2023 while the rest districts will identify representatives

next week.

By the same token, agenda setting participant identification process will also be held in Gambella, said the Commissioner, adding that participant selection has been undertaken in 14 districts.

Some 25 mln. Ethiopians to obtain Digital ID by 2024

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA-The National ID Program disclosed that it has planned to reach out to 25 million Ethiopians for Digital ID by 2024.

National ID Program CEO Yodahe Arayaselasie told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that 25 million citizens need to have access to national digital ID by the end of the fiscal year.

The National ID Program is working in collaboration with several important sectors and secondary school students in order to make it realistic. By registering residents who have bank accounts, efforts are being made in other sectors, such as the financial industry, to implement and make the plan reachable, Yodahe said.

In addition to this, the Program is working to enable 90 million citizens to have digital ID in 2025.

The CEO also stated that three million citizens have been registered so far for the National ID Program since it allows citizens to access any service across the country.

Additionally, he stated that digital identification is essential for economic growth and would provide access to an expanding range of digital services.

The new Ethiopian Digital ID has been prepared in three formats including a hardcopy plastic card with all features of resident ID, a PDF version, as well as a



digital form on a smart phone, it was learnt.

According to Yodahe, all the three formats of the national digital ID have equal acceptance and can be verified via scanning its QR Code.

Ethiopia has 40 million smart phone using citizens thereby all of them are eligible to get the national digital ID. Furthermore, awareness rising training on the significance and application of National Digital ID, is being given to the police, courts and vital events in all regional states, he said.

Zone's tourism generates over 81 mln. Birr

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA - Culture and Tourism Department in Bale Zone of Oromia State announced that it has generated over 81 million Birr revenue from 50,000 domestic and foreign tourists over the last fiscal year.

Zonal Department Head Robeda Jarso told The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the zone has secured over 81,226,000 Birr from 50,151 domestic and foreign tourists.

Of the sum of tourists who visited the zone, 46,151 of them are domestic tourists and it was possible to garner over 69,226,000 Birr out of them. Similarly, the zone secured 12,000,000 Birr from some 4,000 foreign tourists in the above stated period, she said.

As to her, three eco-tourism sites namely Holeqmmnwaqo, Boson gomo, and Tsebellfaremie in the zone got a possession verification map through the state government last year. Besides, Huruf Soma Park gained map whilst efforts are being made to make tourist destinations that have been newly mapped by the state government.

She further stated that Bale National Park to be registered under United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as a permanent international heritage whilst it is the inspiration of the local people who are living there.

She pointed out that the government is working a lot on Sof Omar Cave, which is expected to play a crucial role in creating



Robeda Jarso

jobs and expanding the tourist sites after the well-constructed necessary infrastructure.

"Though the Bale zone has huge natural resources and the land of tourist sites, it is not gaining adequate benefit out of the sector due to natural and human factors. For instance, the existence of illegal settlement and hunting on Bale National Park is serious factor in the area," Robeda said.

She also indicated that awareness creation among the society is being carried out to preserve the tourist sites in the area.

News

Jimma farmers' avocado export burgeons fast

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- The adoption of new and productive species enables avocado farmers in the Jimma Zone of the Oromia State to get better production and increase their revenue from the export market, the zonal agriculture bureau said.

Speaking to FBC, Jimma Zone Agriculture Bureau Head Muhammad Taha Aba-Fida stated that the number of avocado farmers supplying products to foreign markets is growing fast. Accordingly, the number of avocado exporting woredas (districts) increased from last year's seven to 12 and the farming is supplemented by the newspecies which brings improvement in both volume and quality.

The volume of export also increased from 68,000kg to over 200,000 kg in the reported period.

According to him, the expansion of productive avocado species is also being carried out in collaboration with farmers. "This year, we have distributed 471,000 seedlings and plan to distribute 1.5 million



next year. So, the production is expected to grow parallel with species development."

Studies identified about 20 woredas of Jimma Zone as suitable for avocado farming.

Farmers said for their part that the new species of avocado plant that is being distributed by the bureau yields more fruit and helps them to expand the activity to avocado trees.

Abrar Aba-Temam, avocado grower, told the same media that he is exporting fruits cultivated from two- year- old avocado trees. "I have cultivated more than 1000 kg of avocado this year. Over the past years, the amount of production was so inconsiderable."

In line with the plan to diversify exportable commodities, Ethiopia has been shipping avocado since August 2020.

Abbay Dam...

accomplishment of this iconic project serves as the source of pride to Ethiopians and enables them to be respected and valued wherever they go."

The Minister further noted that the artificial lake created alongside the mega dam could serve as the source of income for a significant number of citizens who wish to be engaged in fishing and recreation services.

The government has given top priority to the project, which would be an engine to the industrialization of the country. This expansion of manufacturing industries on the other hand could attract anchor investors and alleviate the pressing challenge of youth unemployment, Habtamu remarked.

It is to be recalled that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) announced the completion of the fourth round filling of the Abay Dam on 10 September 2023.

Many researchers argued that the water behind the dam could help Nile downstream countries to have constant water flow throughout the year.

Qatar expresses...

tourism and commerce.

"This exhibition allowed us to understand the technology that Ethiopia has achieved in water utilization and electricity supply and Qatar acknowledges the former's efforts to modernize the economy and change the livelihoods of its citizens."

The Ambassador congratulated the Ethiopian government for its accomplishment of future-centered projects including the Science Museum that is said to be instrumental in acquainting the youth with modern knowledge and technology. "Qatar is ready to extend the necessary support for the Museum."

"We would like to facilitate the partnership between Qatar Museum Authority and Ethiopia's Science Museum and to employ their cooperation as a tool to further galvanize the two countries' strong ties."

Hamad added: "Projects including Science Museum are a great start for a great country and even serve as the benchmark for future development plans. I wish Ethiopia to continue to execute more huge projects like this and ascend to the group of developed countries."

In a related development, the Ambassador conferred with members of the Ethio-Qatar Parliamentary Diplomacy Friendship Group at the House of Peoples' Representatives yesterday.

The deliberation is said to focus on working together to improve the status of Ethiopian domestic workers who are residing in Qatar, and to facilitate an experience exchange programs in various fields.

It was also pointed out that the discussion will help to further strengthen the role and contribution of respective parliaments in consolidating the two countries' partnership.

In the discussion, Chairperson of the Ethio-Qatar Friendship Group Mohammed Al-Arusi stated that the relationship between the two countries is based on mutual benefit. "We will continue to strengthen the collaboration in all sectors."

On his part, Ambassador Hamad confirmed that the relationship between the two countries will continue to be strengthened in media, labor exchange, investment and other areas.

Ethio-Qatar relation has shown progress which is manifested by high-level visits by officials of the respective countries, signing of various agreements as well as a tour of cultural troupe and expansion of direct flights.

Ethiopian wins 'Best African Airline' Award

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopian Airlines, Africa's leading airline, won the 'Best African Airline' Award at Business Traveller Awards 2023, Ethiopian Airlines Group announced.

At the event held in London, extending his sincere gratitude to Ethiopian hard working work forces and its customers, Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mesfin Tasew said that they are extremely happy to have won the much contested and globally acclaimed

Business Traveller Awards as the Best African Airline.

As to the Group, the year 2023 has been very special for Ethiopian Airlines as it has won the much-coveted multiple industry awards from Business Traveller Awards to SKYTRAX World Airline Awards, to APEX Passenger Choice Awards among others.

"Ethiopian's success has been demonstrated in both passenger and cargo and logistics services in its vast network across the globe. And also, this award means a lot to us and it

is very special as it comes at a perfect time when we start the New Ethiopian Year of 2016," the CEO said.

It was learnt that the Business Travelers pick the best airlines annually and the results are authenticated by an independent auditing firm. Ethiopian triumph was announced on Wednesday 13 September 2023.

Business Traveller Awards has named Ethiopian as the Best African Airline for four years in a row, since 2020, and Kenyan and South African airways ranked second and third respectively, it was indicated.

Authority eyeing...

and put the country among the commodity's leading suppliers in the current fiscal year.

ECTA Deputy Director Shafi Oumer told the Ethiopia Press Agency (EPA) that the authority has set three strategies to penetrate the global coffee market. Accordingly, facilitating joint ventures between local and foreign investors in the coffee business, exporting roasted coffee to African countries and exploring new market destinations are measures identified by the authority.

According to him, the amount of revenue Ethiopia expected to earn from export of coffee declined last year because of price decline in the global market. To avert the decline and sell more coffee, the authority has set a minimum price and forbidden

the export of the commodity below the set price.

"We identified coffee varieties based on their quality and sold them into the ISO market and we are working to sell specialty coffee at a better price. In the year 2023, 53 percent of specialty coffee was sold in this way."

Strengthening Ethiopia's share in the existing market and exploring new destinations as well as exporting value added commodities are also areas the authority has given due consideration. "We believe our strategies would help the country to generate better income and keep competitive in the global coffee market."

Ethiopia has a variety of coffee species and its agro ecology is suitable to produce

different flavors of coffee.

Shafi further stated that the authority is also doing its level best to increase the country's tea production and enhance forex earnings from the commodity. Apart from technical and professional support to tea growers, the authority has carried out various activities to enhance the former's presence in the global market.

Encouraging local investors' involvement in the tea production is also the area that has attained significant attention.

At the same time, it was learned that Ethiopia is going to host the 20th African Fine Coffees Conference and Exhibition from February 5-9 2024 under the theme "Specialty Coffee at Origin."

Opinion

Strengthening global alliance to combat climate change

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Mitigating global warming and climate change needs global alliance and in the last three decades, Ethiopia has strived to fight the problem on the United Nations platform via cooperating with concerned countries.

Currently, climate change induced by gas emitted from the industries to the atmosphere has been the pressing issue to all countries and various sectors are affected critically and particularly the developing countries are the most victims.

When started the industrial revolution 150 years ago, the western countries utilized carbon based energy sources such as petrochemicals, coal and environmentally unfriendly elements for their industries. Such kind of production method has continued to date in a wider volume including more countries from Asia and Latin America.

The gas emitted to the environment has made the earth inconvenient for every life dwelling on it. Therefore, to save the world from catastrophic impact of climate change and global warming, countries of the world have been negotiating for the past successive decades on carbon reduction though lasting solution is not reached yet.

Due to global warming and climate change, countries are hit by wild fire, drought, and desertification, melting of snows in the North Pole and consequently engulfing of Ice lands by sea water. To the other extreme, because of fluctuating weather condition, floods damage residential houses, irrigation canals and farm lands. It is also the cause for the loss of humans' and animals' life.

Therefore, persisting in the negotiation on climate change for the reduction of carbon emission and replacing non renewable energy sources by renewable ones should be considered.

Africa, the continent with more than 1.4 billion people, mostly depends on agriculture which is its economic main stay, subsistence and climate change sensitive.

It is a common phenomenon that the sedentary farm and the livestock sectors are critically affected by drought. Farmers are forced to migrate from their locality due to failure of crop and become aid dependent. Cattle, particularly in the low land areas, are easily affected by drought because they are already suffering from shortage of forage. In case disease outbreaks due to the absence of veterinary services, they meet their death in the wilderness.

The expansion of desertification also affects agriculture which poses low yield of crops which in turn reduces food supply to the market. As a result, famine might occur.

In the rural parts of Africa, the number of landless youth is increasing due to shortage

of farm lands and such situation creates conducive environment for terrorist groups to recruit the youth for executing their devilish objectives.

On the other hand, as the climate change and global warming threaten agricultural production and productivity, the youth are coerced to migrate illegally to other countries in search of better life.

According to the recent IOM report, only within a decade, 10 thousand youth lost their life while crossing Mediterranean Sea because of the submerging of old ships. Therefore, governments should exert their efforts to mitigate climate change and reduce unemployment thereby building up moral of the youth to work in their country.

While attending the conference that focused on climate change and took place in Nairobi, Kenya recently, the United Nations Secretary General, Antonio Gutiérrez said that African countries should cooperate to make their voice loud to be heard in the international platform to mitigate the climate change effect.

He also said that African countries need not go far to draw lesson from other countries. Instead, they should learn from Ethiopia's efforts in this regard. The Ethiopia's experience in planting billions of seedlings through green legacy initiative should be taken as exemplary in mitigating climate change.

President Sahlework Zewdie, while attending the Nairobi climate meeting, expressed Ethiopia's unwavering commitment to work with fellow Africans and other global partners to achieve the priorities and the long-term objectives of making the planet comfortable for the present and future generations.

In her speech, the president further said that Africa has tried its level best to make its voice heard and to alert partners of the disastrous consequences noting that Ethiopia has been on the forefront in this fight.

"Today it is about climate, but the continent's major issues such as peace and stability require our common position. It has been difficult to explain to our people, to the youth in particular, this contradiction of which a rich continent in resource, but poor people yet," She said.

She also stressed the need for sufficient research publications on climate change to get accurate representation of Africa's special needs.

"We must emphasize on investing in African research institutions to produce regionally relevant science that can inform the different working group under the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). This endeavor requires a strong commitment from both African scientists and the international community, accompanied by the financial capacity necessary to deliver

these research publications," she said.

President Sahlework said that Ethiopia has experienced challenges in the past decades especially in the last consecutive years a persistent drought, flooding, and locust invasion where millions severely affected.

The country has been carrying out different practical policies and actual interventions as steps to contribute to removal of emission and building adaptation capacity, she added.

"Building climate-resilient green economy is one of the pillars of our 10 year national development plans. As part of our strategic consideration, we have launched the long-term low emission and climate-resilient development strategy that has been submitted to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) with the aspiration to achieve net-zero emission and building climate-resilient development by 2050,"

She recalled that the Ethiopian Green Legacy Initiative (GLI) that was launched in 2019 has succeeded in planting over 25 billion seedlings on the degraded landscapes by mobilizing the volunteers throughout the nation.

The Initiative helped for the development of more than 120,000 nurseries and created more than 180,000 jobs throughout the country. More importantly, the GLI is intended to inculcate the value of green legacy among the citizens. The greening initiative has been scaled-up into fruit-bearing perennial trees thereby directly linking it with the country's food system transformation strategy.

In terms of renewable energy production, Ethiopia is also investing on green energy projects such as hydroelectric, wind, solar and geothermal energy sectors as well as promoting modern rural cooking technologies, she added.

Ethiopia is striving to finance climate actions proactively and persistently as means of systematically addressing the economic challenges of the country.

Accordingly, the government has invested over 82 million USD from 2011 to 2019, mobilized from domestic, bilateral, multilateral sources, as well as from international climate financing institutions on climate change mitigation and adaptation projects and programs in agriculture, energy, transport, industry, forestry, urban development and health sectors.

Despite this investment, the president indicated that Ethiopia still needs to attract and mobilize a significant finance to support its climate-compatible development agenda.

"We still count on our partners to fulfill their commitments and to developing countries prepare themselves for the new challenge via setting new quantified finance goals in the coming years. We also strongly urged multilateral financial institutions to undergo

a serious reform that fits for the purpose for the needs of developing countries rather than fueling the historical debt accumulated on the shoulders of developing countries, mainly Africa."

"The future depends on decisions we make now," she said stressing the need for urgent actions in limiting global warming into 1.5 degree Celsius to avoid the worst impact. Eight years after its signature, ensuring the implementation of the Paris Agreement is not an option again.

In the past, Ethiopia played crucial role in the climate negotiation and served as mouth piece of the African continent in the global climate negotiation. It enabled to mobilize financial resources from donor countries.

But the major carbon emitters such as the USA and China have a dominant power in the negotiation and the African bargaining power in such a deal is insignificant.

Transportation sectors of the Western European countries and the USA are still dependent on carbon based petro chemicals imported from the developing countries.

A family in the USA has cars may be equals to its number and they are also travel up to thousand kilometers on daily bases hence, one can imagine how their energy consumption and emitting capacity is higher. Their consumption products are produced in other countries and transported thousands of kilometers and this again increases their emission rates.

On the contrary, in the developing countries, a farmer resides in the rural parts does not use vehicles as means of transportation in daily bases and all his consumption products are from his own farm hence, he has no chance to emit carbon. These all shows how the world energy utilization is injustice. The economically advanced countries are the major emitters but the poor farmers are the major victims of the climate change while they have insignificant role for the gas emission.

Developing countries, side by side with engaging in climate change negotiation, need to embark on developing renewable energy sources such as hydro power, geothermal, wind, solar and bio energy not to repeat the advancing countries' mistake through utilizing carbon based energy for their development endeavor.

They have enough natural resources to meet their development endeavor in terms of renewable energy except lack of sufficient finance, technology and human resources. Hence, the advanced countries should help the poor countries in this regard and in such a way, protecting the earth from hazardous effect can be achievable.

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

Editorial

Leveraging on tourism: the nation's major income source

Ethiopia is endowed with myriads of tourist attractions that include outdoor festivals; unique cultural heritage, rich history and remarkable biodiversity which are reflected in a tally of nine UNESCO World Heritage Sites more than any other country in Africa to mention a few. The fastest-growing global airline brand and the continent's leading airline is at the center of the country's tourism industry of course.

From bracing multi-day high-altitude treks through the Simien and Bale Mountains to moderately demanding day hikes amidst the remote rock-hewn churches of Gheralta, Ethiopia offers practically limitless opportunities for keen walkers.

Ethiopia's colorful outdoor festivals add a unique feature to its tourist attractions. The Festivals are majorly religious and cultural events which attract tourists to tourism destination of Ethiopia. Events and celebrations are varied from religion to religion, and culture to culture. However, the most known events of Ethiopia are both cultural and religious attractions.

Ethiopia is a unique country with 13 months' calendar and celebrates festivals throughout the year. The celebration includes arts and sports.

Thousands of Ethiopians and international tourists celebrate the eve of Meskel at Meskel Square of Addis Ababa. So, the colorful occasions of Ethiopia's Meskel Festival are held annually in September. After a week, following the Meskel Festival, there is another colorful gathering of people from all corners of the country to celebrate Irreecha Festival—a thanksgiving festival of Oromo people.

This festival is attended by many tourists from around the world for its feature of accommodating all kinds of people; the younger and the elder and peoples from all walks of life. The Oromo people celebrate the festivals by dancing, singing, and gathering with relatives.

Likewise, the Fiche Chembelala Festival shows the unification of the Sidama people among the clans and other Ethiopian nations. The festival carries out communal events and traditional songs and dances. Therefore, Fichie Chembelala Festival enhances esteem, good governance, social union, tranquil conjunction, and cohesion among the Sidama tribes and other Ethiopian diverse people.

In addition to the outdoor cultural and religious festivals, the Great Ethiopian Run has become one of the tourist attractions.

The Great Ethiopian Run is a ten-kilometer street running occasion that happens every year of November in Addis Ababa. The day's occasions incorporate a 10 km race and a 5 km women's race. It attracts several prominent international and domestic famous runners. The Festival has many entertainments on the major streets of Addis Ababa. During the training session, international guests will have time to explore historical, cultural, and natural tourism destinations.

When talking about Ethiopia's tourist attractions, we cannot put aside contribution of the Ethiopian Airlines. As a multi-award-winning airline, Ethiopian has been the champion in various coveted awards including Skytrax's 'Best Airline in Africa Award' for six consecutive years among others.

The relevance of air- transport goes far beyond the tourism sector. It is a catalyst for sociology-economic development; it serves for the integration of host communities within the world community; and it enhances the development of a strong Travel and Tourism sector in supporting the hospitality job creation, and also it raises national income.

The government of Ethiopia has capitalized on the tourism sector via carrying out various activities aiming to gain the best benefit of it. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism is responsible for developing and promoting tourism in Ethiopia, and to boost sustainable socio-economic and political values with popular and stakeholder's participation.

As the country is beginning its new year 2016, it is inviting tourists to come and be part of its festivals and visit the attractions.

Opinion

The Abraham Accords: Celebrating Three Years of Regional Cooperation and the Potential Impact on Africa

BY H.E. ALELI ADMASU

(Israeli Ambassador to Ethiopia, Burundi and the African Union)

This month marks a very important milestone for the Middle East and North Africa: three years since the signing of the Abraham Accords between Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain, under the auspices of the US government. Three months later, in December 2020, Morocco joined the process, signing a normalization agreement with Israel.

The catalyst that enabled these historic accords was the conscious decision taken by the parties to promote a stable and prosperous future for the Middle East.

The agreements have ushered in a new era of normalization and peace that not only connects governments but also brings people together, despite differences in language, religious beliefs, cultures and more.

So far, the Abraham Accords have offered a mere glimpse into the full potential of regional cooperation. Even so, the scope of trade between Israel and other Middle Eastern countries increased 74% between 2021 and 2022. Another example is tourism, mostly non-existent in the past, which has skyrocketed. In 2021, visits from Israel to the UAE increased by 172%. Meanwhile, the number of Israelis flying to Bahrain since the establishment of direct flights has increased exponentially.

The accords have also had a significant influence on reinforcing Israel's relations with neighboring countries, thereby enhancing regional stability. For example, the Prosperity Green & Blue agreement between Israel, the UAE, and Jordan determined that a solar field to supply 600 megawatts of green electricity to Israel will be established in Jordan, while in return, a desalination plant in Israel will deliver 200 million cubic meters of water to Jordan.

In a region where 65% of the population is under 30, providing the younger generation with opportunities is a key factor in preventing instability. To that end, youth delegations have been initiated, encouraging bonds between tomorrow's leaders and laying the foundation for cooperation in the decades to come.

This collaboration also extends to education. In the summer of 2022, Ben-Gurion University welcomed students from Morocco. Additionally, a number of Emirati students have enrolled in Israeli universities. Bahrain has also embraced the prospects for shared educational activities and signed a number of agreements with Israel to advance student and professor exchanges.

Israel's African partners can benefit from reinvigorated bilateral and trilateral cooperation on issues that affect us all: food security, climate change, water management, and healthcare

In a notable example of how these initiatives can foster mutual understanding, after Emirati Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan visited the Yad Vashem Holocaust Remembrance Center in Jerusalem, the UAE incorporated Holocaust education into its school curriculum as a mandatory subject, attestation to the ability of the Abraham Accords to foster coexistence and religious tolerance.

Israel's improving relations with its regional neighbors are also good news for Africa. As old enmities evaporate and countries focus on advancing their common interests, Israel's African partners can benefit from reinvigorated bilateral and trilateral cooperation on issues that affect us all: food security, climate change, water management, and healthcare.

Whether exploring increased collaboration with old friends like Ethiopia, building relationships with new countries, or expanding our cooperation to a continental level through the African Union, Israel is ready to leverage the Abraham Accords to do good in Africa.

The Abraham Accords have shown unity's power to inspire and provide opportunity. They offer a window into a potential future of the region and demonstrate that when both leaders and ordinary citizens prioritize peace and cooperation, a far better future for the Middle East – and the world – is possible.

Israel hopes that many more countries will join this endeavor, creating a brighter tomorrow for the sake of all our children.

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



The Ethiopian Herald

Established in 1943

Published daily except Mondays
By The Ethiopian Press Agency

Office of the CEO

Tel. 011-126-42-22
Fax. 251-011-156-98-62
email- epa@press.et

Advertisement and Dist. Department

email: etpresspromotion@gmail.com
Tel. 011-156-98-73/011-811-13-15
Telegram :- 0976084707 - press

Editor-in-Chief: Worku Belachew

email- workubelachew@press.et
Address- Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-city

Woreda - 05, House No----
Tel- +251 111 26 41 98

Managing Editor: Wakuman Kudama
Email: wakuma220@gmail.com

Deputy Editors-in-Chief:

Alem Hailu
Elizabeth Mengistu
Zekarias Woldemariam
Desta Geberehiwot
Daniel Beyene

Website: www.press.et
email: ethiopianherald@press.et
Fb//Ethiopian Press Agency/
The Ethiopian Herald

Art & Culture

The filmmaker who brought Ethiopian cinema to the global stage

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

The buzz around Haile Gerima's yet to be released movie is already going viral on social media. As a rule, every time that a cinematographer of Haile's caliber announces that he is going to release a new film, the media automatically turn it into a media frenzy. All the hype aside, Haile's stature as a mature, highly gifted and committed filmmaker is enough grain to feed the media rumor mill that is grinding it into daily diet of news, analyses and interviews until the time the film is released to the general relief of the hungry audiences and the insatiable critics.

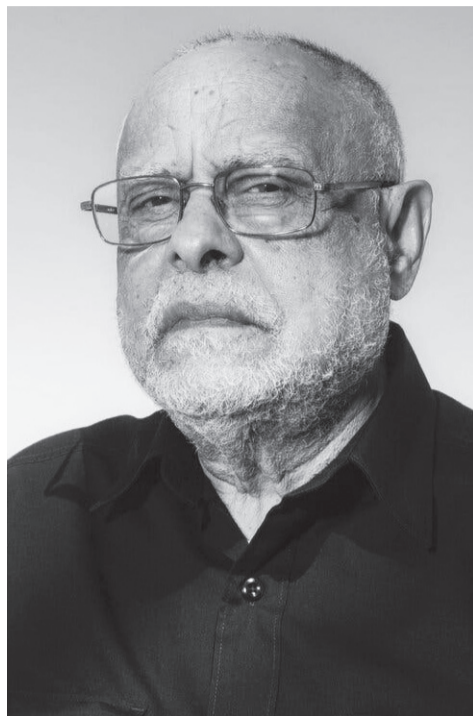
A glimpse into recent media coverage of the imminent release of Haile's new entitled in Amharic as *Yetut Lij*, literally meaning *Child of the Breast*, suggests that eager anticipation is the order of the day; at least until the film hits the silver screen. No one doubts that Professor Haile has already scaled the highest heights of filmmaking with films like *Sankofa*, *Bush Mama*, *Harvest 3000* and *Adwa* to name but only a few. He has already demonstrated his unflinching commitment to a kind of "liberation cinema" or the kind of black cinema he advocated and practiced all along his long career.

It is not politics that stirs Haile's imagination and yet there is something of a political statement in some of his productions like *Sankofa* which is a protest against slavery, and *Teza*, a kind of criticism against absurd political violence during the Red Terror in Ethiopia. We can perhaps say that he is a politically engaged artist without making political statements. There is always protest against black oppression, racism and senseless violence at the back of his mind or hidden somewhere in his subconscious although Haile seldom admits it.

It would however be an injustice to call Haile a politically-driven cinematographer because one can be an excellent artist even when handling political themes in cinema. Haile is rather an intellectual filmmaker. Sergei Einstein is admired not for making a film about the Russian revolution but for his extensive use of techniques like montage he used to bring the film *Battleship Potemkin* to a poignant life for the audience.

What makes Haile different from the run of the mill Hollywood filmmakers is that he neither cares about how much money his films make, nor worries about audience acceptance unless it is his audience, the black audience for which he cares much. Haile is a fiercely critic of the Hollywood film establishment that is dominated by the power of exclusively white studios, mostly owned by multibillion dollar white-owned companies.

Fortunately, Haile's achievements cannot and should not be measured with the yardsticks of Hollywood where success is basically measured with the amount of money blockbusters make at the box office



and not for their artistic qualities.

The barons of the American cinema make huge headlines every year at the Grammy awards but that is not intimidating to Haile who is a relentless critic who never tires to speak against the injustice of the film establishment. Not because he is denied access to the studios but because he is often averse to the injustices, lies, greed and tyranny with which Hollywood is operating both within America and globally. In a recent interview in connection with his upcoming film, Haile told the audience that, had he joined Hollywood, he could have died of a heart attack long time ago.

Given the racist and biased politics of Hollywood who would imagine that the boardroom could have accepted to make *Sankofa*? It was early in his career that Haile distanced himself from Hollywood because he knew they would not invest a dime in the production of his films. Haile believes that film is a weapon and can be used for good or evil and he considers himself a fighter for black rights, black voices everywhere in the world with the same potent weapon.

On another occasion, he was asked why he is passionate about being an African filmmaker, being black to which he answered that it was because he was a lost man right from the beginning when he came from Gondar to Addis Ababa, adding that he did not and does not know to this day why he left his native place and went to America. "I don't know why I came here until this day instead of finding myself in Gorgora at this time where I could lie in my boat on the lake, bathing in the morning sun that appears every morning." Haile said with a touch of nostalgia and a feeling of loss.

He said that he felt lost when he left his native Gondar and then when he left Ethiopia and went to the United States. He rather feels like this is not his natural place until his encounter with African Americans while studying in college and later on when he joined the black filmmaking fraternity that gave him confidence and purpose.

Haile's father, Gerima Tafere, was a history

writer and dramatist his mother who was a teacher. He was thus the product of two educated and talented people who have influenced not only his upbringing but also his later career as a filmmaker. Haile's love for his father borders on adoration. He is immensely proud of his father and this is evident whenever he speaks about him. He owes both his inspiration and the materials for the stories that he is molding into his films to his father. That is why he is often saying that "Filmmakers who are not interested in their parents and grandparents should not call themselves filmmakers at all."

For at least the last 50 years or so, Haile's attitude towards cinema has never shown any sign of wavering. It all started when his first feature film entitled *Sankofa* appeared in 1993. The white movie establishment tried to kill the film with silence maybe thinking that Haile would never survive without grants or co-productions with big studios. As he recently told the audience at a New York film festival where he elaborated on his 'philosophy of cinema' saying that telling stories is not only a passion running in his veins but a constant struggle to make the voice of black artists, filmmakers at all levels to be heard or find their voice and speak in their own voice to portray their own realities.

Haile's philosophy of movie making is not a new one because even before him radical African filmmakers like the Senegalese Sembene Ousman had espoused the anti-colonial point of view and made films that defend black rights and exposed white oppression. But what makes Haile different from others is his militant personality, his courage to speak the truth, his critical faculty and his non-conformism when it comes to issues pertaining to his country, his family, memories of his father in his native Gondar and blackness vis a vis white supremacist oppression.

Haile is equally uncompromising when it comes to making films that reflect one's history and identity instead of imitating Hollywood stereotypes. Professor Haile is also merciless in criticizing contemporary young filmmakers who are trying to imitate or copy Hollywood films in their attempt to copy-paste well the themes as well as the acting thereby producing something between a caricature and fantasy. According to him, young filmmakers to know their society and themselves, study their subject matters thoroughly before picking up the camera and start shooting.

Judging from the recent interviews he has with various social media sites, Haile Gerima's obsession with history, the history of his family and that of his country seem to have assumed obsessive dimension. He is not trying to speak of Gondar, his father and grandfather and the past history of Ethiopia in a critical manner.

However, he is not only critical of his country but also the radical politician of his generation who chose to copy-paste the

foreign ideologies from the West and from Eastern nations that embarked on revolution while they neglected their own history and traditions. He accuses them of failing to learn from their mistakes and worse still, criticizes them for making the same mistakes over and over again, in a kind of vicious cycle.

You might be amazed by his openness, outspokenness, disarming frankness and easy going manners. But most movie fans in Ethiopia or around the world agree on many points about Haile Gerima, the maverick filmmaker who has, single handedly taken Ethiopian cinema one step ahead and put it on the African and global map with *Adwa*, *Harvest 2000*, *Bush Mama* and his masterpiece *Sankofa* and many other major and minor productions.

First, Haile is a serious filmmaker, serious in its deepest sense. He takes years writing and polishing his scripts, as a scriptwriter. He does deep research spending months if not years on location studying the settings, the language, the psychology and behavior of his characters. He spends nights and days working in his studio on new stories before he has even the time to finish producing the project in hand. He is a human machine that invents stories, digging deep in history and he loves to dwell again and again on the theme of African and black oppression, black alienation, black or Ethiopian victory against while colonialists.

On the personal level many people agree that Haile is a fearless person who speaks his mind or has no axe to grind. He is fiercely independent, nostalgic about Gondar and Ethiopia as a whole and keeps on working on new films although his previous productions did not make money as far as commercial success is concerned. Even *Teza*, the film that earned him critical acclaim has not earned him much money according to a recent interview.

The much anticipated new film by Haile Gerima is not or will not be his last masterpiece, Haile is a kind of person who does not stop making movies everyday-writing scripts, researching in depth, editing, toying new ideas. These are activities that usually take their tolls on the time he could devote for other things like family or friendship or social engagements. "I have raised my children properly and now that they have their own children, let them take care of them. I have done my job as a father and I am now free to pursue my passion. I am not going to become a baby-sitter." He recently said with his characteristically loud laughter. Whether his scripts turn into films or not, Haile is always working. "I will die working on my films!" he told his interviewer, laughing at himself and adding, "I don't even think I'll die at all!"

Let's wish Haile still many summers to come while he will continue to shock and surprise us with yet other masterpieces beyond his forthcoming production. Will it be even more powerful than *Teza*? Let us save this assignment to the critics.

Law & Politics

Fostering mutual respect and unity through smooth national dialogue

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

Over the years, multiple countries have resorted to staging national dialogues as a solution to their longstanding sociopolitical and economic grievances. The act of hosting such dialogues has come to be perceived as a symbol of reconciliation and peacemaking in communities that are segregated and polarized on different ideological lines.

As the world continues to grow more complex and interconnected, the presence of a comprehensive national dialogue is more essential than ever to foster healthy and long-lasting relationships between different segments of society.

National dialogues have become a staple feature in various parts of the world, especially where the political climate is characterized by division and disagreement. These dialogues are meant to provide a platform for different groups and voices to air out their grievances and engage in constructive discourse on how to move forward as a united society.

Engaging in a national dialogue provides a valuable opportunity for people to come together and participate in promoting constructive and respectful discourse. By listening to others, sharing ideas, and engaging in support, it is possible to increase understanding, reduce tension, and build more lasting and coherent communities.

Smoothing the path of national dialogue is a critical issue that needs to be addressed in Ethiopia as it has the potential to bring profound benefits to the society. The national dialogue is a platform that encourages discussions and debates amongst citizens that highlight their different perspectives. The benefit of this dialogue is that it offers a chance for people to air their views, opinions, and ideas, which can help to give rise to new solutions to different issues.

By ensuring that the path of dialogue is smooth, Ethiopian citizens can begin to perceive one another as individuals with unique values and ideas, as opposed to mere representatives of particular ethnic or political groups. A smooth national dialogue path, therefore, helps to foster an environment that encourages mutual respect among different groups in the society. The result of such an environment is that it supports the creation of strong social ties that cut across ethnic and political boundaries.

Such ties are critical in ensuring a cohesive society where citizens work together towards achieving common goals that are beneficial to everyone. Smoothing the path of national dialogue in Ethiopia is an important step towards building a stronger, more united and peaceful society, where people come together to address their differences and challenges in a constructive manner.

It also provides a platform for people from diverse socio-cultural, political, and economic backgrounds to come together, share their views, and find common ground. In doing so, it cements oneness and unity



NATIONAL DIALOGUE

unify | engage | mobilize

among the general public, improving social cohesion and national integration. When people are able to share their perspectives and experiences, they begin to understand each other better.

Through dialogue, people can find common ground, even if they come from different backgrounds, religions, or political affiliations. This creates a sense of togetherness and belonging, promoting national unity. By bringing together people from diverse backgrounds, everyone has an opportunity to participate and make their voices heard. This not only ensures that everyone's views are represented but also provides a sense of equity and fairness.

When people feel that they have an equal say in national issues, they are more likely to feel included and invested in the success of their country. In addition to promoting social cohesion, national dialogue can also lead to policy changes and reforms that benefit the country as a whole. When people from different sectors of society come together to discuss national issues, they can identify common problems and work towards finding solutions.

This can lead to policy changes and reforms that address the needs of all citizens, regardless of their background or affiliation. Moreover, national dialogue can bring about national healing and reconciliation. In Ethiopia, for example, the country has experienced various conflicts and political upheavals, which have resulted in deep-rooted divisions and mistrust between different communities.

National dialogue can provide a platform for people to share their grievances, express their pain, and work towards finding common ground. This can help to alleviate tensions and promote healing and reconciliation. When people are engaged in dialogue, they are more likely to participate in the democratic process and hold their leaders accountable.

By the same token, national dialogue can help to bridge differences between different regions and ethnic groups, reduce tension, and promote collaboration towards establishing a stable country. As people come together to discuss national issues, they can identify

challenges and opportunities for economic growth. This can lead to the formulation of policies and initiatives that promote economic development, job creation, and poverty reduction.

In addition to cementing oneness and unity among the general public, national dialogue promotes social cohesion, inclusivity, trust, democracy, good governance, conflict resolution, economic development, national healing, and patriotism. As such, it is essential for building a stable, prosperous, and united Ethiopia.

When people are free to share their views through dialogue, they can identify solutions to problems that affect them all. In doing so, they can also find areas of agreement and common ground, which forges a sense of trust between them. Through this bond of trust, Ethiopians can move forward together as a united nation.

National dialogue provides an effective platform for inclusivity and diversity in Ethiopia, where people from various socio-cultural backgrounds, economic and religious beliefs come together to share their opinions and views. This form of dialogue is crucial in fostering a sense of inclusiveness and creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation.

In addition, national dialogue promotes cultural diversity in education and seeks to create an educational system that is inclusive of all cultures and ethnic groups.

Through national dialogue, diverse groups can learn to work together in harmony to promote common interests, creating a stronger and unified nation. National dialogue creates a safe space for people from various backgrounds to disagree, and constructively resolve differences leading to inclusivity and the building of cohesion, which are key ingredients for social harmony.

Participants, who took part recently at the training hosted by Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC), said they are ready to expedite the participant selection as well as agenda setting activities in their respective districts.

During the closing ceremony of the three-

day training, the participants said that they would work closely with the ENDC to assist the commission in identifying participants in credible, inclusive, transparent as well as fair ways.

Getaneh Kebede, Representative from Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice (EZEMA) party, highlighted the importance of the training and called on political parties to seize the national dialogue as an opportunity to resolve the nation's long-lasting challenges in a peaceful manner.

He added: "Peace is the only powerful weapon that the current generation could pass down to posterity. Thus, everyone should bring its quest to the table and be ready to be part of a solution as well."

In a similar vein, Kassech Wolde, Representative from Prosperity Party stated that the training has equipped her with the necessary information on how to assist the agenda setting as well as participant selection.

She urged everyone to present their issues in a peaceful manner while becoming part of the solution.

For Yemarshet Begashaw, representing women's organizations, the training is instrumental to create awareness on the concept of National Dialogue and its methodology as well as its importance. The training would also allow them to exert their responsibility in a fair and inclusive manner.

A religious leader, Aba Hailemichael Wolde Samuel, indicated that the training was insightful which allowed them to look back at the nation's indigenous knowledge and how it could be applied to in the National Dialogue.

"By learning from past mistakes, Ethiopians should actively take a positive role in realizing the National Dialogue."

Prof. Mesfin Araya, Commissioner-General of ENDC, said that the trainees would return to their respective districts and would facilitate the selection of the participants in concert with the commission.

The selected participants as well as representatives of various institutions would then take role in the agenda setting process, he remarked.

G-77 has a common position to create a new international order

- Jorge Lefebre Nicolas

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

“The group of 77 needs a collective reflection on how to face the new global realities to have access to development, eradicate poverty, defend cultures and take its rightful place in the global decision-making that affects everyone. Since its establishment, this group has played an important role as a representative of the South and defender of its interests in many negotiations. We are a group of countries characterized by diversity in terms of geography, cultures and levels of economic development. That diversity should not be weakness, but strength,” said former Cuban President Fidel Castro while attending the G-77 summit.

The summit of the G-77 member countries is underway in Havana, the Capital of Cuba which is the current president of the group. Today’s guest of The Ethiopian Herald is Cuban Ambassador to Ethiopia, Jorge Lefebre Nicolas. In the short stay, he had with Herald, Nicolas has raised the importance of the G-77 plus China summit, the contribution of his country to the group and other current issues. Have a nice read.

The G-77 is taking place in Cuba, Havana. Would you please give us a glimpse on the group, its inception and progress so far?

The G-77 group summit is underway in Cuba, Havana as of yesterday. So, the G-77 group is one of the most important governmental organizations in the world. It was created in 1964 under the umbrella of the United Nations. In the beginning, it gathered only 77 countries of the South. That was the moment of the decolonization of Africa. There were many liberation movements, fighting to get their independence from the North. The modern Africa was taking shape in that decade.

The dollar was the most important currency but started to lose value and it created a financial crisis in the world. That was the original aim of this group. A group of countries were united under the non-aligned movement. They don’t realize that they become bigger to more than 130 countries. But at that moment, the world was divided into the North, the West and the East. It was the Cold War. This group of countries decided to create a negotiating group to strengthen their negotiating capacity in front of the challenge of the North.

By now the group has increased its membership to 134 countries. These days we are talking about a group that reunites 80% of the world’s population. At this juncture, around two-thirds of the countries are members of the United Nations. So you cannot imagine the capacity of the group in terms of creating a common position from the south standing in front of the challenge facing from the North.

So, the role of this group was different from decades since its inception. At the beginning abstain was put on the colonization in cases like recognizing the independence of the new African countries at that moment, and then with the years they moved to some political issues but it mainly responded to economic inquiries such as how to create a new architecture in economic affairs.

We have poor economies that are dominated by the big banks from the northern countries. We need to have a strong negotiating position in front of them. Thanks to this group that was created in 1964, it made

thorough discussion in the United Nations in 1972, many countries were members of the group, and they called to create a new international order.

At that moment, the most developed economies offer assistance for the development of countries like ours. Within the group, we have a common position to create a new international order which has not been achieved so far but many things have been possible due to the presence of the group. This is the first benefit that we get from the group. The negotiation capacity of all the countries of the South can be reunited within the group despite having differences in culture, level of economy and so on. But we have a common view about many issues.

The most important agreement signed under the umbrella of the United Nations on the economic field was the general agreement for tariffs and taxes. The group has an immense capacity to discuss with the north the challenge we have to the development. And more or less this year, that has been the activities of the group. And the group has been active. Since 1964 many organizations have been created and dissolved but the group is still there.

So every year, the group has sessions in the United Nations or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the group gathering in United Nations. They conserve positions and plan a strategy on how to avoid the challenges that every country has their challenge to develop. We can elaborate on all the challenges in one document to be approved by the United Nations.

And somehow, the North is not happy with the position of the group. However, through negotiations, we can get something from the developed countries and it is very important for the group. Now, Cuba is the president of the group for the first time and is expected to transfer the role to Uganda. The Theme of the summit is current development challenges: role of science, technology and innovation. Over the last three or four years, we have seen the pandemic. Thanks to science and technology, we can sit and discuss the pandemic.

Accordingly, we can provide food for the



We have poor economies that are dominated by the big banks from the northern countries. We need to have a strong negotiating position in front of them

majority of the world’s population. You need to make use of modern technologies. Countries in the south have the land, water resources and others. However, we lack technology. So we need to make better use of the technology and we can get the latter from the north. We need a movement to meet them to share that with the countries in need. So that is also the importance of the group.

Every country cannot get something by standing alone. It would rather be very vulnerable. By being a member of the group, people with similar challenges gather together and have a common position on some issues. So, they are in a better position to discuss with the country with resources and it is wonderful if you do it through the United Nations. And now we are holding the summit as of yesterday with the presence of a majority of the heads of the state and government of the group.

A great number of participants are expected to attend the summit. More than 50 heads of state and government are expected to attend the summit in Havana. We will be discussing the challenges facing the development and deliberate on how to make use of the resources. We have to have a better position on how to transform the financial architecture of the world as we need to do that. The heads of state are expected to devise a strategy to face development challenges.

We are going to support each other in sharing our technologies with the rest of the group to get some positive results. For instance, Cuba has relatively good potential in health. So we have been contributing to this group by deploying Cuban doctors, sharing our health

Continued to Page 9



G-77 has a common position...

Continued from Page 8



experience with the member countries and assisting countries to create universities for Health Sciences.

Why does the group sometimes refer to itself as G-77 Plus China? What is its relationship with China?

China has become one of the most important economies in the South. Then in 1992, China joined the group, not as a member, but as a special partner of the group. That's why we call it G-77 plus China. China is an important international actor with a very strong economy. The program of cooperation of China with Africa, and Latin America, is very important for the benefit of these countries. So, having China in the group is imperative for the rest of the countries. So you can establish your strategies and plans on how to cooperate and get credit for the planned purpose. So, together as a group, we become very strong, but if we are standing alone, we are nothing. So that is why, we need to be together.

What important decisions are expected from this year's G-77 plus China summit?

We discuss the problems we will face the future and establish a strategy for how we deal with them. Resolving the problem of providing food and shelter, proper utilization of the land and water resources, facing the consequence of conflict and so on are some of the discussion points that the group focused on. If we take the war in Ukraine, it creates a problem on the price of food all over the world. So, it needs a strategy to face that. We can help each other and establish that ground.

Ethiopia is also a founding member of the group. The country is also one of the most important economies in Africa. The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Ethiopia were pleased to lead the Ethiopian delegation to participate in the summit in Havana. There will be consultations, negotiations and discussions on common problems and two days later leaders again meet in the UN general assembly that is going to be held in New York.

As Ethiopia has many water resources, it needs to apply an intelligent use of the water to provide the resource to agriculture here in Ethiopia

So that is the importance and the timeliness of this summit. So, we are going to discuss many issues there. And those issues will be taken to the General Assembly of the UN takes place this year.

Could you elaborate on the contribution of your country during its presidency of G-77 plus China?

First of all, we wanted to give more international presence to the group. So this year, during our presidency, we have convoked to meet very important issues. We have Cambodia summit for Education Ministers of the group, Ministers of Science and Technology and others. We have to make this meeting just to coordinate positions among the members of the group.

But what we want is to give the group coherence and to strengthen our positions to face the challenge that we have. Now, I think we have achieved that. The group is very respected by the United Nations. Even our enemies say when we secure the group, Cuba has given the group more visibility. This is because Cuban diplomacy is very skillful. And they have given a second brief to the group. That is true. Our diplomacy has been useful to give the group more international presence in all international forums. We are now going to international forums not alone but as a group. So when they organize the forum in Petersburg, or the Economic Forum in Davos, the group is there.

So, the presidency of the group has been there and the group has been present in those international forums. So it is a matter of giving visibility to the actions of the group as it has been a very important group throughout the years. The most important group of countries have remained together and many are now members of the group of 20, the BRICS. So, we have important members who have not been divided for long. Now, several countries have joined the group. The last country to join the group was South Sudan and it became part of the group in 2012.

After the United Nations, all the countries reunited but the UN is divided into regions and every region has its own lobby or pressure groups. But then you have the non-aligned movement, which was very effective during the Cold War.

Countries are not aligned with the United States and/or Russia. They do not adopt socialist and/ or capitalist blocs. They were in the middle. Now the context is different. So the Alliance does not have the same role that they had in the past. However, the G-77 is still there because its main focus was on issues related to the economy. It focuses on how to defend our economic rights, how to give food to our people, how to give education to our people, how to organize our negotiating position in front of the North and how to receive better benefits from the North.

We appreciate the presence of Ethiopia in Cuba, as we have not been receiving any Ethiopian delegation over the past 20 years, except former President Mulatu Teshome who attended the funeral ceremony of Fidel Castro, in Havana. Now, for the first time, the voice of Ethiopia will be heard in Havana, at the summit of the G-77. And I

think that is important.

How has been the partnership and collaboration between Ethiopia and Cuba, especially about innovation and technology?

Over the last few years, we have been working together to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to build the capacity of every country for the development of innovation, science and technology. The visit of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen would help to sign an MOU in Cuba. About water resources, two months ago, we started full cooperation to capacitate the people working in this field. As Ethiopia has many water resources, it needs to apply an intelligent use of the water to provide the resource to agriculture here in Ethiopia.

Over the past years, we have had some kind of cooperation in health. We also have strong cooperation in biotechnological research, there is a *Finlay Institute* here and a biotechnology institute in Cuba. At the same time, we have a bilateral agenda. Cuba and Ethiopia are countries that share many things. We have a common history and we are strengthening our negotiation position in multilateral affairs. We support each other at the level of multilateral affairs.

Apart from attending the G-77 summit, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen is expected to officially reopen the Ethiopian embassy in Cuba, Havana. Though the embassy starts jobs before three months, now is the proper time for him to officially inaugurate the embassy. We are sure that we will get closer and elevate our ties in different fields. And we will see in the future more exchange of visits by delegations; other things will come and take the bilateral relations to a new level.

Ethiopia has now joined the BRICS. What is your reflection?

First of all, I want to congratulate Ethiopia as it has chosen to be part of this group which is an important economic actor in international affairs.

By being a member of BRICS, the people may not get a benefit right tomorrow. However, in the long run, you will get a benefit from the monetary system of the economy. And they can share their resources with you. So, it opens economic possibilities for Ethiopia.

The BRICS countries decided to expand membership for the first time, though more than 20 countries have formally applied to join BRICS, a bloc of emerging economies that includes Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, Ethiopia has become one among the six countries invited to become members of BRICS.

The countries chosen to be a member of the group are emerging economies. They would create a solid group of negotiations for economic issues. At the same time, the presence of China and India in that group enables it to establish an international bank for cooperation among them. The group will have a strong economy next to the north.

Thank you very much!

It's my pleasure!

Society

Appropriate uses of social media key to arrest disinformation

BY TEWODROS KASSA

The invention of the internet has brought dynamic changes in this world. According to reports, the use of digital media, specifically social media, is growing at a rapid pace and the twenty-first century could be described as the “boom” period for social networking.

According to reports provided by Smart Insights, as of February 2019, there were over 3.484 billion social media users. The Smart Insight report indicates that the number of social media users is growing by 9 percent annually and this trend is estimated to continue.

Currently, the number of social media users represents 45 percent of the global population. The heaviest users of social media are digital natives, the group of persons who were born or who have grown up in the digital era and are intimate with the various technologies and systems, and the “Millennial Generation”, those who became adults at the turn of the twenty-first century. These groups of users utilize social media platforms for just about anything ranging from marketing, news acquisition, teaching, health care, civic engagement, and politicking to social engagement.

However, the unethical use of social media has resulted in the breach of individual privacy and impacts both physical and information security. Reports in 2019 reveal that persons between the ages 8 and 11 years spend an average 13.5 hours weekly online and 18 percent of this age group is actively engaged on social media. According to Cyber-security Company Surfshark, those between ages 12 and 15 spend on average 20.5 hours online and 69 percent of this group are active social media users. While children and teenagers represent the largest Internet user groups, for the most part they do not know how to protect their personal information on the Web and are the most vulnerable to cyber-crimes related to breaches of information privacy.

Recently, media experts expressed the necessity of improving literacy and awareness of the society to alleviate the demerits of social media in Ethiopia.

Lack of awareness and poor social media literacy is making the country prone to various existing and new social and economic problems, the scholars noted.

Social media has to promote Ethiopian language, culture, community growth and boost tourism flow, but it has seen causing and deteriorating conflicts due to mismanagement, stated Yordanos Gizachew, Head of Journalism and Communication at Jigjiga University.

She said that the country needs to strive to minimize the social media impact through providing training on how to utilize the platform for common good which enables media professionals to transmit accurate



news.

“We may easily like or share information on social media; but those who disseminate hate speech, fake news use the opportunity to escalate instability and get the nation into crisis. For this reason, everyone should use the platform cautiously to ensure peace,” Yordanos said.

The society should be well aware of the information it disseminates and be alert; to whom it sends a message. “When access to social media flourishes in developing countries, it might cause problems since there is no restriction. In developed countries, users have time-limiting options that appear on social media apps,” she expressed.

However, there is no such technology in Ethiopia. Therefore, the government must work with Ethio telecom to control fake news disseminated on social media. She also suggested that establishing law is crucial to ensure accountability on those who spread fake news on social media.

Wollo University Journalism and Communication Lecturer Yalew Desalegn on his part said that people should have social media and information literacy while using the platform.

In the context of Ethiopia, most people do not have the aforesaid literacy that is why many crises are happening. Yalew stated that message recipients share information without verification which creates conflict since most of the information arises from rumors rather than evidence.

“Everyone should be aware that the media has the power of building or dismantling a nation. So everyone should receive accurate news and examine it critically before sharing it with a third person. It needs an awareness creation campaign to mitigate social media usage constraints,” he recommended.

It is appropriate to provide training to students from elementary to university level in order to raise the awareness of the generation about proper usage of social media for the public good, it was learnt.

Ethiopians should be aware of when and how to use social media since it helps to ease the social, economic and political problems of the nation. Citizens should use social media to promote culture, mobile banking and to realize behavioral change, the scholars recommended.

Meanwhile, the Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations Council (ECSOC) and Meta (Facebook Company) announced that they are working closely to promote digital literacy and foster peace building in Ethiopia.

Program and Development Director with ECSOC, Hana Woldegebriel said that ECSOC and Meta have entered into a collaborative initiative aiming to enhance digital literacy for peace building across the nation.

Digital platforms can transform CSOs’ capacity, enhance efficiency, improve their engagement with stakeholders, improve the quality of their services, and provide new ways of generating revenues, among others.

This event is designed to equip CSO representatives with the necessary digital skills to enhance safe and responsible use of digital platforms and fostering an environment of informed, reflective, and meaningful engagement.

It is an agreed fact that social media platforms will play a crucial role in fostering societal change and transformation. The other way round, if they are used appropriately and irresponsibly, including the proliferation of misinformation, calls to violence, and hate speech, can pose a significant challenge with the potential to exacerbate offline harm. Thus, the wise, appropriate and safe use of the platform is critical for the common good of all.

Verbatim and Caption

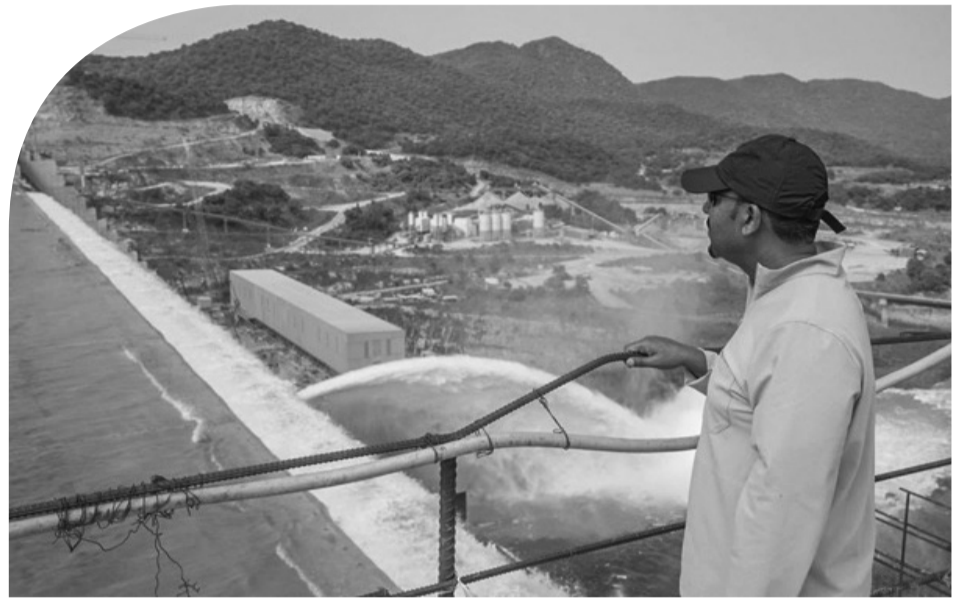
Ethiopia completes 4th round GERD filling, proves no harm on downstream

I want to congratulate all Ethiopians on the successful completion of the fourth round filling of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), Africa's largest hydropower plant. This is the outcome of the cooperation of all Ethiopians.

The cooperation we Ethiopians demonstrated in building the dam should be replicated in other national projects. The unity of citizens must be replicated once again in due course of emancipating the nation from poverty and underdevelopment.

There were a lot of challenges. We had been dragged backwards. We had encountered internal challenges and external pressures. We have overcome all these and managed to arrive at this stage. However, we have not yet completed climbing the uphill though we have just arrived at the top of the hill. By completing the fourth round filling successfully, we show to the generation Ethiopia's power to achieve its intended plans.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) witnessing GERD's 4th round filling



The fourth filling of the GERD is a huge success Ethiopia has registered withstanding diplomatic pressures. The pressure was so immense on Ethiopia since the beginning; the successful completion of the fourth filling has fully reversed the pressure against Ethiopia.

It is a big diplomatic victory for Ethiopia to complete the water filling according to plan. The success is the outcome of the contribution of the Ethiopian people.

Ethiopia has always taken into consideration the mutual benefit of neighboring downstream countries in its water development and the fourth round filling of the dam without any harm on the downstream countries proved Ethiopia's stance.

Yacob Arsano, Associate Professor, GERD Negotiating Team Member and Hydro Politics Researcher commenting on the dam



The successful completion of the fourth filling of the GERD is a confirmation of Ethiopia's position not to cause harm to Egypt and Sudan.

Ethiopia has once again declared beyond any doubt that the country is only seeking development, after many speculated about the danger of filling in its various stages.

The fourth filling of the dam is a critical stage in which Ethiopia confirmed the fact that the country is moving in the right direction. Egypt and Sudan should share the joy with Ethiopia over the success of the fourth filling of the GERD since it has not brought any significant harm so far.

Mohammed Al-Arousi, Member of Parliament and Advisor to the Minister of Water and Energy commenting about the dam

The successful completion of the 4th round filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) shows that no challenge will stop Ethiopians when they stand together for one common goal.

Besides being a source of cooperation between the three riparian countries, the Great Renaissance Dam has practically demonstrated the fact that there will be no damage to the lower riparian countries. The completion of the 4th round filling opens a new chapter in the process of the construction of the dam.

Engineer Sileshi Bekele (PhD), GERD negotiating team leader, Ethiopia's ambassador to the United States and former Minister of Water and Energy explaining current issues about the dam.



The overall construction of the GERD reaches over 93 % completion. The dam comprises left, right and middle sections and to reach the final stage, the left and right sections requires only 9 to 10 meters while the middle part needs up to 20 meters. Until next year, this part will be fully accomplished.

Currently, two turbines are producing energy. After the successful completion of the fourth round filling, in this budget year, five additional turbines would be added to generate energy. This fiscal year, the number of turbines producing energy from the GERD would increase into seven. These units will be operational soon.

Engineer Kifle Horo, GERD General Manager briefing higher government officials

