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Economist weighs in on Ethiopia's regional integration efforts

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopia needs to exert extra efforts to outline an unequivocal roadmap and ensure rule of law in order to realize regional integration, so suggested Addis Ababa University Economist Prof. Alemayehu Geda.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, Prof. Alemayehu stated that the country should work hard on realizing regional economic integration giving priority to achieving peace and stability, and preparing a clear economic roadmap to this end.

He stressed that the nation has to fulfill macroeconomic convergence criteria such as lowering the inflation to a single digit, adjusting budget deficit and foreign reserve, balancing trade deficit and others so as to achieve regional economic integration.

Professor Alemayehu recalled that Ethiopia had signed various continental and regional

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France ambassador acclaims Ethiopia's tourism, hospitality exhibition

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- "The tourism and hospitality exhibition deserves accolades as it is organized in the way to make the tourism potentials of Ethiopia known by all in a vivid manner."

The above remark made by Ambassador

See France ambassador ... Page 3

EU pledges continued support to CSOs in Ethiopia

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- European Union (EU) Delegation to Ethiopia announced its plan to continue supporting Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to enhance their contribution to the development and democratization processes of the country.

The third Civil Society Funding project (CSF III) that was launched in 2018 has been completed with 'great performance', the EU said.

In his remark during the closing event of CSF III project yesterday, EU Cooperation Head Stefan Lock said that the EU has objectives of supporting voice of CSOs representing constituencies and citizens in policy dialogue and policy monitoring.

The project has been achieved with great performance in spite of some challenges related to insecurity and COVID-19 pandemic, he said.

The project has benefited CSOs to continue playing their greater role in terms of



influencing policy making in the country, he stated. The Head also stressed that the CSOs should play more active role since they are intermediaries between the citizens and government bodies.

"Of course, capacity still needs to be there. The sector still has much capacity constraints. Operational capacity,

management capacity and financial capacity needs more funds," he said, and added that EU will continue providing supports.

The CSF III project provided technical, expertise, and capacity building to beneficiary CSOs. In granting this project, the EU spent about 11.75 million Euro grant

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Ministry calls for consolidated efforts towards trachoma elimination

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – The Ministry of Health (MoH) has called on stakeholders and donors to join hands in the efforts of eliminating trachoma and blindness. Today, World Sight Day 2023 is to be celebrated under the theme: ‘When spiders unite, they tie down a lion’.

At the conference held yesterday, MoH Minister Lia Tadesse (MD) said that the trachoma disease intervention in Ethiopia has made significant progress in preventing and controlling severe forms of trachoma in the various parts of the country over the past years, however a lot needs to be done.

She said: “The government of UK has been our lead bi-lateral thereby providing over 5 million people with improved access to WASH, which help contribute not only to sustainably eliminate Trachoma but also other waterborne diseases. Also, it is currently providing 95 million Euro support to Ethiopia with the One WASH 5 years National Programme (2019-2024).

So far, the UK support partnering with several development partners has benefitted about 928 health facilities with latrine and water supply facilities and close to 628 health facilities with full package in all target programme states.

Results from the ongoing trachoma surveys being conducted in trachoma endemic woredas shows that over 1.6 million people, most of them women, received surgical correction of Trachomatous Trichiasis (TT) and were able to avert blindness, she



stressed.

“Despite the presence of a large number of people who received corrective TT surgeries, we have treated over 850,000 individuals for TT since the 2015 launch of the fast track initiative to clear the TT backlog,” she added.

Since 2020, MoH and its partners were able to perform over 270,000 TT surgeries and therefore, “We have managed hundred thousand eye sights thereby improving their ability to perform social and economic activities.”

“Along with regional and local government authorities and higher education institutions, the ministry is implementing various interventions such as surgery, antibiotics, facial cleanliness and environmental improvement to eliminate trachoma to realize progress towards the achievement of the 2030 national and global targets,” she said.

Remarking the great achievements registered globally, her Royal Highness



Duchess Edinburgh said that it is time to scale up our efforts to achieve our aim of eliminating trachoma by the year 2030.

Mentioning the UK’s Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and other development partners in tackling the reduction of trachoma, her Highness said, this needs to be further strengthened.

Education is a powerful tool to help change behaviors and break the cycle of trachoma transmission, she added.

“In Ethiopia, Orbis has provided 100 million doses of antibiotics and 300,000 surgeries, and 48 districts no longer need mass administration of drugs to tackle trachoma in the last 25 years,” she noted.

During the conference, which was organized by the Ministry of Health in partnership with the UK and Orbis, Royal Highness Duchess of Edinburgh, ambassadors, country representatives, regional health bureau head and development partners among others were in attendance.



MoE works on generating qualified teachers, creating conducive atmosphere

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA- Ministry of Education (MoE) stated that it is mainly focusing on making teachers skillful, competent and knowledgeable through training and having good teaching-learning environment.

Speaking at launching of new chapter of change of Kotebe Education University, Minister of Education, Prof. Berhanu Nega said that many activities would be implemented this year for creating good education system in the nation via immensely improving quality of education in the country.

He said: “Attaining the set target in this regard demands the combined effort of all. Hence, all universities and stakeholders have big responsibility to bring tangible change in the sector.”

As investing in the sector pays off, the ministry has planned to work more on it thereby coming up with positive environment in education, capable and competent teachers as well as inviting education environment, he added.

“The moral of teachers needs to be built by developing special incentive system and other means to create productive and competent students.”

He said: “The whole education system in Ethiopia needs to be changed, and firm determination and commitment of stakeholders is badly needed thereby coming up with competent and productive as well as ethical generation in the years to come.”

“Our work should speak and we all are expected to work more to deal with problems the sector is facing like lack of quality education, shortage of qualified teachers and appealing environment for education,” he opined.

He further stated that the nation has to improve the education system and successfully bridge the gap observed to push itself steps forward.

He also noted that it is better to create competent, productive, responsible and ethical generation who can take over the country with its future by seriously capitalizing on quality education.

Peace restoration bearing fruits in Amhara State

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- The Amhara State Administration announced that peace restoration efforts are bearing fruits as stability in many parts of the state enabled citizens to return to their normal life.

Accordingly, the industry, health and agriculture sectors have begun reinvigorating as people in these field are undergoing their daily activities detached from troubles, the Amhara State Communication Bureau said.

Bureau Head Mengesha Fentaw (PhD) told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the industries that were affected by the conflict in the state have recovered and resumed production as the security problem in the area has been resolved in a concerted effort among pertinent bodies.

Efforts are being exerted to solve problems related to transporting industrial outputs to customers, he added.

In many places, the society is supporting the development works as much as possible so as to enable the industries to produce with full capacity, he noted.

He stated that the State Administration is efficiently executing its responsibility of solving security problems thereby



encouraged investors to go back to work with peaceful mind.

According to Mengesha, everything is being fixed safely and the community is leading a stable life in many places of the state in general and the eastern part of the region in particular.

Likewise, schools in many cities and districts of the region have begun receiving students, he said.

In terms of health, various campaigns have been made to control the spread of cholera

and malaria that have been observed in the region recently, he disclosed.

Accordingly, aid providers are allowed to provide support by identifying the affected areas while the State Administration is trying hard to prevent the epidemic from causing more damages, according to the Head.

The realization of peace in many districts of the region also helped farmers to continue their career without any disturbances, Mengesha said.

IOM pledges to consolidate multifaceted engagement with Ethiopia

ADDIS ABABA (ENA)- The new Director-General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Amy E. Pope said that a multifaceted engagement with Ethiopia is a priority where the country serves as the seat for the African Union.

The director-general, who took office on the first of October 2023, told the media yesterday that the work of the International Organization for Migration really needs to prioritize engaging in Africa where migration is a pressing issue for the continent.

Over 80 % of migration occurs in the continent and across the continent, she revealed, adding that it is not to Europe or to the Gulf states.

“Throughout my work on issues of migration, it has been clear that the challenges that exist here on the continent are significant. When you look at conflict, poverty, uneven development, and increasingly as we see the impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities, it is clear that the challenges are enormous,” Pope elaborated.

In this case, engaging with Ethiopia is multifaceted, and the African Union here is the best place to reinforce migration affairs as the country is the seat of this continental organ.

Noting that Ethiopia itself is a mission that has been with the International Organization for Migration since 1995, the organization has been engaging with the Government of Ethiopia.

Ethiopia has been hosting quite significant displaced people and refugees, the director-general noted.



“It is one of our largest missions in Africa, faces all facets of the human migration experience... There are nearly 4.4 million right now who are displaced, whether it is people who are leaving Ethiopia to go, live and work elsewhere.”

Moreover, the director-general indicated that Ethiopia is also serving as transiting for many people who are on their way elsewhere and arriving to remain in Ethiopia.

Therefore, the needs are diverse and possibilities for engagement are tremendous, she stated, adding that “so for me, this (Ethiopia) was a natural place to start the conversation.”

IOM will also engage with the African Union member states not only to build out better ways for migrants to move but also enable better economic integration, which is one of the AU’s strategic goals.

The director-general said that focusing on the impacts of climate on human mobility is her priority.

She figured out that about 7 million people have been displaced as a result of climate change just in the east African region.

“We’ve seen communities displaced by drought most recently, but also flooding. We know that climate will become one of the greatest stabilizers of communities, unless further action is undertaken by communities and by member states and partners,” Pope warned.

For her, this is an area where IOM is well positioned to respond, but it needs to do more in concert with our member states and partners.

The director-general also went on to mention the natural and manmade catastrophic events that have been happening globally, including the horrific flood in Libya and an earthquake in Morocco and Afghanistan just a few weeks ago.

“You layer one conflict upon disaster to disaster and you see the numbers of people who are being displaced rise astronomically,” Pope said.

Recall that Africa has made more progress than any other continent in developing some of the most progressive legal frameworks around forced displacement.

The African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (better known as the Kampala convention), which came into effect in 2012, is considered a landmark for human rights. Over 25 states have ratified the convention which legally binds government to protect the well-being of IDPs.



IMF projects Ethiopia's economy to grow 6.2% in 2024

BY TAMERU REGASA

ADDIS ABABA International Monetary Fund (IMF) issued economic Performance of Sub Saharan African Countries on Tuesday.

According to the report of the IMF, Ethiopian economy will be grown from 6.1 % to 6.2% by the end of 2024.

The report said that 2023 has been a difficult year for activity in sub-Saharan African economies adding that the inflationary shock following Russia’s war in Ukraine has prompted higher interest rates worldwide, which has meant slowing international demand, elevated spreads, and ongoing exchange rate pressures. As a result, growth in 2023 is expected to fall for the second year in a row to 3.3% from 4.0% last year.

The region is expected to rebound next year, with growth increasing to 4.0% in 2024, picking up in four-fifths of the sub-Saharan Africa’s countries, and with strong performances in non-resource intensive countries. Macroeconomic imbalances are also improving adding that inflation is falling for most of the region, and public finances are gradually being put on a more sustainable footing.

As to the report four things which require determined policy action like inflation, exchange rate pressure, debt vulnerability and economic divergences challenge the economy of the region adding that inflation is still too high it is in double digits in 14 countries.

Explaining the challenge of debt vulnerability, the report said that the funding squeeze is not over, as borrowing rates are still high, and rolling over debt is a challenge. And half of the low-income countries in the region are at high risk or in debt distress.

While the recovery is underway, economic divergences within the region are widening in particular, per capita incomes in resource intensive economies remain subdued the report said.

Economist weighs in on...

economic agreements such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), Inter-Governmental Association for Development (IGAD) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

The main purpose of these agreements is to ensure economic integration through reducing tax and liberalizing trade among member states. However, Ethiopia didn’t execute its task practically like other member countries for many reasons including poor

commitment among pertinent bodies, he indicated.

Due to this reason, he believed that accomplishing the regional economic integration could be difficult.

“Realizing regional economic integration cannot be easily achieved without outlining regional economic integration roadmap and ensuring rule of law across the country,” he noted.

Addressing the 6th year, third tenure of the Joint Session of House of Peoples

Representatives (HoPR) and House of Federation (HoF) on Monday, President Sahlework Zewde stated that the government is keen to transform its political diplomacy to economic integration in the region. She also added that her government has planned to record 7.9 % economic growth this fiscal year. Moreover, IMF has recently forecasted the 2023/24 fiscal year GDP growth of five largest economies in Sub-Saharan Africa and Ethiopia’s GDP is projected to grow by 6.2 %.

France ambassador...

of France to Ethiopia during the opening ceremony of the exhibition at Science Museum on Tuesday.

France and the Ethiopian Ministry of Tourism have longstanding partnership as the later is in charge of heritages, Ambassador Rémi Maréchaux said adding that “We work with the Ministry under the protection and restoration of Rock-hewn Churches of Lalibela.”

He went on saying: “We believe in the potentials of Ethiopia for the development of tourism. I say it as an Ambassador of France which is the first destination of

tourist worldwide.”

Mentioning that France hosts over 90 million tourists a year, he highlighted that the main reason that they are able to attract such number of tourist is through developing the capacity of promoting their heritages.

That is what is common between France and Ethiopia, he said adding that tourists visit Ethiopia’s wild life but the main reason of their visit is its unique heritages sites.

Owing to this fact, the Ambassador said their investment prioritizes protecting and promoting heritages while their investment in tourism will follow.

His country also currently engaged with the Prime Minister Office under the transformation of the National Palace into museum, which will be inaugurated soon, as to him.

Moreover, he said France works in collaboration with all actors in Ethiopia regarding wildlife conservation particularly with the Hailemariam and Roman Foundation (HRF) in order to rehabilitate Maze National Park.

The tourism and hospitality exhibition stay opened to the public until November 8, 2023.

EU pledges...

during the five year period of the project, according to the Delegation.

Ethiopian Authority for Civil Society Organizations (ACSO) Director General, Samson Biratu also acknowledged EU’s supportive role of funding CSOs engaged in Ethiopia.

ACSO has been monitoring and evaluating the project that enabled several organizations to receive a grant. Such positive engagements should be continued, therefore, Samson said, adding that the government always appreciates partnerships to increase the participation of CSOs.

Opinion

Water resources development to raise peoples' living standards

BY GETACHEW MINAS

The Ethiopian economy is largely dependent on agriculture, which in turn depends mainly on seasonal rainfall. The country is endowed with renewable surface and ground freshwater with seasonal and local distribution. According to Gulilat Birhane, Water resources researcher, this endowment however, has not given adequate opportunity for sustainable economic growth. Moreover, the intensity of recurrent droughts affects the livelihoods of agricultural communities and the whole economy.

Even in a year of good rain, the occurrence of floods affects the livelihoods of riparian residents with little capacity to neither protect them from the seasonal flood nor mitigate the impact. Excess water is also responsible for the soil erosion in the highlands. Studies indicate that the sediment volumes in different rivers are variable. It is believed that the trans-boundary Rivers alone carry billions of tones of sediment every year to neighboring countries. Poor watershed management and farming practices have contributed to these developments.

The level of sustainability of water management is also a challenge for the sector. Lack of co-ordination among groups and organizations is aggravating the situation and constraining the returns to investment. Lack of studies and research works in the sector has constrained the contribution of the sector to the economic development of the country.

River basin studies have been undertaken in the country several decades ago by local and external agencies. Also, basin development studies have been carried out in recent years in a more comprehensive and integrated manner. However, the implementation of these studies has been limited. Realizing the prevailing implementation problem, the agency responsible for the water sector has began work on water sector reform. This started with developing integrated water resources management policies which were subsequently followed by the creation of strategies and development programs. These constituted extensive stakeholder consultations. This process included gathering of experiences from other developing and developed countries.

The water sector studies revealed that Ethiopia is divided into eleven climatic zones ranging from equatorial desert to hot and cool steppes, and from tropical savannah and rain forests to warm temperate and cool highlands. As G. Birhane indicated in his study, rainfall is generally erratic and irregular. The fluctuation of the rainfall is closely related to the occurrence of the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) that occurs on a 2–7 year cycle. Only two of the basins, which make up 7% of the country's landmass and serve as home to a number of pastoralists and their livestock, have no water.

On the contrary, there are also basins with high volumes of water. What is mindboggling is how the pastoralists survive in these water-deficient areas. Remedial measures may be taken to reduce the risk in their traditional life styles. In addition to the general water scarcity in these areas, frequent droughts further affect the socio-economic features of the country. In the history of the country, several intense droughts and famines had been recorded. Several thousands of people have been displaced due to drought and famine events alone.

The incidence of draught may lead to migration of affected people to neighboring zones. In any given year, millions of people face food shortages and need relief assistance. The incidence of poverty is also high at the rural and urban levels respectively. Nevertheless, no major action has been taken to overcome the problem in a sustainable way, and environmental degradation is now aggravating the problem.

In previous water resource development projects, the issue of environmental impact has not been well addressed. Some studies have been conducted, but have not addressed the implementation issue. In other words, major mitigation measures have not been carried out to assist affected groups of people. In countries, including Ethiopia, the major concern should be on two major realities and these are the social and the economic opportunity of water development. Unfortunately, these concerns were not well articulated. The potential irrigable land in Ethiopia is millions of hectares out of which only a very small portion has been developed.

Studies of the water sector have concluded that the production of feed, fiber and sugarcane could not meet local demands with rain-fed agriculture and the current low rate of irrigation development. To close the food gap, it is estimated that millions of hectares of irrigated land have to be developed in the next decades. To this may be added ground water resource development, which has a potential of billions of cubic meters.

The total hydropower potential of the country is estimated to be millions of mega watt when the hydropower projects are fully activated. Water quality is a critical issue in a number of areas, including groundwater in the valleys and basins. Studies show that the groundwater is high in fluorides. The lack of information on the quality of water makes it hard to determine relevant strategies in a given locality. Despite its importance to water management, there is limited water quality monitoring in Ethiopia. Upstream activities in a number of basins contribute to water pollution with no consideration for people in downstream. Without modern management, the condition will further deteriorate. This may lead to conflicts between people living near and around the basins.

Allocation of water may also be another

area of concern. However, there is no major issue leading to a conflict. There are, of course, some cases of pollution by people living in upstream areas. This is actually a common global phenomenon that is related to population growth and distribution that leads to scarcity of natural resource. For the Ethiopian economy which is dependent on agriculture and labor force, it is necessary to build capacity for effectively managing its water resources.

There is, therefore, a need to build research and implementation capacity in Ethiopia linked to development efforts. Development efforts made so far were not supported by empirical research findings. Only a few experts in water resources development have relied on imported ideas or experience, which do not fit the prevailing conditions in the country. The Ethiopian government policy that was developed in the past attempted to address all the issues highlighted above. Experts are of the opinion that the policy deals with various issues, including research. However, since the policy is comprehensive in nature, there are certain issues still to be examined at a local level.

It is agreed that conventional ways are not working in the water sector in every country, including Ethiopia. Economic growth and development is negatively affected by fluctuations in agricultural production due to variation in water supply. This leads to market variations, such as the fall in the product market and recurrent droughts. The partial solution lies in diversification of the production systems that fully utilize the available water resources of Ethiopia. The utilization may range from rainwater harvesting to construction of big dams, and from small-scale to large-scale irrigation systems.

The economic justification would have to be provided through research and studies. In a country with abundant unskilled labor, low-tech labor intensive investment the economic trend is clear. It may have its own high cost and low return on investment. According to G. Birhane, the development of the water sector is negatively influenced by the crucial factors stated below.

These factors are: lack of sustainable and reliable water resources management strategy; need for efficient utilization of water resources; programs and projects without clear objectives; uncertainties and ambiguities in planning; prevalence of centralized management not focusing on rural development; need for institutional sustainability; shortage of operational and maintenance activities of water schemes; water development practices lacking coherent objectives and continuity; highly subsidized social services; absence of stakeholders participation in the development of the water sector; relatively low participation of the private sector; low investment on research and development; and the trans-boundary nature of the rivers

and the conflict that comes along. These factors have impacts on the development of the water sector in Ethiopia. If these factors are not properly managed they may have negative impacts on the economy. In the past, the country has experienced rain and water related problems including drought which it has been unable to avert.

As part of the broad water sector reform program, the government has incorporated drought alleviation and management system in the sector. It has encouraged investment in the sector, thereby addressing drought in a more systematic way, rather than react to drought when it occurs. However, the study on which this program has been based was not comprehensive and little of it was implemented. Because of the lapsed time, these studies are of limited value. Without immediate implementation and updating, such efforts are a waste of meager resources. Given this, the government strived to implement some of the projects identified under the present basin studies. Agencies have been created to support and monitor the implementation of the studies. There are also efforts to facilitate and co-ordinate research and development efforts in the sector. This approach is a departure from previous endeavors in the sector. It is noted that change in the practice of the water sector is a challenge.

In managing change, it is always difficult to get true and real partners and forecast external pressure. Experts note that internally the sector had institutional problems in developing a coherent vision. But because of reorganization of institutions, the sector has an opportunity to be organized under a unified organ and establish the foundation for reform. Of course, the reform begins with setting vision, policy, goal, objectives, principles, strategies, programs and projects. All these are consistent with each other.

The vision of the sector has been spelt out in a way that enables it to alleviate the prevailing problems in the water sector. The policy has three broad parts, which are the general policy, cross-cutting issues and sector issues. The issue of research and development and capacity building is addressed under the cross-cutting issues. Present and future water resources development in Ethiopia is related to research and capacity building. The overall goal of the water resources policy is to enhance and promote all national efforts towards the efficient, equitable and optimum utilization of the available water resources for significant socio-economic development on a sustainable basis.

Achieving the goals and objectives of the water sector development program contributes to raising the living standards of the Ethiopian people. It also enhances production for domestic consumption and exports that earn foreign exchange.

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

Editorial

To reap maximum benefit from tourism

As part of the efforts to cultivate the country's tourism potential for the overall economic development, the government has launched an exhibition at Science Museum to display the untapped potential the country possesses.

In a tweeted message, PM Abiy Ahmed (PhD) also urged Ethiopians to do their best to harness the country's rich potential for development in the tourism sector. "I call upon all Ethiopians to explore what your country offers; to extract the potential of what you discover; to promote and to serve in the interest of positioning Ethiopia as a destination with many splendors"

Indeed, the tourism sector deserves such big attention as it can pay back the economy duly with multifaceted benefits like financially, creating employment opportunity, safeguarding the environment among others.

Almost every country in the world practices tourism though the type and volume differs. One difference it makes is the attention the countries give to the sector as an industry.

Some countries who have a lot of potential to benefit from the sector invest a lot of finance and knowledge to nurture the industry. Indeed they reap what they sow. Ethiopia is potentially among the countries that can reap a lot of benefit from tourism if it gives due attention to it.

It is endowed with diverse sources of tourism. It has various tangible and intangible heritages that are registered by UNESCO that outnumber any country in Africa in this regard. It has also innumerable sites with captivating natural scenery. These places are good factors to attract more tourists.

Furthermore, Ethiopia has a good opportunity to gain revenue from conference tourism, since it hosts many international events annually.

In this regard, the government activity need due support as they are likely to raise the country's performance in the tourism industry. Over the past five years, it has ventured new trend of development that boost tourism industry. Such development project include those implemented under the dine for nation, dine for Sheger ... etc initiatives.

Such unique mega projects have managed to mobilize resources from the public to transform the naturally intact places to tourism destinations of irresistible beauty. There are hopes that they will add the tourist flow to the country as well as their duration of stay in the country.

The rapid development of tourism is likely to serve as a booster the rest of the economic sectors in the country. The industry can generate a huge sum of foreign currency that the country is highly in need of. Furthermore it can create employment opportunity for the large number of youth. Tourism is also a typical economic sector that can serve the objectives of developing the economy without causing damage on the ecosystem or the environment. Developing ecotourism enjoy due acceptance in that it can maintain peoples livelihood while protecting the environment as it is usually referred to as the Smokeless Industry.

Considering the all-round importance of tourism for the country, the private sector at home and abroad should intensify their collaboration to assist the government's efforts of advancing the development of tourism in the country.



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Opinion

Ethiopia's endeavor to boost diplomacy in various fields

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

In the modern days, educational diplomacy could serve as an important tool for enhancing global and regional initiatives for peace and expansion of friendship among the current generation of the world. It would create a common understanding on major socio-economic and environmental issues that the world is facing. Education diplomacy could serve as a conveyor belt for fostering the culture of dialogue among the intellectuals of the world. It could be instrumental in sharing research findings on peace and conflict resolution across the institutes of higher learning in the world.

Educational diplomacy enhances cross cultural relations and experience sharing among the peoples of the world through public diplomacy and expansion of tourism as an instrument to expand good will among the intellectuals of the world.

Students of secondary and higher institutes of learning across the world can use educational visits and tours across the world to gain practical knowledge in the areas of culture, science and technology and other fields of studies. They can also use such opportunities to enhance youth to youth relations across the world.

Diplomacy in the field of education will provide an excellent opportunity for third world countries to foster south-south cooperation and transfer of technology for sustainable development. In the world in which digitalization and automation is playing a decisive role, educational diplomacy is a key strategic option for ICT and digitalization of the national economies of countries like Ethiopia.

Educational diplomacy is an important tool for promoting research in the areas of global health, agriculture, water development and the energy sector. Sharing of research findings among the universities across the world will help to resolve major global issues which are posing a threat to the general wellbeing of the peoples of the world.

The less developed countries can employ educational diplomacy to vigorously advocate for new economic order in the world. This is important primarily because unless viable reforms are introduced in the global trade and economic relations, these countries cannot pull themselves out of the vicious circle of poverty.

Now the world is under an imminent threat of the effects of climate change. Educators and researchers across the world need to unite in pressurizing policy makers across the world to solicit fund to help the most vulnerable countries suffering from the devastating aftermaths of climate change.

The current situation in the world demands strong cooperation and partnership to tackle

In the world in which digitalization and automation is playing a decisive role, educational diplomacy is a key strategic option for ICT and digitalization of the national economies of countries like Ethiopia

the challenges that the world is facing. No country can be able to face the common challenges the world is facing in a single handed manner. Education diplomacy is an important strategic instrument for global solidarity and partnership for enhancing cooperation in the education sector.

As stated earlier, Ethiopia is using formal and informal diplomatic channels to promote quality education in the country. Universities in the country can use formal diplomatic channels through the Minister of Foreign Affairs or can contact major universities across the globe to engage in program exchange systems to ensure quality education in their respective areas of research.

By joining BRICS, Ethiopia will have the opportunity not only to expand her educational diplomacy but also to engage in expanded diplomacy on various sectors oriented diplomatic activities. As part of her regional effort to create a forum for solidarity among African countries, Ethiopia embarked on establishing Pan African University in the country.

The fulfillment of the Ten Years Perspective Plan certainly requires strengthening of educational diplomacy as a pathway to be used to develop a wider strategy to ensure the development of the country. Ethiopia will continue to engage in diplomacy through the education sector as an important component of her foreign policy and diplomacy.

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

Business & Economy

The progressive investment toiling for better results

BY BACHA ZEWDIE

Dire Dawa, the “Oasis”, one of the Ethiopian cities known for their industrial centers, the hospitality and wonderful community of its residents makes it convenient and ideal for investment work. Dire Dawa, which is known as the “Industrial Corridor”, was a city known for its commercial activities, but this business center has remained stagnant.

According to the data of the Trade, Industry and Investment Office of Dire Dawa, the city is making an effort to return to its former commercial status. One of the activities that show this effort is the activity it is doing in the investment sector and the effort is bearing fruit. The sector has been managed by a board. This is a step taken to ensure that all investment sector issues are considered by the board, and the problems of the sector as well as investors’ questions get a quick and organized response.

Abera Mengistu, the Head of the Investment Research and Promotion Team at the Department of Trade, Industry and Investment in Dire Dawa City Administration, explained that encouraging changes are being registered in the investment sector in the City. The city has performed well in the investment sector in the last fiscal year. One of the activities was to issue investment licenses for new investment projects. Accordingly, in the 2022/23 fiscal year, it was planned to issue investment licenses for 450 investment projects, and 347 investors (206 in services, 104 in manufacturing, 22 in construction, and 15 in agriculture) received licenses. And, the projects have the potential to create job opportunities for more than 21 thousand citizens.

Among the investors who received investment license, eight factories and four projects in the hotel and tourism sector, which created job opportunities for 3, 952 citizens, have started work. The activities that made it possible have also been done.

One of the advantages of investment projects is that they directly or indirectly benefit the communities in the areas where the projects are carried out. When the city administration of Dire Dawa brings investors to the city, it is with the intention that the investors will benefit the local community in various ways. Abera explained that the investment projects carried out in the city have many benefits for the city and the surrounding society.

“In addition to creating job opportunities through their investment activities, investors in the city are fulfilling their social responsibilities by providing various types of support. The activities of supporting students with educational materials and helping the underprivileged are examples of this. As investors carry out infrastructure development activities in the areas where they do their investment activities, the local community will benefit from this activity. He said this benefit has made the



Car Assembly for Dire Dawa Free Trade Zone

community develop a positive attitude towards investment projects.

Although it is not deniable that Dire Dawa has recorded a good performance in terms of investment activities in the last fiscal year, Abera stated that there were challenges that hindered its performance. One of the problems is the implementation gaps in giving quick responses and taking measures to the questions of investors who could not carry out their work according to the contract they had taken for investment license and land.

Establishing Free Trade Zones is one of the practices that countries implement to facilitate their export and import trade and increase their foreign direct investment flow and to improve their overall economic growth. It is a place where value-added production, logistics, financial provision and similar activities and services are performed. In addition to producing products, importers and exporters bring goods into the country and store them in the region, process them and deliver them back to foreign markets. It also offers integrated financial and advisory services.

With this in mind, the Dire Dawa Free Trade Zone, which is expected to make a significant contribution to the national economic growth by streamlining Ethiopia’s export and import trade and increasing the investment flow, was announced on August 14, 2022 by the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Abiy Ahmed (PhD). It is remembered that the Free Trade Zone started working being inaugurated by the Prime Minister on the same day.

According to Abera, one of the good opportunities and resources that enable Dire Dawa to achieve superior performance in trade and investment activities is the free trade zone of Dire Dawa. Currently, many investors are showing interest in operating in the free trade zone. There is a better flow of investors than before. The free trade zone is making a great contribution to increase the flow of investment.

“Foreign investors’ primary interest is to enter the free trade zone and engage in business. 27 foreign investors who participated in last year’s “Invest Ethiopia” investment forum visited the Dire Dawa free trade zone. The free trade zone will greatly help to increase investment flow,” he said. Adding he said that the region creates great potential for the Dire Dawa investment.

Abera further explained that Dire Dawa Investment, which showed a successful performance in the last fiscal year, has planned to achieve better success in the 2023/24 fiscal year as well. It is planned to give investment licenses to 500 investors in the fiscal year. The investors are expected to register a capital of more than 42 billion Birr.

According to the plan set, among these investors, 35 projects are in the pipeline to complete their construction and start production. The city administration of Dire Dawa has the desire for many investors to engage in the manufacturing sector in terms of the city’s investment capacity and vision. However, the investors will be protected in their choice to work in the sectors that their knowledge level, financial capacity and work experience can make them successful. Members of the Diaspora community are showing great interest in engaging in the investment sectors of Dire Dawa.

In addition to job creation and local development, one of the reasons why investment is required is to increase technology transfer. In this regard, members of the Diaspora community those were born in Dire Dawa area have come to the city from different parts of the world to provide technology training. This activity will continue to be strengthened in the current fiscal year. Encouraging results are being recorded in making the work carried out by the experts brought by the investors from abroad so that the Ethiopians can replace the foreigners with short-term practical training and make the technological transition a reality. Many manufacturers

are following this practice and carrying out their investment activities.

In an effort to improve the quality of service delivery, some investment sector services have been started to be provided online. According to Abera, the one-window service provided to investors allows investors to easily submit requests for their necessary resources for their projects and get quick responses.

In terms of infrastructure provision, Abera recalled that the city has tried to increase the flow of investors by realizing better infrastructure provision in the past. The 202 hectare Dire Dawa Industrial Village has its own power distribution station and is not connected to the city’s power supply, so there is no risk of power cuts. The construction of the power distribution station of the industrial village is a reliable solution to the problem of power supply, which was frequently interrupted and had a significant impact on the productivity of investment institutions. The investors have also given their testimony that they have a good view for the development and supply. It is planned to upgrade the road level inside the village.

It is known that the operating system implemented to encourage investors has a legal framework prepared at the national level. In this regard, the Dire Dawa City Administration implements procedures to encourage investors entering the city based on the legal framework. Activities are part of measures to encourage investors.

Abera expressed his concern that the lack of budget will have an impact on investment activities, especially land preparation. Another problem that has been identified in the investment sector in the fiscal year is the issue of the investment stakeholders’ ability to carry out activities that are essential to the success of investment with equal speed and efficiency. There are 12 institutions operating. The speed and efficiency of these institutions requires great attention.

Art & Culture



Irreechaa: Platform for Peace, Reconciliation and Blessing

BY NAOL GIRMA

Irreechaa is a platform for peace and reconciliation. It is known for upholding these values. On the eve of the *Irreechaa* ceremony, local elders and Abbaa Gadaas' summon communities and ask whether peace prevails amongst them or not. They command those at loggerheads to settle their disagreement prior to thanksgiving day. A person who committed a crime such as the murder of a fellow human being, must pay blood money or compensation called Gumaa before setting out for *Irreechaa*. All who committed petty or serious crimes must obey the commands of Abbaa Gadaas' to settle their disputes and ask each other for an excuse before the day of thanksgiving and prayer.

It is the duty of the community to obey the commands of the elders' and Abbaa Gadaas'. Negotiations should be held to resolve disputes and to let celebrants bury the hatchet and stop nursing a grudge with one another before the Thanksgiving Day, so that one goes to the *Irreechaa* venue with pure heart and free of guilt, hidden motives and revenge. Peace, negotiation and forgiveness are the basic pillar values on which the *Irreechaa* festivities are based. *Irreechaa* is a place of peace and reconciliation, not a place of revenge or accusation. Oromo is a society that values the fear of God. Such wisdom allows it timely resolution through negotiations. Going to Malkaa *Irreechaa* nursing resentment, revenge, or grievance is not allowed. Celebrants who go to Malkaa for Thanksgiving should forgive their friends and go to Malkaa with a free mind and heart. The elders ask the crowd three questions: Are you all at peace with each other? Are you all at peace with the Creator? Are you in peace with the creator? This time, those in conflict and disagreement show their willingness for forgiveness. The public respond in loud voices, "We are in peace with all," and then the Thanksgiving ceremony officially begins with Abbaa Malka's and Abbaa Gadas's blessings.

The public that surrounds Malkaa *Irreechaa* holding green grass and flowers dips the grass and flowers into the water and sprinkle the water on their faces and thank god for the last season's success, prays for the future, and receives blessings from elders. They preach peace, love, unity, hope, prosperity, commonality, fraternity and unity. The crowd thanks the creator and

wishes peace for themselves, for others, for the earth, sky, and entire nation in songs and prayers. All activities and processes carried out before and on Thanksgiving Day show that *Irreechaa* is a place where peace and good deeds are practiced and demonstrated. For this reason, the Oromo people believe that "when humans are at peace with each other, God is also at peace with them".

The other important value is the one that deals with a blessing. *Irreechaa* is an important stage where elders and Abbaa Gadaas' give blessings for the nation, land, man, women, children, animals, ecosystem and their co-existence in mutuality. Thus, *Irreechaa* is a place where blessings are bestowed by elders and received by fellow participants. On this special occasion, naming-giving ceremonies of children as well as showering wedding couples with blessings are among the big events. Besides, the occasion facilitates chance meetings where bachelors woo, date and seduce their future wives and husbands.

Irreechaa is a big platform where love is preached and praised; disagreement, grievance and discontent are condemned; where the creator and creature, the big and small, the rich and the poor, neighbors with neighbors, man with God, man and land, man and environment cohabit in peace. In addition to the reconciliation, peace, blessing, and forgiveness that take place on the stage, it is also a day that the hopes of participants are renewed. Moreover it is a day on which Oromo gives thanks to almighty God/Waaqa for what he/she has and prays for the limitations he/she fears will encounter them. The Oromo people give thanks to Waaqa, who has kept him or her through the darkness of summer and transited him/her safely with entire families to the spring season which is filled with hope and joy. According to Oromo society Peace has a special place as it is the pillar of all necessities for a human being. Abbaa Malkaa, Abbaa Gadaa, and other elders declare harmony, prosperity, and hope on the stage, surrounded by multitudes. The elders give blessings in the following manner.

***Irreechaa* is the Symbol of Unity, Fraternity!**

Yusuf Tusse a participant from Kenya said his country and Ethiopia share historical relationship all the way down from Haile Selassie and the relationship has been going

on for generations; and we would request this relationship to be strengthened even more for prosperity of our countries, nation and nationalities.

Irreechaa is celebrated not only in Ethiopia. "It has become a regional, African, and global event."

According to him, Ethiopia can be a good ambassador for Africa, not only for itself, because there are so many communities with diverse culture in Ethiopia and one of the most populated countries in Africa.

"I want to challenge the leadership and also the community that Ethiopia has not marketed itself enough. For whatever reason, this is the time that Ethiopia speaks louder than itself so that the world can hear and see the green, the scenery, and the beauty it has. Ethiopia has to speak and show to the world what it has in terms of diverse culture, food, and tourism attraction so as to market them to the world."

Another Kenyan participant on the *Irreechaa* festival said that this tradition is very important in unifying people, celebrating the festival, he said, adding that the whole world can come and learn from this important event.

According to him we need to expand this festival and promote it further to reach out to more people so that people come and celebrate.

When we say *Irreechaa* is the symbol of unity and fraternity, we mean that the values of unity, fraternity, respect and love have power in building a nation. *Irreechaa* celebration is a place where Oromo society comes together without discrimination against sex, age, religion, belief, outlook, or class. Therefore, *Irreechaa* is the place where the Oromo renew their unity, fraternity, love, history, and culture. *Irreechaa* is a living witness where all walks of life and adherents of different religions come together and celebrate Oromummaa. *Irreechaa* is becoming the stage where the unity and fraternity of nations and nationalities in Ethiopia are strengthened and displayed to the world. It is becoming the best place where the cultural values of the Oromo are exhibited to the world. Especially, in the last couple of years, *Irreechaa* has become the known platform where the neighboring nations of Oromo participate warmly and exhibit their culture, share experiences with Oromo and admire the unity and greatness of Oromo and its culture.

***Irreechaa* for economy**

The *Irreechaa* celebration has a multidimensional benefit for the nation's economy. Beyond exhibiting the positive

symbolism of our country to the world. It is the source of income for the merchants. Furthermore, the celebration creates job opportunities, additional income, and a place where friends meet and recreate. The participants, journalists, and tourists who come from far and near expend on hotels, transport, ornaments, and cultural tools, which inject a lot of money into the economy, which in turn increases national benefit.

The most benefit goes to those who produce cultural clothes and ornaments. The modernization of cultural clothing not only boosts the economies of individual traders but also has a large share in scaling up the culture of the world. The opportunity the celebration creates for the economy is the most essential pillar for lifting the overall national economy.

***Irreechaa*: For beauty, nationalism**

Irreechaa is beauty by itself. Its beauty is described by the attires (clothes), ornaments, paraphernalia/*ulfoo*, the line of participants' spectacle, cultural dance and songs, which are all part of the beauty of the ceremony. When the women carry their ritual stick/*siinqee*, wearing *caaccuu*, wearing *callee*, carrying milk's utensils/*okolee*, decorated by cultural dressing's and singing a song *maarehoo*, *yaa maarehoo...*, and go in front of Abbaa Gadas, elders, and multitudes, it gives exceptional beauty to the parade. This beauty and togetherness of the Oromo had been prohibited for decades and a century. Now, *Irreechaa* is in its revival or renaissance stage, where the new generation is considering it as a source of strength. The youths have begun saying, *Irreechaa* is our power! *Irreechaa* is our culture! *Irreechaa* is ours! *Irreechaa* is our identity!

The marching to the venues by festival has to follow certain rituals. Girls march ahead the elderly; then Siinqees' mothers follow. This is because elderly believe that the girls are innocent and more sympathetic. Next, the *Abbaa Muudaa*, *Abbaa Gadaa* and the participants take turns, in a manner that respects the Oromo customs and traditions. Youths are singing, dancing, and watching the safety of the participants at the march in the back while. It is unethical for the young generation to march ahead of the other participants.

Indepth

Highlights of President's address to joint session of the two Houses

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

On Monday, October 9, 2023 the President of the FDRE Sahle-Work Zewde opened the joint session of the two Houses in the presence of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD). As per the constitution of the FDRE the president opens the two Houses for the yearly activities on the last Monday of the first month of the Ethiopian year and that was based on this precept that the head of state was present in parliament to deliver her opening speech in which she highlighted the major programs of the government for the new year.

In her address the president made a long introductory remark regarding the country not only of the present but also with a historical perspective. She highlighted how Ethiopia was a major country not only in Africa but also the world at large for her ancient civilization and glorious history that academics have witnessed in their accounts and researches. But she also did not shun from highlighting the dangers that the country can run unless certain current tendencies, certain historical narratives are rectified and used in a way that can build our nation avoiding past mistakes or those that are perceived as such and continue to unduly haunt us. She said when we were united and faced any problems we managed to resolve them and it is division that continues to keep us back from growing as we should. She said that the country has paid dearly due to various sorts of intestinal conflicts that have really hurt us. It stopped us from advancing forward and meets all our economic plans and prospects.

There were enormous losses only recently alone when we engaged in the conflict in the north and that has left lots of wounds and scars among our society she said. It was an avoidable conflict if we had only followed the peaceful path of discussing our problems around a table in a civilized manner and it is a pity that there are still similar problems today while we have the chance to use the formation of the National Dialogue Commission to present all our views and work towards understanding and accommodate our differences as much as possible with the principle of give and take. She said resorting to violence has always been damaging and not worth it because in conflicts there can be only one winner and the other party may lose, but if we use discussions and negotiations all parties involved are winners and that is what this government intends to do this year and the coming ones. The doors for discussion and negotiation are always open and this is a principle of this government. It is well known that resorting to armed rebellion against the state cannot be tolerated because the government has the responsibility to



keep its people safe and sound and guarantee their livelihoods in a peaceful environment. It should be underlined that there cannot be tolerance for violent means to advance claims or resolve problems. The president warned that this path is not tolerable and cannot be left to thrive.

Our people needs to narrow the differences as much as we can and share values and look for building up a united country that can be up to the challenge of facing successfully the demands of the epoch, what is needed to thrive in a world full of complications and challenges, as well as multiple geopolitical issues.

Whatever mistakes might have been committed in the past need to be rectified and serve us as a guide not to do it again. We cannot let ourselves be prisoners of any eventual past mistakes or miscalculations and we need not lose this golden opportunity of making the best out of the National Dialogue Commission which has been in action now for the last one and a half years and has been preparing the ground work such as selecting agendas, issues and participants from various zones of the country and is soon to embark on the phase of discussions. Every national and every group is invited to take part through their representatives and be part of the solution rather than the problem. The president has urged people to take part in these discussions and not miss this opportunity because she said we have missed several others in the past.

First and foremost the president said the main objective of this government for this year is to secure reliable and sustainable peace throughout the country.

We need to adopt a new common shared national narrative for all. It can't do this, the fancied advancement and progress as

well as prosperity will be difficult to attain.

We will use all avenues of peace for all while we are firm on our stance to secure the rule of law throughout the nation. Our doors for peace are however always open and we need to insist on this so that there are no misperceptions because this is a critical stance the president underlined. To this end the National Dialogue Commission which was established a few years ago is a true opportunity and we need not squander it.

The president said that the dissemination of false stories and fake news has reached alarming levels and it needs to be controlled. Citizens must refrain from actions that try to disseminate hate and distrust among communities using false narratives and using inflammatory language and in the current age of technological advancement these words penetrate every household and the dangers are clear.

There is no doubt she said that we should always be ready to learn from our past mistakes and not repeat them or be prisoners of those mistakes casting a dark shadow on our path to move forward.

The equality among citizens must be guaranteed, the president said and building peace through negotiations is a priority for us. When all parties are represented in the political landscape freely and equally this will help us move forward and achieve our socio-economic objectives.

Again the National Dialogue is the best chance to give an opportunity for all sides in the social and political spectrum and contribute to an agreement. Our differences must be narrowed as much as we can and the country should reflect the faces of all communities.

The president has referred to Ethiopia of the past and mentioned how a major civilized

state it was and how history is witness to this fact. And to have this chance again the National Dialogue is the opportunity to continue to write new history she said. Ethiopia should win and for that violence and conflicts should be abandoned as a means to solve problems or iron out differences of viewpoints or ideologies. Everyone should present their case and work toward resolving differences without considering resorting to violence or use of force. She said it must be known that the government is the sole authority which has the prerogative to use force legitimately.

The Pretoria Peace Deal has opened a new opportunity to a new era of peace, but there are still challenges in the country that we need to cope with together standing as one. Talking about the economy the president said that it should be noted that our economy has continued to grow despite the multiple challenges the country has been facing both internally as well as externally.

Last year the economy registered a growth of 7.5 percent and this year we work to attain 7.9 % she noted. There has been diversification in the economy so that we do not rely only on a few items only and there are now more beneficiaries from the economic growth. There have been created more than three million jobs last year and in the next three years more than nine million jobs are expected to be created. As regards foreign employment chances there have been agreements with several countries to send as many as half a million people for employment this year she noted.

Following the adoption of the Ten Year Development Plan there has been assessments of how the economy is doing and the biggest challenge has been inflation and the government is doing all it can to resolve this problem that has been causing sufferance particularly to the lower classes of people with low incomes. The biggest solution to lessen the impact of inflation is to increase internal production and avoid relying on imports that cost us huge amounts of foreign currency. Strict fiscal policies will be adopted she said to lessen the impact of inflation.

Another huge challenge to our country the president mentioned in her address is corruption and we have to do away with this respecting the rule of law, applying strictly the law. There should be more control in this regard and contraband and illegal trade is also another huge challenge we face and need to combat fiercely.

All in all the president's address had a note of optimism but with caution inviting citizens to work with the government respecting the rules of peaceful life and doing all they can to avoid being accomplices of illegal ventures in every sense. A united Ethiopia has unlimited potential was her core message.

Law & Politics

The dividends of Abbay Dam to regional integration

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

The Abbay Dam plays a crucial role in fostering regional integration among Nile Basin countries. The dam's potential to increase hydroelectric power generating capacity, foster regional cooperation, spur economic development, and promote environmental sustainability makes it a game changer for the Nile Basin regions.

By providing reliable electricity, the Abbay Dam could attract foreign investment for the most part in manufacturing and heavy industries. Additionally, the dam could facilitate the development of renewable energy industries which could have global implications. By increasing Ethiopia's hydroelectric power generating capacity, the dam will provide the much-needed electricity not just to Ethiopia but also to its neighbors.

The dam could also help to spur economic development in the Nile Basin regions. By providing reliable electricity, the Abbay Dam could attract foreign investment predominantly in manufacturing and heavy industries.

The construction of the Abbay Dam exemplifies the power of collaboration. Its successful implementation necessitates comprehensive consultations and negotiations among all the Nile Basin countries. This process contributes to trust building, diplomatic relationships and a deeper understanding of each country's concerns and aspirations.

Regional integration facilitated by the dam can contribute to economic growth and development within the Nile Basin. By expanding access to electricity and water resources, the dam becomes attractive to foreign investments, stimulates industrialization and generates employment opportunities. These positive economic outcomes further strengthen the bonds of regional integration.

As a matter of fact, the project's positive effects can also extend to neighboring regions fostering stability, peace, and cooperation.

The Abbay Dam stands as a significant player in fostering regional integration among the Nile Basin countries. Through its contributions to energy generation, economic development, and cultural exchange, the dam brings Nile basin countries closer together. By prioritizing cooperation, dialogue, and sustainable development, the dam signifies a remarkable milestone in the journey towards regional integration and collective progress.

The dam's immense contributions to various aspects such as energy generation, water resource management, economic development, and cultural exchange significantly contribute to bringing Nile basin countries closer together. The Abbay Dam marks a remarkable milestone in the journey towards regional integration and collective progress.

One of the key ways in which the dam fosters regional integration is through its significant contributions to energy generation. The dam presents an opportunity for the Nile Basin countries to share this renewable source of power. This cooperation in the energy sector not only strengthens their interdependence



but also enhances their energy security and promotes sustainable development.

The availability of electricity from the dam can attract foreign investments, stimulate industrial growth, and create employment opportunities. This economic growth in turn strengthens the ties between Nile basin countries and fosters regional integration through increased productivity. By the same token, the successful implementation of the dam can have positive spillover effects in terms of stability, peace, and collaboration.

Additionally, the Abbay Dam can serve as a model for other international projects inspiring similar regional integration efforts globally. To fully realize the potential for regional integration, it is essential to prioritize cooperation, dialogue, and sustainable development throughout the entire lifespan of the dam.

By prioritizing sustainable practices and environmental conservation, the dam contributes to the preservation of natural resources and the promotion of a greener future for the Nile basin countries. This shared commitment to sustainable development further strengthens the bonds of regional integration and collective progress.

The Abbay Dam stands as a beacon of regional integration among the Nile Basin countries. Through its contributions to energy generation, water resource management, economic development, and other related aspects, the dam can bring the Nile basin countries closer together. Needless to say, by prioritizing cooperation, dialogue, and sustainable development, the dam signifies a remarkable milestone in the journey towards regional integration and collective progress for the Nile Basin region.

In a similar vein, the dam plays a crucial role in fostering regional integration among the countries of the Nile Basin. It goes beyond immediate benefits by prioritizing sustainable practices and environmental conservation. By doing so, the dam contributes to the preservation of natural resources and the promotion of a greener future for the Nile Basin countries. This shared commitment to sustainable development further strengthens the bonds of regional integration and collective progress.

The shared commitment to sustainable development through the Abbay Dam also

has social and economic implications. By prioritizing environmentally-friendly practices, the Nile basin countries can create new opportunities for sustainable economic growth. The development of energy sectors such as hydropower can attract investments and provide employment opportunities driving the transition towards a more sustainable and inclusive economy.

By collectively working towards a greener future, they build strong bonds based on mutual respect, collaboration and a common vision for sustainable development. This shared commitment to environmental conservation creates a conducive environment for further regional integration efforts and paves the way for collective progress.

The dam's emphasis on sustainability encourages knowledge-sharing, fosters trust among nations and inspires collective action for responsible resource management globally. The dam plays a significant role in promoting regional integration among the Nile Basin countries.

The dam's construction has been a subject of intense discussion and debate. However, with effective cooperation and collaboration, the dam can serve as a catalyst for regional integration and development. By working together on such a significant project, the Nile Basin countries can demonstrate their commitment to regional solidarity and the pursuit of common goals. This can pave the way for further collaboration in various sectors.

The Abbay Dam can contribute to economic growth and development in the Nile Basin countries. By expanding access to electricity and water resources, the dam can attract foreign investments, spur industrialization, and create employment opportunities. Such positive economic outcomes can further strengthen the bonds of regional integration.

By prioritizing sustainable practices and environmental conservation, the dam contributes to the preservation of natural resources and the promotion of a greener future. This shared commitment to sustainable development not only strengthens the bonds of regional integration but also has broader social, economic, and global implications.

Through its contributions to energy generation, water resource management,

economic development, and cultural exchange, the dam can bring the Nile basin countries closer together. By prioritizing cooperation, dialogue, and sustainable development, the dam can mark a significant milestone in the journey towards regional integration and collective progress.

The installation of Abbay Dam's five turbines gives impetus to country's economy and the region apart from flickering hope for millions of Ethiopians who do not have access to electricity, said water resource researchers.

In an interview with Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), the hydro-politics researcher, who is also the member of Abbay Dam negotiating team, Yacob Arsano (PhD) said that the five turbines that are being installed at the Abbay Dam have immense benefit to boost power supply locally and to the international market.

The already operating two turbines are also supporting the national grid to satisfy a large number of citizens who are in dire need of electricity, he added.

The national effort to operate seven turbines this fiscal year is an inspiring move to deal with power dearth in rural areas and increase energy supply to industries, he noted.

In addition, it also boosts the Ethiopia's capacity to export a relatively high amount of energy to neighboring countries, according to Yacob.

"Djibouti and Sudan demand more power from Ethiopia. Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan are also other countries that are approving their demand to import electricity. One of the significance of the construction of the dam is for this purpose, he said adding that "I think, the operation of the five turbines will benefit all these countries as well," he indicated.

Water Resource Researcher at Addis Ababa University, Prof. Admasu Gebeyehu on his part expressed that the operation of the five turbines is almost equivalent to one-third of the full operation of the dam.

He believed that the turbines installation and operation is a great move as its helps to address power shortage in the manufacturing sector.

Prof. Admasu considers this progress as a signal that shows the project doesn't cause a significant harm in a way that has been complained by lower riparian countries.

Women in Focus

Great influence through social media

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

Currently residing in the United States of America, Hiwot Tadesse, an artist, is famous in the art industry. But, she wins the hearts of many through her voluntary activity that she carried out via social media. Not only did she provide a helping hand for several people, but she allowed many Ethiopians across the globe to pay back to their community through her volunteerism.

The following is Hiwot Tadesse's stay with the Ethiopian Press Agency; where she talked about her experience and voluntary activities. Enjoy!

Hiwot went to Tsadeku Yahannes Primary School, located at her birth place, Gondar, Amhara State where a number of prominent Ethiopians like Professor Haile Gerima was educated. When she was a student, besides the habit of reading books, she used to actively engage in different clubs in her school.

Unfortunately, following her grandmother's death, she could not stay in Gondar and had to come to her auntie's house in Addis Ababa; and continued her preparatory school. Later on, she was lucky enough to join the Theater and Art Department in Addis Ababa University which was her childhood dream.

"I never considered myself as a journalist but an artist. For the reason that art and promotion is highly linked in the country, I feel happy that I was able to engage more in the media."

She went on saying: "I believe my purpose in life is beyond having a decent job, owning a house or a car. Stretching a helping hand for people that are in need and giving them relief is what inspires me to live and do well."

This is the main reason that she uses her social media account for charity purposes. Here, she mentioned that the Coronavirus pandemic had a significant role for her to highly engage in the voluntary activity through the media outlet.

Despite the socioeconomic impact, the pandemic played undeniable role for the emerging of many ideas and businesses. Staying at home pushed her to spend more time on the social media and allowed her to meet plenty of kindhearted individuals.

Then, she accidentally came across that the Makedonia Humanitarian Association was having hard time trying to provide adult diaper since

there was restriction of visitors due to the pandemic and number of people that used to support the organization was significantly declined. Then, she instantly started collecting adult diapers from her fellow Ethiopians in the US and donated the diapers to the Association's representative in Virginia.

Hiwot did not stop her charity work there; but she continued supporting people along with her social media followers. She started sharing the story of the people that seek support by verifying their story with the support of her circles. Thus, she was able to reach out to so many children as well as adults through the platform.

Though compromising her time needs a lot of dedication given the fact that she is a mother of three and have her private job, she stressed that the charity work is something that she will not compare it to anything.

One time, she saw a promotion made by Ethiopian Children's Cardiac Center that says 'Donate your Christmas gift for cardiac patients'. By the time, a child with cardiac disease needs at least a hundred thousand Birr for medication. She decided to cover the expense of medication of one child. Then she discussed with her friends and collected over 270,000 birr that covers at least three children's expense.

One day, a father whose child was suffering from cardiac disease gave her a call. He told her that he is a father of a six months daughter who needed a surgery in India and he was short of cash. She immediately communicated with her friends and gave him the money he needed.

"Years after, her father sent me a picture of a beautiful and healthy girl celebrating her birthday along with a note. I do not think I will ever forget the feeling," she underscored.

After her spouse came up with the idea of celebrating their children's first birthday by donating books for "Kebebe Tsehay Orphanage Center", and donated the children comic books that they collected through social media platform, she made it a habit of celebrating when her own birthday.

Apart from her continuous support to the cardiac center, she decided to collect another donation as a way of her birthday celebration. Hiwot said to her friends and followers to exchange their supposed gifts in to cash and give her instead; so that she can support the center. Fortunately, she collected over one million Birr which sponsored around ten children. She continued the second year gathering some 1.2 million Birr and sponsored 12 children.



Hiwot Tadesse

“

I believe my purpose in life is beyond having a decent job, owning a house or a car. Stretching a helping hand for people that are in need and giving them relief is what inspires me to live and do well”

Hiwot was never satisfied with her support as the numbers of children that are lined up in the waiting list for their turn for examination did not give her peace. She then collaborated with likeminded people and was able to donate the cardiac center 50 million Birr worth medical machine (equipment).

Hiwot was awarded for her dedication in supporting people in need. Best Service Award was one of her prizes given to her by Montgomery City.

She was also rewarded the Sweet Life Award for using social media for charity works. Similarly, she was given several appreciation certificates from several charity organizations that she worked with such as Makedonia Humanitarian Association, Tesfa Addis Parents Childhood Cancer Organization, Selihom Mental Care Center, among others.

She said that she shares all the recognition and appreciation certificate with her husband and three children as she dedicate all those times in her charity activities taking from her families; and extended her gratitude for those people and organizations who believed in her and provided support to the needy one.

Society

Bridging differences to sustain lasting peace

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Peace and security are fundamental pillars that enable societies to lead a peaceful life and advance development endeavors. Without peace, it becomes highly unlikely for countries to achieve their development targets and for communities to spend a single day in peace.

Therefore, peace and development are interconnected, and peace is an imperative element that helps citizens lead peaceful lives and advance development.

The presence of peace provides a conducive environment for societies to thrive. It fosters stability, social harmony; ensure the rule of law, creates the necessary conditions for economic growth, investment, and human development. Peace nurtures trust and cooperation among individuals and communities and establishes a favorable atmosphere where progress can flourish.

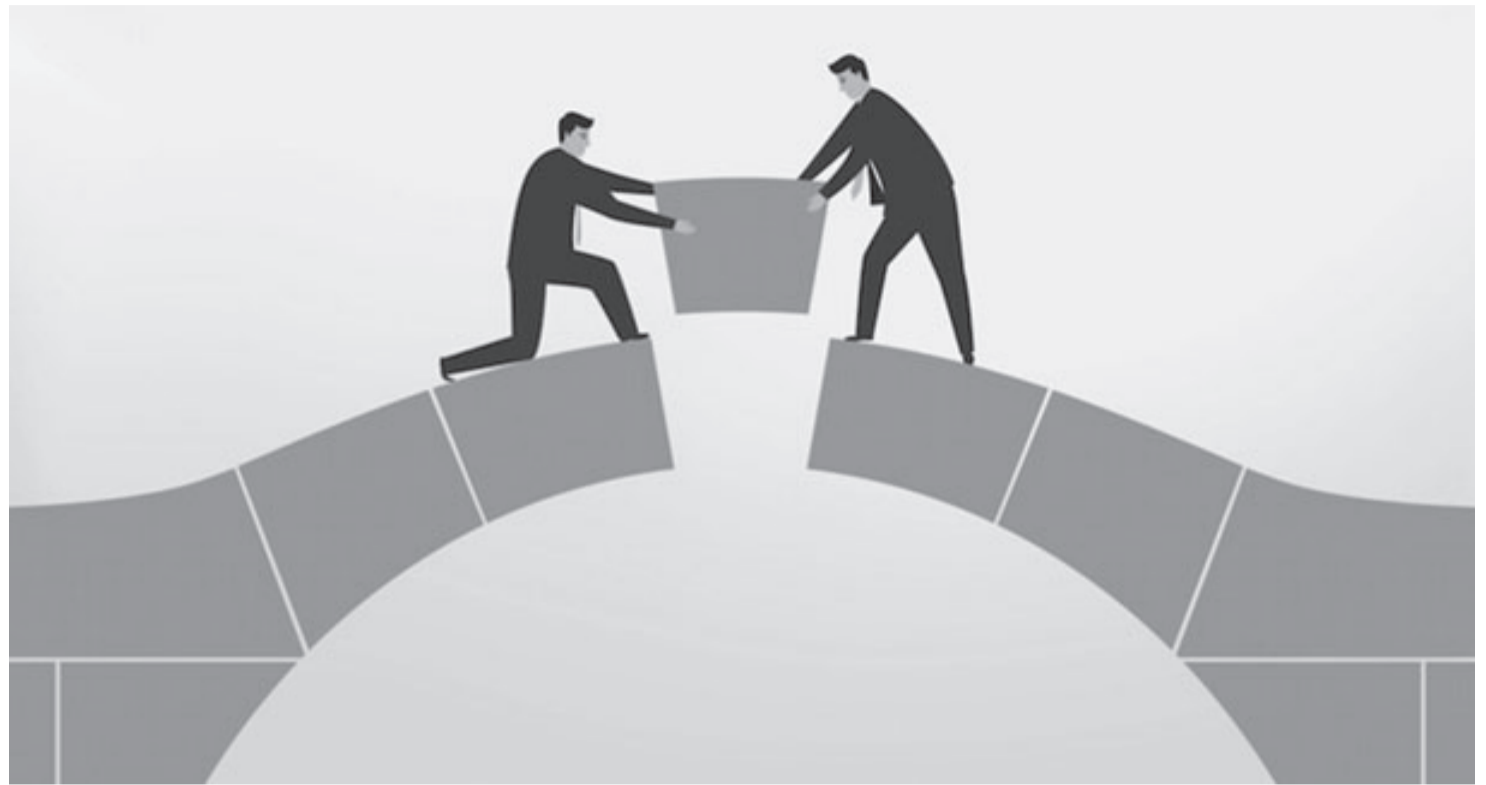
Moreover, peace plays a vital role in safeguarding human rights, promoting social justice, and ensuring the well-being of all citizens. It allows societies to focus on inclusive development, address inequalities, and provide equal opportunities for everyone to thrive. Peace also facilitates the effective functioning of institutions, encourages good governance, and promotes citizen participation in decision-making processes.

In contrast, the absence of peace diverts valuable resources away from development efforts. Conflicts and insecurity consume time, energy, and resources that could have been directed towards education, healthcare, infrastructure, and other critical sectors. This hinders the overall advancement of communities and perpetuates hardships for individuals.

For this reason, Ethiopia has been working determinedly to resolve conflicts peacefully, maintain peace, security and order throughout the country and advance its development. However, due to various reasons, it cannot fully sustain peace and security across the country. In actual fact, several endeavors have been exerted to resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner; and in return, the efforts have borne fruits though there are still some unresolved challenges.

And in the current Ethiopian budget year, the government has expressed its plan to exert utmost efforts and ensuring the rule of law and resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner. Particularly, because the National Dialogue Commission has finalized its preparatory phase and entering into the consultation phase this year, it is expected to create an opportunity to build a peaceful, stable country through narrowing our differences and augmenting our unity.

Addressing the 6th year and the 3rd tenure of the joint session of the House of Peoples' Representatives (HoPR) and House of Federation (HoF) on Monday, President Sahle-Work Zewde, also accentuated her government's commitment to work meticulously, resolve differences in a peaceful manner and sustain peace



It is natural to have unity and differences on certain issues and human beings have differences in color, religion, culture, language, place of residency, and attitude. In the same way, there are also matters that make us similar. The most important thing is appreciating the differences and exploiting the difference to strengthen our togetherness

throughout the country in this Ethiopian budget year.

“When we trace back our country’s history, we encounter diverse perspectives. History reveals that our unity has been our strength enabling us to defend our country and showcase globally the country’s renowned heritage sites that attract visitors from around the world.”

Ethiopia has made significant contributions to the world in various fields, including art, philosophy, law, genes and the establishment of institutions. Additionally, it is a symbol

of freedom for black peoples that inflamed the spirit of patriotism.

On the contrary, according to her, we have failed to develop a national narrative that unites us and accommodates all interests. Our efforts to establish a functioning state system that is acceptable for all have lagged behind, as we have been divided by localized ideas; unable to resolve our differences through peaceful means. As a result, conflicts and poverty have entangled us and limited our ability to utilize our natural resources.

Owing to this, we have become peoples with two faces. One face represents the country’s natural, cultural, and historical wealth Ethiopian endowed with, while the other reflects the conflicts and divisions that we destroy ourselves instead of utilizing our untapped resources. Thus, it is imperative to redirect our approach to national political and economic matters and mend the broken junctions, and engage in more productive and constructive ways. We should examine past experiences thoroughly; weigh the pros and the cons and figure out new ways that could work for us.

Now, in Ethiopia, a new chapter of hope has been ignited, and a comprehensive chapter of prosperity is opened. The reform is not up to a few individuals or groups or some locality but it is about all Ethiopians. We may agree and disagree on ideas, but the fortune is up to the generation and the country.

According to Sahle-Work, we should stand united be better prepared to effectively respond to the needs of our communities. This entails revitalizing our approaches and building the capacity to find political solutions to existing threats and emerging challenges. It also requires setting aside points of disagreement and ensuring that the voices of the general public are heard. Through this inclusive approach, we can pass on a better future to posterity.

It should be noted that developed nations enjoy wealth and tranquility not because

they lack differences among them, but because they are committed to addressing those differences through roundtable discussions. It is natural to have unity and differences on certain issues and human beings have differences in color, religion, culture, language, place of residency, and attitude. In the same way, there are also matters that make us similar. The most important thing is appreciating the differences and exploiting the difference to strengthen our togetherness. The past should not spoil the future; but it should be a lesson. The past history should be a foundation for togetherness instead of being a source for disagreement, the President remarked.

“We should embrace the spirit of tolerance and open-mindedness for constructive discussions. We must strengthen our unity as a multinational country and strive together. It is important to invest our time and energy in shaping the future rather than dwelling on the past. This is the responsibility of this generation,” she underlined.

Recalling the ten year development plan that the government devised three years ago, the President said that in the first three years of the plan which is from 2013-2015 E.C. promising achievements are witnessed in all areas. The performance of the preceding year, for instance, was encouraging even though there were a number of challenges.

“We have also drawn a valuable lesson that if we work committedly, we can achieve better. Changing all the challenges; to opportunities, beating them and registering success is a great achievement.”

While talking about the National Dialogue Commission Sahle- Work said that building a better Ethiopia is in the hands of Ethiopians. Ethiopians should not miss this opportunity again. The dialogue is a historic platform in which we correct our mistakes, resolve our differences, and to ensure lasting peace. Thus, she urged all Ethiopians to work committedly and support the National Dialogue Commission to make the effort a success,