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## DPM/FM Demeke receives incoming U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA- Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Ethiopia Demeke Mekonnen received at his office yesterday Ervin J. Massinga, the new Ambassador of the United States of America to Ethiopia.

The parties exchanged views on bilateral and regional issues of common interest.

In welcoming Ambassador Massinga, the Deputy Premier promised that the government of Ethiopia would extend the necessary support to the ambassador during his tenure. The government would also back the Ambassador's efforts to deepen the two countries ties.

Demeke expressed his hope that the strong Ethio-US ties would further be strengthened and bilateral cooperation deepened.

See DPM/FM Demeke ...page 3



## Conference underscores digitalization for TVET transformation

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- Digitalizing the Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) would ensure efficiency and create an enabling environment to the sector's transformation, the Ministry of Labor and Skills (MoLS) said.

The Ministry is holding a two-day International TVET Conference under the theme "Contribution of Digitalization to TVET sector."

See Conference...page 3



## Ethiopia records over 172 mln. USD agricultural export revenue

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia has secured over 172 million USD revenues exporting agricultural products in the past three months, Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration (MoTRI) disclosed.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), MoTRI Communication Director Belaynesh Regassa said that the revenue was generated from exporting pulses, oilseeds, cane and chat crops, livestock and forestry products in the last three months of this budget year.

"Pulses and crops hit over 85.708 million USD exporting 110,221.42 metric tons while oilseeds hit 31,513.89 million USD exporting 17,729.22 metric tons to the

See Ethiopia records ...page 3

## Army remains beacon of peace for Ethiopia: Gen. Getachew Gudina

• Nation to mark 116<sup>th</sup> Army Day

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA –Ethiopia's able army that has the capability to withstand challenges has remained a beacon of hope for peace for Ethiopia and supported the stability of neighboring states, a high-ranking military officer said.

A panel discussion was held yesterday regarding the 116th Army Day.

Addressing the gathering, the Head of the Information Department of the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) Gen. Getachew Gudina stated that the army is a hope of peace for the people of Ethiopia. The ENDF is also carried out successful peace enforcing missions in East Africa by withstanding topographical problems of the region, lack of awareness of the society and material supply problems.

Gen. Getachew further noted that consolidated efforts are underway to enhance the quantity, quality and efficiency of the army. The ENDF is renewing itself with the change, overcoming challenges and achieving notable results.

Photo: Eyob Tefert



The army has registered tremendous victories over enemies since its establishment and preserved the country's

sovereignty and national unity without any interference.

See Army remains...page 3

Ethiopia's quest for mutual benefits and shared development

Page 8

Green gold for bolstering export earnings  
Coffee production

Page 6



Regulatory measures to tackle hate speech and fake news

Page 9

# News



Fassil Dawit (PhD)

## Ministry strives to farm 138,000 tons of fish

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA-** Ministry of Agriculture said that it is working to farm 138,000 tons of fish this fiscal year as it has cultivated over 14,000 tons of fish in the first quarter.

Ministry of Agriculture, Fish Agriculture Desk Head Fassil Dawit (PhD) told Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that several projects are being implemented to grow the embryonic fish farming.

“Despite the low productivity, the national fish farming is one of the emerging sectors. Developments are being seen from time to time. And 14,270 tons of fish have already been cultivated during the outgoing quarter year,” he said.

Ethiopia is endowed with numbers of lakes and water reservoirs. But, the amount of fish cultivated each year is very minimal. The absence of quality fry, fishery technologies, fish flakes and reproduction biotechnologies are hindering the sphere development, he stated.

Ministry of Agriculture has identified all the necessary issues which require improvement, and ongoing projects are also expected to lessen the difficulties in the sector, he mentioned.

Nowadays, fishery developments centers located in Bahir Dar, Arba Minich, Hawassa, Ziway, Batu, and Sebeta are progressing well. Besides, new fishing technological tools are on the way to be delivered to fisheries, he added.

Fassil also noted that awareness creation campaigns that aimed to make the fishing modern and legal are being undertaken.

As the national agricultural production campaign which was initiated by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) also comprises the fishing sector, developmental works are being carried out in good manner. Ethiopia has more than 200 fish species, he added.

## Ethiopia signs ARC Treaty

**ADDIS ABABA (ENA)** - Ethiopia signed the African Risk Capacity (ARC) Treaty to join the African Union Agency, African Risk Capacity Insurance Company Limited on Monday at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The signing ceremony took place in the presence of the African Union delegation led by Mohammed Salem Boukhari, Finance State Minister Semereta Sewasew, and representatives of Ethiopia's Agricultural Transformation Institute and other line ministries.

In his opening remarks, Ethiopia's Foreign Affairs State Minister Ambassador Mesganu Arega underscored the importance of signing this treaty in providing Ethiopia with the opportunity to work with ARC to better prepare, plan and respond to extreme weather events and natural disasters, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Considering the significant effect of climate change on Ethiopia's agricultural sector, collaborative work with regional and international institutions such as ARC is pertinent, noted the state minister.

Amb. Mesganu also stressed the



government's commitment to working in collaboration with ARC in building national response capacities.

Mohamed Salem Boukhari, on his part,

commended the commitment of the Government of Ethiopia for signing this agreement which is an important step to join the ARC.

## Institute working on modernizing construction industry

### • Holds stakeholders workshop to attain 2030 SDGs

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA**—A lot of efforts are being exerted to modernize the Ethiopian construction sector in a bid to realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the coming seven years, Construction Management Institute (CMI) said.

Speaking at the workshop organized yesterday in collaboration with Ethiopian Economic Association (EEA) under the theme: “Construction Industry, Employment and Ethiopian Economy (CIEE),” Institute Director General, Eng. Tamirat Mulu said that the construction sector has huge contribution to GDP and job creation. However, there are a number of constraints in the construction sector regarding labor market, technology, experts, contractors, project advisors, regulatory bodies, and executive bodies. Therefore, the workshop would play a vital role in identifying the root cause of the construction industry and directing the relevant solution via joint efforts.

As to him, more than 22,000 citizens were provided with skilled human power gap bridging training since its inception with a view to modernizing the construction industry. In this regard, the institute has been conducting problem solving research with higher academic institutions to solve the gap in the industry.



EEA Vice President Lema Gudissa (PhD) on his part said that the Association has been organizing an event in national, continental, and international workshops to solve problems. Association comprises over 5,600 members as it is striving a lot to address all parts of Ethiopia. Besides, it is conducting research with various states like Oromia and Amhara to address the construction restraints as the sector is playing an indispensable role for national growth following agriculture.

Urban and Infrastructure State Minister, Eng. Wondimu Seta said, “The government has given due attention to the

construction sector as it plays a pivotal role in fostering national economic growth.

An initial discussion paper was presented by Ermias Engida (PhD) entitled, “Ethiopian Economy and Construction Industry linkage for Economic growth: Macro-economic part”, he noted that the Ethiopian economy over the past some years has been affected by Russia-Ukraine war, COVID-19 and the northern conflict. According to the international experience, he said the construction sector is playing significant role in stimulating the national economy.

# News

## New proclamation ties applied universities with industry partners

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA-** The newly adopted Higher Education, TVET, Research Institution and Industry Linkage (HETRIL) Proclamation, optimized preconditions for universities selected to be applied institutions, the Ethiopian Academy of Sciences (EAS) said.

The (EAS) held a National HETRIL forum aimed to link 15 public universities (nominated to be applied institutions) with government agencies and industry professional employers.

In his opening remark, EAS Vice President Prof. Afework Kassu said the HETRIL Proclamation, which was recently adopted by the Ministry of Education, has created legal frameworks needed to develop institutions. "It is one of the biggest educational reforms carried out by the current government. The



Professor Afework Kassu

absence of a mandatory legal framework on the issue immensely contributes to the decline of educational quality."

Prof. Afework added, "In the health sector, for example, the country failed to produce sufficient numbers of applied science professionals."

The scholar, however, expressed optimism that higher educational institutions would produce



Dereje Engida (PhD)

well-trained professionals as institutional linkage becomes obligatory under the new proclamation.

Addis Ababa Science and Technology University President Dereje Engida (PhD) also said that academicians are likely showing better initiative to conduct research since the proclamation facilitates the commercialization of research.



Teshome Daniel

Head of Institutional Linkage and Technology Transfer at the Ministry of Education Teshome Daniel on his part stated that the proclamation makes the National Linkage Council, Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer Center integrated.

The National HETRIL forum was organized by Ministry of Education, GIZ Ethiopia, and Djibouti, and EAS, *The Ethiopian Herald* learned.

## Conference...

Speaking at the event, MoLS State Minister Teshale Berecha (PhD) stated that streamlining digitalization in the TVET system has a remarkable effect in improving access to information, and knowledge and allowing for self-paced learning and assessment.

The government in collaboration with the state TVET authorities and representatives from ICT sector has developed strategy for further development of digitalization and have addressed several issues including digital content, online assessment, human resource and others.

Even though there were efforts made to integrate digital technology in TVET institutions, the expected technology support has not been met due to several reasons. Hence, the government has put major strategies in digitalizing the TVET system.

The state minister further noted that establishing basic digital infrastructure at all levels, equipping TVET community with relevant digital skills, using digital

technologies in training, administration and supporting special needs trainees with assistive digital technology are also part of the strategy.

"Digitalization in our TVET would not only help to catch up the dynamics in the digital world and increase efficiency and effectiveness, but it would also strengthen resilience to guarantee learning in times of crises."

Thus, the conference has a vital role to inculcate new innovative ideas and sharing lessons learned from other nations on digitalization, benefit and influence policy makers, partners and actors in TVET system, Teshale emphasized.

In his opening remark, Lars Fiechel, Program Manager, Sustainable Training & Education Program (STEP) of GIZ stated that equipping TVET trainees and young people of Ethiopia with digital skills is of paramount importance.

"Digitalization has become a cornerstone of modern life, impacting almost every facet of



Photo: Gebabo Gebrie

our existence. It is essential for TVET to keep pace since information is in our fingerprints and the world is interconnected through digital networks."

According to him, relying on conventional methods of teaching and training is insufficient in this era. Thus, it is vital to embrace technology as a critical element that can make education and training more relevant, efficient and engaging.

Despite the notable success and advancement both nationally and internationally, access

to technology and digital infrastructure is limited and the low level of digital literacy and reliable internet connectivity hampered the integration of digitalization into TVET.

"As such, it is our collective responsibility to ensure that young people are not left behind in this digital age. To this end, conferences like this play a pivotal role in promoting the importance of digital skills and serve as a platform for sharing knowledge, best practice and innovations that can drive meaningful change in the TVET sector," Fiechel remarked.

## DPM/FM Demeke receives...

Ambassador Massinga, on his part, said economic cooperation with the U.S. helps Ethiopia unlock its potential. He also reportedly vowed to work to further strengthen the multi-sectoral relation of the countries in his stay here.

Ethiopia and the U.S. have worked in partnership for many years to combat terrorism and cross-border crimes. In this regard, the collaboration of the U.S. and Ethiopia has borne fruit by bringing peace and stability in the turbulent region.

Currently, the diplomatic and political relation between the two countries, which started in 1903, is expanding in the spheres of trade and investment. The long people-to-people and trade ties have also been strengthened.

The ENDF is working with the responsibility of sustaining Ethiopia by repelling the security that has been posed by local and foreign enemy quarters. "The army has been paying great sacrifices for the wellbeing of the people of Ethiopia and everyone should pay respect for this."

Strengthening the army means of protecting and guaranteeing national security. In this regard, the ENDF has been paying noble sacrifices to protect the

global market in the same period," she remarked.

To increase export volumes of oilseeds and pulses, she emphasized on promoting joint efforts with exporters engaging in the sector through streamlining mass production and business centers.

Furthermore, the ministry has been supporting exporters to scale up the production volume and expanding market centers through launched service packages thereby registering a remarkable

## Army remains beacon...

country and its people. Marking the day has a special significance to acknowledge and encourage those members who are paying different sacrifices.

For his part, ENDF Chief of Staff's Military Affairs Advisor Lt.Gen. Almesht Degife stated that extensive activities should be carried out to enhance the army's capability of thwarting provocations. "Those groups who are involved in defaming the ENDF should

halt such destructive activities."

The ENDF must be respected and recognized for the sacrifices it has been paying to preserve the sovereignty of the country. Marking Army Day is essential to make ready for next missions. The whole community should encourage, glorify, strengthen and support the ENDF to further accomplish its mission effectively. Everyone should stand alongside ENDF, Lt. Gen. Alemshet appealed.

## Ethiopia records...

achievement, she noted.

Besides, she indicated that the government has approved a technologically supported online system to facilitate investor's implementation of export contracts and export delivery licenses in a timely manner.

Also, the ministry has been taking firm monitoring and supporting exporters to supply the products to the global market, she said, adding that it has also been undertaking strict follow ups on illegal trade and contrabands.

"Due to some security problems, especially where sesame growing areas and the occurrence of aflatoxins have seriously impacted productivity, she mentioned that sesame is the third exportable item next to coffee and flower in revenue at a national level."

Accordingly, reforms are made to fill the gaps witnessed in the sector, make the service delivery more accessible, easy and economic that help boost productivity, she remarked.

# Opinion

## Access to sea out let: A historical, legitimate request

BY ABEBE WOLDE GIORGIS

Ethiopia is a country with ancient civilization and its own government. Its territory had been stretched beyond Red Sea in the north and its hinter land reached to thousands of kilometers in the south. The Axum Civilization established before the introduction of Christianity to Ethiopia in 4th century and the strong attachment of the kingdom with the Red Sea and beyond had enabled to control trade routes which made it powerful for centuries.

The trade engagement through port of Adulis and Massawa with the overseas world further made the kingdom to become a dominant power in the region. Historical findings proved that in the 6th century, King Kaleb of Axum crossed Red Sea and governed South Yemen.

However, its rival Arabs emerged as powerful in the Red Sea in 7th century demolished port of Adulis and contained the Axumites' aspiration to expand beyond Red Sea and forced them to expedite towards South but the utilization of various ports in the suburb of Red Sea, Babeal Mendeb and Indian ocean continued until the colonial powers conquered the areas in the last quarter of the 19th century.

The Red Sea had been both a source of opportunities and risks to Ethiopia. The Red Sea trade route and the using of ports had been the source of the strength of the Axum kingdom. It served to conduct trade with the ancient empires such as the Persia, India and China. Ethiopians had been exported tusks, incense and monkey to these empires. Slave trade also had been common.

The Axum kingdom minted its own coins and served for exchanging commodities here and in the Middle East.

Contrary to these, foreign intruders used the sea to cross and invade the hinterland of Ethiopia particularly since the 16th century onwards and made military expedition. The intrusion of Turks, Italians and British can be mentioned in these regard. Foreign missionaries and explorers also crossed the Red Sea and reached to the hinterland for clandestine activities.

The construction of Suez Canal by French company in 1869 enhanced the vitality of Red Sea in facilitating the world trade by connecting Europe with Asian countries. It also changed the trade routes of Europe through Atlantic Ocean by crossing Cape of Good Hope located in South Africa towards Asia.

Though the flourishing of international trade through Red Sea became blessing, it also became a curse to Ethiopia.

After the agreement of the European powers

in the Berlin conference in 1888 to create maps and control Africa, Red Sea served the colonial power fleets to transport weapon and invade the African territories. Until the last quarter of the 19th century, there were no neighboring countries bordering Ethiopia.

All the countries currently regarded as neighbors were created by colonial powers by military means as a result of the emerging of capitalism after the broke out of industrial revolution in 1850 that necessitated market places to dump industrial products and to extract raw materials. Thus, Africa had been found as best place to fulfill the colonialists' needs.

Then, they had accelerated their colonial expedition in Africa. Unlike the North, West, South and Central African countries, East African countries had very little exposure to the European powers until the opening of Suez Canal in 1869.

The purchasing of the Italian Rubatini Company a portion of land in 1870 in the areas of Asab from the Afar Sultan Ibrahim paved the way for Italians to realize their colonial ambition in the later decades. In 1880s, based on the agreement between Emperor Menelik and French colonial powers, France annexed Djibouti and named it as French- Afar and Issa colony, Britain also crossed sea of Babel Mandeb from Yemen and occupied port of Zeyla and created British Somaliland as their colonial territory.

In 1885, Italians occupied Massawa because of the British conspiracy and five years later following the death of emperor Yohannes IV, they created Eritrea which was formerly known as Bahirenegash province under the rule of the Ethiopian kings. They also conquered Southern Somalia and named it as Italian Somaliland.

Until these days, Ethiopia had not had neighboring countries but access to sea in all suburbs of Red Sea, Babel Mendeb and Indian Ocean without any hindrance. In fact, since 1557 port of Massawa was occupied by Turkish and in the later centuries the port was given to "Naibs" which means a deputy governors comprised the local elders.

Later in the 19th century, the port was administered by Egyptians but the province was known as Mereb Milash which means the territory beyond river Mereb in which currently serve as a border line between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The major colonial powers which strived to get colonial territory in the suburb of Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean were Great Britain, France and Italy. All countries had the colonial ambition to conquer countries in the Horn of Africa and at the same time, there had been conflict of interest among them.

The major injustice act responsible to deny

Ethiopia from access to Red Sea is the Hewett treaty named after a British major Hewett. The Hewett Treaty so called the Treaty of Adwa was an agreement between Britain, Egypt, and Ethiopia signed at Adwa on 3rd June, 1884. The treaty ended a long-simmering conflict between Egypt and Ethiopia, but indirectly started a new conflict between Ethiopia and Italy.

In 1884, the Egyptian forces backed by British forces had been fighting against the Dervish forces in Eastern Sudan were engulfed and unable to escape from the enemy trap. Understanding the Egyptians trouble, the British came to Ethiopia to the Emperor Yohannes and begged him to send his troops to eastern Sudan in the place known as Kufit and to liberate the besieged Egyptian forces and in a return pledged to give back port of Massawa to Ethiopia.

Based on the agreement, Ras Alula Abbanega with his troops marched to Kufit and liberated the besieged Egyptians and escorted them to port of Massawa and later they left to Egypt. But the British forces provided the port to Italians by revoking the agreement.

As a result, Emperor Yohannes lost the port. On top of that, the conflict with the Dervishes was escalated and they invaded Ethiopia and reached up to Godar town, burnt churches and residential areas in order to revenge the emperor.

Emperor Yohannes who fought and paid sacrifices to liberate Egyptians created enmity with fellow Africans simply to fulfill the European interest that resulted in the end of the Emperor. He himself marched to the war front in order to defend his territories from the Dervish invaders but unfortunately he lost his life at the battle of Metema in 1890.

Taking the death of Emperor Yohannes as a good opportunity, Italians moved towards the high land parts of Ethiopia and established their colonial territory and named it Eritrea. Consequently, Ethiopia had been denied access to ports of Massawa and Asab until 1953 when Eritrea was united with Ethiopia in federation.

From 1891 to 1941 Eritrea had been colonized by Italians and the denial of access to port brought its own consequence on the Ethiopian geo politics interests. When the Italians fascists had been preparing themselves for the second invasion in 1936, they transported armaments, ammunitions including chemical weapons which had been banned to use on war based on the League of Nations' convention from port of Milano to Massawa through Suez Canal.

Ethiopia which was surrounded by colonial powers that time unable to import weapon and this forced it to ill preparedness to the war. When the invading forces conquered

Ethiopia, Italians remapped Eritrea and defined as part of the East Italian colonial territory by merging with the rest of Ethiopia and added it in the province of Tigre.

After the defeat of Fascists in 1941 by combined forces of Ethiopian Patriots and British forces, Eritrea remained as occupied enemy territory and ruled by British for 10 years. Then, as a result of referendum conducted under the auspice of UN, Eritrea federated with Ethiopia in 1953. The unilateral revocation of the federal act by Emperor Hailasilassie I in 1961 forced Eritreans to took up arms and fight for their freedom and after the 30 years long fierce fighting, Eritreans liberated themselves and become a sovereign country and again Ethiopia become a land locked country since 1991.

Currently, Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa next to Nigeria with more than 120 million. There is no land locked country in the world with such huge population.

Its economy is growing rapidly so that to accommodate its growing import and export trade volume, the time has come to raise the issue of owning its own direct access to ports through diplomatic means forwarding mutual benefits with its neighboring countries.

Fortunately, it has established good relations with its neighboring countries. It has deep rooted trade relation with Djibouti; it also established trade relation with Somali land. It has sent its troops for peace keeping mission in Mogadishu.

By the same token, the restrained relation with Eritrea lasted for 20 years has ended and opened way for people to people relations following the assumption of power of the new government led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD).

Moreover, there are various ethnic groups residing both in Ethiopia and the neighboring countries with strong psychological, cultural and economic attachment. While those residing in these countries entertain access to sea, their Ethiopian brothers are denied the privilege which is hard to accept.

These and other factors can be taken as a ground to start dialogue with the neighboring countries to pave the way to enable Ethiopia get direct access to ports. From the Ethiopian side, there is strong hope that the neighboring countries will give a positive response to the of Ethiopia's request for mutual benefit from the ports.

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

# Editorial

## Ethiopia's unwavering stance benefits all

The third round of trilateral talks among Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan over the rules and guidelines for the filling and annual operation of the Abbay Hydroelectric Dam has recently held in Cairo, Egypt to find a common ground and reach some end goal that is agreeable to all parties involved.

The first and second round talks were held in Cairo and Addis Ababa in August and September respectively. However, the efforts could not arrest differences and yield the desired outcomes owing to the intransigence stance of Egypt sticking to the unfair water share agreements set during the colonial era.

In fact, from the very beginning, Ethiopia has been stating its plan to sustainably develop and utilize its natural resources with the aim to address the ever growing needs of its people and accelerate its socioeconomic development.

In essence of this, since the foundation stone of the Abbay Hydroelectric Dam was laid to begin the construction this mega Dam that will provide electricity close to 70 % of the population, Ethiopia has been determined and repeatedly expressing its commitment to work closely with upstream and downstream countries – to ensure reasonable utilization of the water in a manner governed by the principles of international water law and bridging differences through talks.

As part of this, in every platform where negotiations over the Dam have taken place, the country has been underlining the need for cooperation and collaboration and to achieve an agreement that is beneficial to all. Ethiopia's stance in this regard has been and is always clear, resolute and unwavering.

Mainly for the reasons that cooperation and mutual understanding is an imperative element to exploit trans-boundary resources, grow reciprocally and reduce the level of poverty, Ethiopia is keen and committed to work in good faith, resolve differences at the negotiating tables; of course, in a manner respecting the principle of equitable and reasonable utilization of the water.

Unfortunately, Ethiopia's good faith efforts and perseverance for cooperation and mutual benefits fail to be heard and achieve the desired outcomes which in return lead to hold repetitive talks and discussions.

If truth be told, Ethiopia has no intention to utilize the water in a way undermining the benefits of the riparian countries or in a sense causing harm to them. Rather, it promotes solidarity and mutual benefit that is established based on a win-win approach. It also hopes the Hydroelectric Dam to be a source of energy integration to cement harmony and peace not only among all riparian countries but also in the region and beyond.

According to a press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in connection with the talks, Ethiopia believes that this platform enables the three parties to understand and respond to the interests and concerns of all riparian states based on the principle of equitable and reasonable utilization and reach a negotiated settlement. And Ethiopia's positive expectation for these talks is based on the foundation provided by the Agreement on the Declaration of Principles (DoP). Thus, the three countries are expected to discharge their shared responsibility of ensuring equitable and reasonable utilization of the Nile River.

True, reaching an agreement that is binding for all has tremendous benefits to all the basin countries, the region and beyond to reinforce stronger partnerships, accelerate their socioeconomic growth and prosper mutually. In this regard, in all instances, Ethiopia will continue participating in all talks carried out with negotiation parties and work in good faith to resolve differences in a peaceful manner and reach agreement.



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The Ethiopian Herald

# Opinion

## Historical perspectives to Ethiopia's legitimate quest for sea outlet

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Why is the issue of acquisition of ports and port facilities gaining currency in Ethiopia these days? Some citizens consider the issue as a taboo and wish to let it sleep forever as the country has lived with no ports for over three decades. Is it a strategy to divert attention of the opposition, as some argue, from current challenges that the government is facing or a legitimate quest that has historical, legal and economic foundations? Many recognize Ethiopia's legal rights to have access to the Red Sea and to ports.

Whatever the case, Ethiopia's right to own ports and port facilities should have been raised over three decades back when the nation lost two of its historical ports following the independence of Eritrea from Ethiopia in 1991.

Even then, better late than never!

The author of this article is of the opinion that Ethiopia actually lost her ports due to protracted international conspiracy to make Ethiopia a weak and landlocked country. This article focuses on major themes of justifications that Ethiopia rightly deserves to have access to the sea shores and ports. This includes historical reality, national security, economic and social development, geopolitical and geostrategic priorities, political assertiveness, cultural relations, pan Africanism and African economic integration.

Let us have historical perspectives to help us proceed to the other topical issues. Record histories vividly indicate that Ethiopia has been utilizing sea ports between 3407- 2888 B.C. In 1997, the well-known Ethiopic, the late Professor Richard Pankhurst wrote an essay entitled "The Ethiopian Borderlands" in which he noted that:

"The Red Sea and Gulf of Aden coast of Africa was situated between one of the world's earliest maritime trade route which linked Egypt and subsequently the countries of the Mediterranean with Arabia, India and the Far East. The coastal areas of Ethiopia in pharaonic times formed part of what the ancient Egyptians termed the Land of Punt and sometimes God's Land. The territory is sometimes considered an un-delineated stretch of territory along the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden shares of both Africa and Arabia."

Professor Pankhurst continues "The Land of Punt (referring to Ethiopia, my insertion) was commercially important for goods it provides to Egypt and more generally to the outside world. The bulk of these exports originated in the interior of what later became known as Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. Such articles were brought to the coast by ancient trade routes linking the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden. The goods included gold from Ethiopia, ivory, panther's skins, myrrh, myrrh trees, and ostrich feathers from Ethiopia." Egypt

exported to Ethiopia lachets, daggers and necklaces.

Ethiopia had a powerful navy consisting of 4000 ship and merchant boats which clearly indicate that prior to and during the Axumite civilization Ethiopian ships were making expeditions to Yemen under the guidance of King Kaleb (circa 514-543)

The Port of Adulis was the main outlet of Axum to the sea in which trade in ivory, spices, gold and emerald, silk flourished.

Ethiopia officially acquired a coastline and ports on the Red Sea in 1950 when the United Nations decided to federate Eritrea with Ethiopia. In 1955, the Imperial Ethiopian Navy was founded, and its first (and primary) base — the Haile Selassie I Naval Base — was established at Massawa in 1956.

Securing a port and alternative port facilities is a matter of national security for Ethiopia. The country is about 60 kms inland from the Red Sea and faces the implications of naval and commercial power rivalries on both sides of Red Sea littoral states and is yet unable to ensure a sustained security on the Red Sea. Despite her close proximity to the Red Sea, Ethiopia was denied membership in the Council of Arab and African Coastal States of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden also known as Red Sea Security Council established in 2020 by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Eritrea, Jordan, Yemen, Sudan, Djibouti and Somalia leaving out Ethiopia under a lame excuse that the country is landlocked. This increased a threat to Ethiopia's security and peaceful development. Besides, while some 14 countries have naval bases in Djibouti, again Ethiopia accesses the port with exorbitant port fee. Ethiopia has now established her own navy and needs a naval base. A draft document prepared by the Ministry of Peace entitled "Ethiopia's National Interest: Principles and Content" emphasizes the imperative for Ethiopia to exercise its rights to construct and utilize ports, ensure access to the Red Sea.

The document provides a list of priorities, including the preservation of the country's territorial integrity, enhancing regional influence, promoting peace and security, effectively advancing Ethiopia's interests in the Red Sea and Gulf Peninsula area, and fostering pan-African development.

In terms of economic analysis, in a documentary entitled "From a single Drop to Sea Water" in which Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed noted that a UN study reveals that access to a sea outlet can contribute to 25-30 % of a country's GDP. That means, if Ethiopia's GDP is estimated at 100 billion, it means it would give up 25-30 billion Birr in additional value. The moment Ethiopia secures access to a port, this value would undoubtedly increase. Therefore, if Ethiopia were to invest 30 billion in obtaining this access, it would make sound business sense. This is precisely why we are inviting others to consider a share in GERD.

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

# Business & Economy

## Green gold for bolstering export earnings

BY MENGESHA AMARE

It has long been witnessed that the largest export crop in Ethiopia, Coffee, is the mainstay of the country's economy. The Ethiopian coffee sector is highly dependent on international prices and affected by the structure and workings of the world coffee market. As Ethiopia has not yet fully exploited its position as the producer of some of the best coffees, a number of competitive advantages could still be grabbed if quality and consistency are secured. In order to maximize this potential, the country has to make a long trek ahead.

Cognizant of the fact that it is better to have professional concept about this precious commercial crop national economic significance, *The Ethiopian Herald* had recently a stay with Yadeni Muktar, an agro economist graduated from Haramaya University in agro economics.

Yadeni said that Ethiopia has been the oldest exporter of coffee in the world and is the largest coffee producer and exporter in Africa, too. It is also well recognized that coffee is one of the highest treasured commercial crops in Ethiopia and the most widely consumed brews in the world and one of the most merchandized commodities internationally. Coffee production is witnessing an increasing trend in the application of various strategies and the country is well capitalizing on this commercial crop.

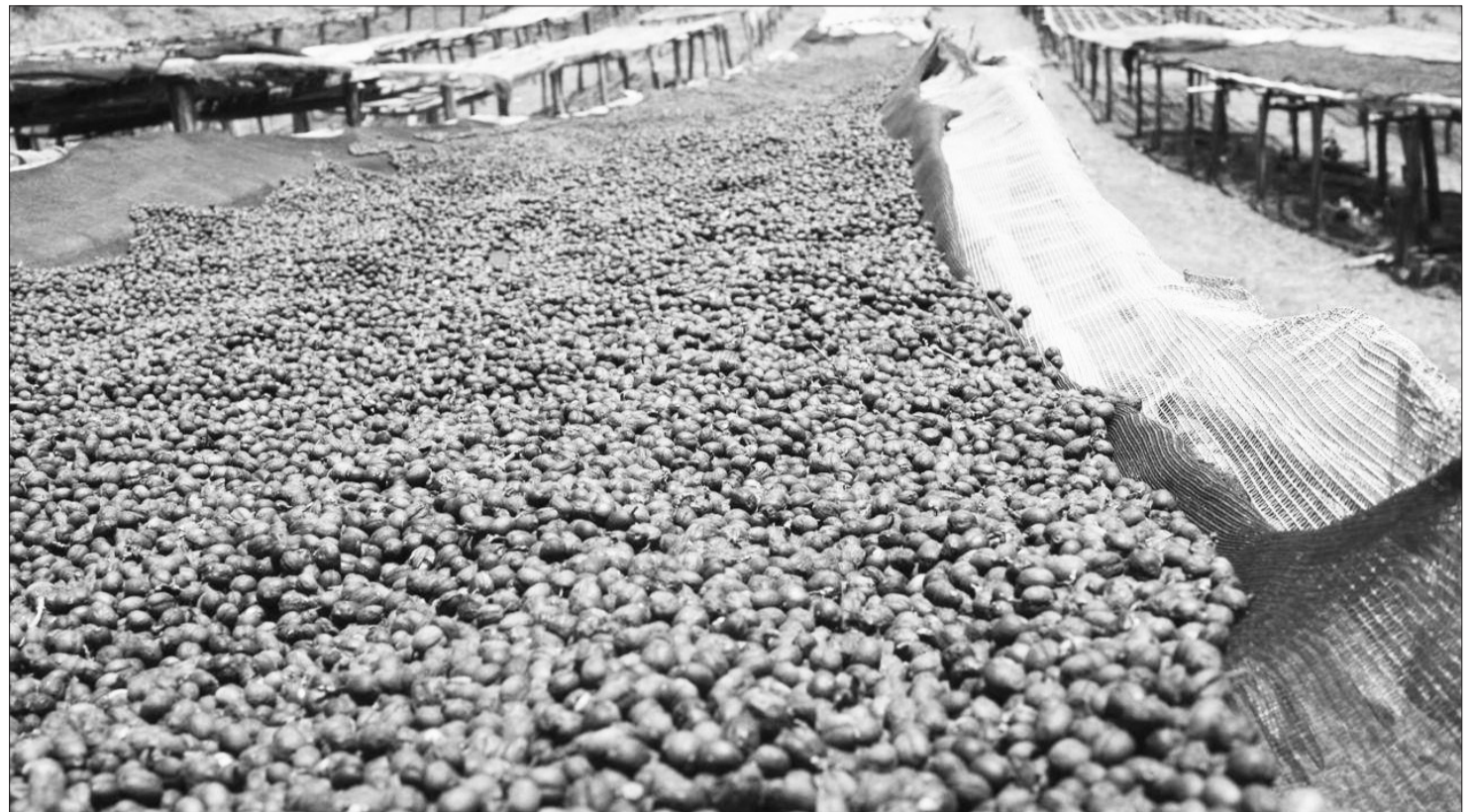
She further elucidated that coffee is a major popular beverage and an important commodity cash crop in the world. It is also the second most valuable commodity next to fuel. Coffee has grown mostly by small farmers all over the world.

Ethiopia is widely known to be the birth place of coffee Arabica, which is demonstrated by its variety and quality of beans. Its coffee is grown in both highland and lowland conditions, nurtured with care by the farmers, garnering the beans a range of unique flavors and textures, she added.

She said, "Coffee accounts for the lion's share of Ethiopian export earnings. It plays an important role in the economy and livelihoods of Ethiopia's rural population. Thus, increasing efficiency of the sector and exporting coffee would enable Ethiopia to sustain domestic economic growth. The Arabica coffee bean, widely consumed globally, is native to Ethiopia, where it has thrived for centuries and generated valuable jobs related to coffee cultivation, processing, roasting, packaging and transport."

According to Yadeni, large coffee producers and smallholder farmers alike are exploring ways to preserve an environment conducive to coffee bean cultivation in Ethiopia.

She said, "The largest coffee producing countries are Brazil, Viet Nam and Colombia, whereas the European Union and the United States of America are the largest consuming and importing markets globally. Coffee can indeed contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by generating income, creating rural employment and alleviating poverty."



*Coffee production requires care and feasible making system*

The future of the coffee sector depends on a coherent process of modernization and on the effective engagement of young people. As the opportunities arising from youth engagement in the entire coffee global value chain are immense, they must not be overlooked and require special attention and funding, Yadeni added.

"The attractiveness of coffee production has been assessed across several districts of Ethiopia. Financial institutions and a range of organizations are expected to work hard to help the coffee sector grow sustainably via reducing barriers to trade, fostering social, economic and environmental sustainability and generating prosperity for all those involved in the coffee value chain," she said.

As to her, an inclusive development of coffee sector requires major shifts, through enhanced sector-level cooperation based on shared values and responsibilities and an alignment of actions, funding and schemes through pre-competitive action, public-private partnerships and investments.

According to Yadeni, the socioeconomic consequences of changes in coffee prices on a set of indicators for employment, economic activity, investment, poverty and food security, per-capita, value added by sector, fixed capital formation, consumption expenditure, use of fertilizers and pesticides, poverty headcount, poverty gap, undernourishment, protein supply for diet.

Generally, Ethiopia's organic coffee is looked-up by an international market. If farmers produce high amount of coffee with high-quality, it is very profitable and advantageous business for Ethiopia's producers, exporters and the country as well. There is a need to educate farmers about the outbreak and economic importance of coffee, as well as about the new technology. This education campaign should be complemented with the availability of high-quality planting materials and the provision of other services to stop the declining productivity and export earnings of Ethiopia's green gold. Educating farmers and coffee bean collectors on how

to keep the quality of coffee and increase the product and productivity is an important asset. Increasing the volume as well as the quality of the coffee product through-out coffee potential areas may bright the future of coffee.

She further stated that the increasing global demand for high value commodities, such as coffee raise the importance to understand whether the expansion of commodities is a force for good and contribute to the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goal.

Yadeni said that coffee prices are related with this market balance and current coffee markets are experiencing excess supply driving prices down. Supply and demand can also change rapidly creating market volatility. Market volatility can adversely affect producers who grow the coffee only for demand.

She said, "The coffee value chain, processing, the conversion of raw coffee into dried coffee, either through the more resource intensive wet processing or dry processing is usually carried out at processing mills. Therefore, additional processing and transportation costs can be added contingent on the processing method and distance to mills."

"Roasting, cooling, blending, grinding and packaging of coffee can be well run. The coffee is then purchased by retailers and consumers from roasters or international traders. Market liberalization coupled with the increased concentration of traders and roasters has expanded their market power which has squeezed the prices given to value chain producers. As increased processing, marketing and distribution costs have negatively affected the bargaining power of producers, this aspect has to be properly addressed," she added.

She further stated that most certification initiatives directly and indirectly target at improving income by ensuring that actors lower down the value chain receive higher

coffee prices. Fair-trade, unlike other certification schemes, has requirements on pricing through minimum pricing and premiums that focuses mainly on benefiting smallholder coffee farmers. Coffee trade otherwise inhibits progress in sustainable development in terms of alleviating poverty, reducing hunger, improving health and well-being and enhancing the quality of education.

The coffee is valued and supplied passing through main stages such as cultivation, processing, roasting and consumption. Cultivation involves the production and picking of coffee cherry beans, often done labor intensively by hand, by farming households in the country. Besides, processing, the conversion of raw coffee into dried coffee, either through the more resource intensive wet processing or dry processing is usually carried out at processing mills, as to her.

In sum, additional processing and transportation costs can be added contingent on the processing method and distance to mills. Roasting involves the roasting, cooling, blending, grinding and packaging of coffee, normally in factories. This step would add costs linked with electric power and packaging materials. Roasting companies can often acquire their coffee from international traders who initially purchase processed coffee from producers.

Yes, the coffee is purchased by retailers and consumers from roasters or international traders. In most places coffee market price signals are more directly transferred to farm gate prices. This means that producers are paid very little for coffee, sometimes less than production costs. This roaster-farmer relationship can vary due to factors such as supply chain efficiency, levies and export taxes.

She exhorted her case urging the Ethiopian government to well eye at the coffee sector to help the nation garner the benefit it deserves out of this precious commercial crop.

# Art & Culture

## Why Africa Needs for a Global Movement to Promote the Culture of Peace

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

As we said earlier in another context, culture is a broader and holistic concept that includes politics, economics, history and other related disciplines, including culture. Thus we have what we call the culture of peace as clearly defined nowhere else more than in the global covenant following the establishment of the United Nations.

As defined by the United Nations, “The Culture of Peace is a set of values, attitudes, modes of behavior and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation by individuals.” This is however easier said than done as the ways of achieving or implementing a culture of peace have already proved extremely difficult unless the psychological, emotional and sentimental conditions are conducive to the emergence of a genuine movement for global culture of peace.

According to studies conducted in this area, “A Culture of Peace includes being in peace with oneself, others and the natural world. The primary tool to promote a Culture of Peace is Peace Education, which must be taught in families, all levels of education, workplaces, and disseminated through the media, and encouraged at all levels of society.”

These pronouncements look extremely simple and easily attainable and yet their implementation requires herculean efforts judging by past experiences.

At the global level, conflicts may be prevented or resolved whenever they turn deadly, with a global and effective Peace Movement that would impact the attitudes of the conflicting parties long before a cold war turns into a hot one. This is the most important factor that has allowed the actors to seek for emotional rather than rational solutions long before the conflicts turn deadly. Even after hostilities start, outside players need to keep cool heads and seek balanced, responsible and feasible solutions instead of taking sides that only exacerbate the situation.

According to the latest information, the African Union Secretariat last week expressed its concern for the speedy end of the new war dubbed in the international media as the Israeli-Hamas war. AU Secretary General Mussa Faki Ahmed has conveyed to the world a rather unemotional, balanced, measured and genuine concern to the people of both Israel and Palestine and the leaders of the two entities to enter into dialogue to address the roots causes of the present conflict that is threatening the world with dangerous expansion or escalation.

Africa has recently displayed diplomatic verve and political acumen in trying to mediate the Russian-Ukraine war as well as other conflicts around the world. The diplomatic maturity of the AU was evident when South African President Ceryl Ramaphosa tried to mediate for a peace deal between Russia and Ukraine without taking sides as it is often the case with great powers that support one side

against the other depending on their national and geopolitical interests.

Although it is a relatively less developed part of the world, Africa is currently better poised to try and make its real weight be felt in international affairs by following a diplomatic road least trodden even by nations with a long history and experience in diplomacy and international relations. Africa has therefore a better and realistic perspective on global peace and conflicts because it has itself been a victim of great power policies during the colonial era and it is presently the only continent that is not actively and openly disputed as an object of great power hegemony.

Last and but not least, Africa is not a continent that is struggling to develop and not a continent that pursues ambitious plans in other parts of the world. Africa as a developing continent is better committed to the prevalence of peace in the world because conflict in one part of the world would sooner or lesser impact its hopes and dreams. Africa has never been a source of global or regional conflict while most continents have been engaged in hegemonic conflicts that claimed millions of lives.

For this and other reasons, Africa has a better chance of generating ideas that benefit world peace both for its own development and useful for regional and global peace. The only shortcoming in Africa is its failure to deal with its own internal conflicts effectively and seek outside help to achieve collective security. This does not however prevent it from working for its own and for world peace because the two are organically linked and their solutions can only be applicable in internal as well as external situations. Global peace is unimaginable without Africa’s active participation and contribution while Africa’s peace cannot be guaranteed without international peace.

The culture of peace in the world was born in the aftermath of WWII at a moment when the horrors humanity went through during the last war were still fresh in its collective consciousness. People scrambled to establish peace movements and build memorial to the fallen of past atrocities in their bid to warn the world that it should work harder to avert hell from engulfing us again.

“Never Again!” was the leading refrain that was reflected in politics, the arts and in the then barely emerging global peace movement. The nascent peace movement, was expressed in a series of peace actions everywhere on the five continents and they had the objective of, “seeking to achieve ideals such as the ending of wars or minimizing inter-human violence in a particular place or situation.”

The history of the global peace movement dates back to the end of WWII. According to available information, “The history of peace movements started with peace societies in the USA and in England between 1814 and 1816. France and Switzerland followed in 1821 and 1830 respectively with the majority of European countries only after 1850.”

When we look at the situation in the post-WWII, we realize that, “during the post-war occupation, a peace movement grew out of the suffering caused by nuclear weapons.



The Bikini Incident in 1954 catalyzed a great expansion of these actions. In August the following year, the First World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs was held in Hiroshima.”

Subsequent to these events, a global peace movement gained momentum as the wars raged in Korea, China, Vietnam and in other countries that came under the common name of Indochina. This was in turn followed by other peace movements in the 2960s and 1970s in countries where governments pursued aggressive policies and hegemonic ambitions that were made evident after the end of WWII with the newly emerging geopolitical realities of a world dominated by the then superpowers. For instance, what is known as the Peace History Society, “was established 1964 to encourage and coordinate national and international scholarly work to explore and articulate the conditions and causes peace and war, and to communicate the findings of scholarly work to the public.”

More than any time since the dawn of the 21st century, the world is now facing the possibility of going into a global inferno once again after witnessing less than 80 years of relative world peace punctured by smaller wars in Vietnam and Indochina, near misses in Cuba in 1960, and permanent bloodshed in the Middle East. Nowadays, the realities of conventional wars are becoming more and more rearing their ugly heads while the world is inching closer to nuclear catastrophe or the possibility of conventional wars turning into deadlier nuclear conflagrations.

The end of WWII had given rise to a powerful global movements like the creation of the United nation as a beacon of world peace. Whether the UN has lived up to its mission of keeping world peace and preventing another global conflagration might be something highly debatable although it has so far prevented the eruption of another a third world war. This is no mean achievement in a world packed with nuclear warheads and increasingly destructive arsenals of mass annihilation at a global scale. The race for acquiring nuclear weapons is

still continuing at a breakneck speed as if humanity has an appointment with mutually assured destruction. A new regional conflict is coming on top of an older one.

While humanity is still wrestling with the specter of a possible nuclear annihilation in Europe with the Russia-Ukraine war deepening instead of showing any sign of abetting, the danger of a new regional war is rearing its ugly head with the ongoing Israel-Hamas war that has all the ingredients for growing into a bigger conflict with the possibility of major regional powers taking sides and threatening to get involved in an unexpected conflict that has already claimed thousands of lives in a couple of weeks.

The need for launching a worldwide peace movement should therefore become the most urgent item on the global agenda. The world is apparently inching closer to a global conflagrations in Europe, the Middle East, Asia and of course Africa. Many people are talking about the possibility of WWII erupting anytime soon as the future is becoming more and more unpredictable and as the possibility of a single spark starting a prairie fire is looming large in this troubled world. One conflict in one part of the world is followed by another in other parts of the world.

On the other hand, the weight and capacity of international institutions to resolve these conflicts are rather decreasing. In this dangerous context, it would be palatable to launch a new international peace movement that would put pressure on national governments, non-state actors and international institutions. Such a movement should put pressure on the traditional actors and boldly work for the preservation of peace and defend humanity in the face of mounting belligerence. It should be launched in such a way as to stop all wars, achieve irrespective of race, color, ethnicity and economic conditions. It may not be too late but not impossible to start such a peace movement. Better try late than never as the saying goes.

# Global Affairs

## Ethiopia's quest for mutual benefits and shared development

BY STAFF REPORTER

Ethiopia's quest for sea port bases is built on the principle of mutual benefits with a focus on pursuing solutions that can lead to shared development and mutual gain for all stakeholders involved. Ethiopia's search for sea port options has been driven by a variety of factors including the need to diversify its trade routes and reduce dependency on a limited number of ports.

By establishing partnerships and collaborations with neighboring countries, Ethiopia can diversify its sea port access, increase its trade and economic growth and strengthen its position as an important regional player.

Ethiopia's pursuit of sea port bases is guided by a long-term vision for sustainable development. Recognizing the limitations posed by its landlocked status, the country aims to leverage maritime access to foster economic growth, create job opportunities and improve the overall standard of living for its citizens. By actively seeking solutions that prioritize shared development, Ethiopia demonstrates its commitment to inclusive growth and social progress.

Ethiopia's quest for sea port bases is rooted in the principle of mutual benefits with a strong emphasis on pursuing solutions that can lead to shared development and mutual gain for all stakeholders involved. Through this strategic approach, Ethiopia aims to enhance its connectivity, foster regional cooperation, attract investment, support sustainable development and contribute to global trade and geopolitics.

Building a sea port can also lead to many economic benefits including generating employment opportunities, increasing the standard of living of its citizens and helping to develop the transport industry. Ethiopia's economy is primarily agricultural-based and access to the sea can help the country diversify its products and create new export opportunities.

The need for improved access to the sea by Ethiopia is not restricted only to trade growth but also for creating better regional integration. Ethiopia has been making several efforts to boost its economy and regional economic integration. Access to the sea, therefore, presents Ethiopia with an opportunity to make an exponential step towards achieving these goals.

Lack of access to a sea port hinders Ethiopia's economic growth as it has to rely on road and rail transport which is time-consuming and costly. Ethiopian exporters have to resort to transit routes operated by neighboring countries, which adds additional costs and time. This, in turn, makes it difficult for Ethiopia to compete with countries with direct access to the sea.

By pursuing solutions that can lead to win-win outcomes for all parties involved, Ethiopia is promoting greater regional cohesion and contributing to a more stable and secure Horn of Africa region. In a similar vein, Ethiopia's quest for alternative sea port facilities is an important aspect of its efforts to promote security, economic development, and other



related aspects in the Horn of Africa region.

By collaborating on the development of sea port infrastructure, Ethiopia can create an enabling environment for greater cooperation and partnership, promoting regional stability and reducing the risk of conflicts and tensions. This desire to build strong relationships is rooted in Ethiopia's history and culture which places a high value on collaboration and collective achievement.

This can involve collaborating on the construction of sea port facilities as well as the development of related infrastructure such as rail, road, and energy networks. In pursuing these partnerships, Ethiopia recognizes the importance of mutual benefit and shared development. To ensure that its quest for sea port options is aligned with the principles of mutual benefit and shared development, Ethiopia has emphasized the importance of transparency and accountability in negotiations with partner countries.

By working together towards shared goals and leveraging each other's strengths and resources, countries in the Horn of Africa region can create a more inclusive and dynamic economic landscape promoting greater security and prosperity for all. Moreover, by promoting sustainable and responsible infrastructure development, Ethiopia and its partners can contribute to a more environmentally friendly and ecologically sustainable region.

Ethiopia's pursuit of alternative sea ports is rooted in a desire to build stronger relationships with neighboring countries and promote mutual growth and development. By fostering collaboration and partnership, Ethiopia can contribute to a more stable, inclusive, and prosperous Horn of Africa region, promoting greater social, economic, and cultural integration across the continent.

By collaborating on the development of sea port infrastructure with neighboring countries, Ethiopia can promote greater cultural exchange and understanding, fostering a deeper sense of shared identity and belonging across the region. There is no denying the fact that Ethiopia's quest for sea port bases

is founded upon the principle of mutual benefits with a strong emphasis on pursuing solutions that can foster shared development and mutual gain for all stakeholders involved.

Through collaborations with international partners, Ethiopia can tap into expertise and best practices in maritime logistics, port management, and trade facilitation. This knowledge transfer can enhance Ethiopia's institutional capacity and promote the development of a skilled workforce in the long run driving shared development and mutual gain.

By enhancing its maritime connectivity, Ethiopia can facilitate trade flows within the continent. This strategic positioning presents ample opportunities for job creation, infrastructure development and technological advancement all of which contribute to shared prosperity and mutual gain.

The landlocked nature of Ethiopia necessitates alternative avenues for maritime connectivity. With no direct access to the sea, the country has recognized the importance of establishing sea port bases to facilitate trade and economic growth. By seeking these bases, Ethiopia aims to enhance its connectivity to global markets, thereby boosting its trade potential and enabling the diversification of its economy. By actively seeking solutions that prioritize shared development, Ethiopia demonstrates its commitment to inclusive growth and social progress.

The population growth has led to a significant increase in the demand for various resources and opportunities, and Ethiopia is struggling to keep up with this demand. This has made Ethiopia realize that gaining access to the sea is not simply a luxury but is crucial to the survival and well-being of its expanding population.

The country's geographical location poses several challenges to its economy and development. The country has limited access to the international market, and as a result, there is limited opportunity for growth. The presence of landlocked neighbors further compounds this problem as it makes Ethiopia rely heavily on these countries for its import

and export needs.

Ethiopia's quest for sea port is based on the principle of mutual benefits and partnership that provide amicable opportunity to strengthening shared development.

In his presentation entitled "from a drop of water to the sea, prime Minister Abiy Ahmed stressed that the issue of access to the sea and ports is not a matter of luxury but a vital prerequisite for the survival of the nation.

Accessing sea port is a legitimate question and is based on the peaceful development of these sea ports.

Instructor and researcher on Political Science and International Relations at Dire Dawa University, Surafel Getahun, told ENA that Ethiopia's quest on alternative port facilities in not only a matter of international relations but is also a basic precondition for the security and development of the country.

He added that in terms of population, geopolitical location, economic development, Ethiopia is a country that can impart greater influence in the region.

He noted that as Ethiopia is a landlocked country, the nation is subjected to exorbitant payments for port services in her export and import transactions.

In order to fill the gaps in her economic status, the issue of acquiring and expanding port facilities or having access to alternative port options is of crucial importance, he remarked.

The researcher indicated that the proposal forwarded by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is based on the principle of give and take and shared development of ports for mutual benefits.

He further noted that Ethiopia's quest for sea ports will create an enabling environment for strong relationship with countries and fulfillment of mutual goals.

The researcher concluded that the government should exhaustively utilize all possibilities including diplomatic and peaceful means to be able to obtain sea ports.



# Law & Politics

## Regulatory measures to tackle hate speech and fake news

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

The implementation of regulatory measures is required in order to prevent the alarming misuse of digital platforms by individuals involved in the dissemination of hate speech and fake news. The emergence of social media platforms has revolutionized the way people communicate with each other and it has offered a plethora of opportunities for individuals to share their thoughts and opinions.

The rapid spread of misinformation and fake news on these platforms presents a significant challenge to the integrity of information exchange and can have serious consequences in terms of public opinion, social cohesion and political stability. Misinformation and hate speech have become significant challenges in the digital age as social media platforms have facilitated the spread of these harmful practices across borders and cultures.

In addition to regulatory measures, there is also a need for greater public education about the dangers of fake news and hate speech. This education should begin at an early age and ensure that individuals have the necessary skills and knowledge to identify and counter misinformation and hate speech when they encounter it. This could include training for social media users on how to identify fake news and hate speech as well as efforts to promote the importance of critical thinking and media literacy.

Another important measure that could be taken is to support the development of alternative platforms that prioritize responsible and ethical communication.

This could include the creation of new social media platforms that are designed to foster healthy and respectful communication as well as the promotion of existing platforms that are more actively involved in monitoring and moderating their content.

The absence of effective social media regulation that ensures the accountability of violators has only aggravated the already existing problem of hate speech and disinformation spreading rapidly across various digital platforms. The need for regulatory measures to prevent the misuse of digital platforms by individuals who seek to spread hate speech and fake news has become increasingly important in recent times.

The misuse of social media has resulted in disturbing consequences with the spread of misinformation and hate speech fueling extremist ideologies

and polarizing societies dangerously impacting the political and social stability of countries.

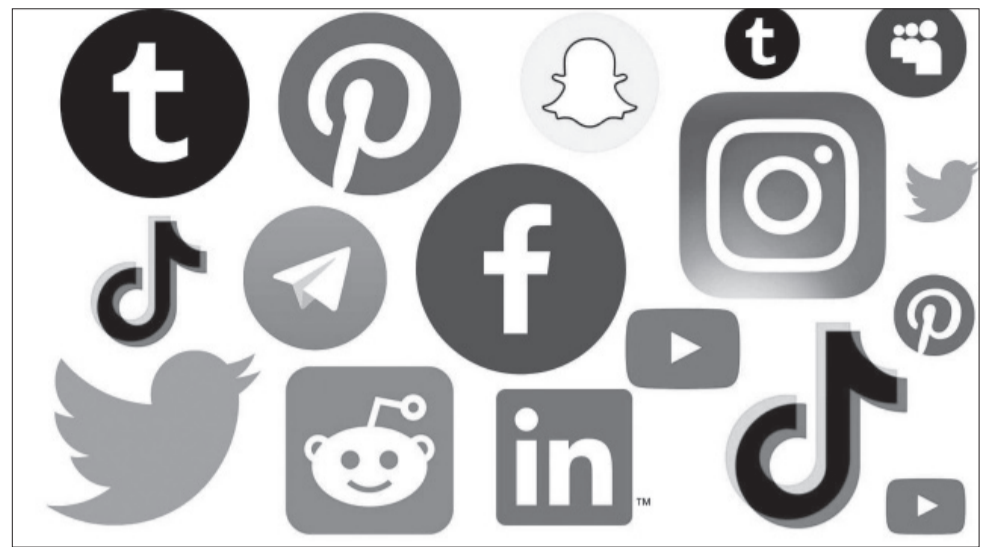
It is crucial to establish strict guidelines on social media platforms and have algorithms that detect hate speech and fake news. Such guidelines could also enforce mandatory identity verification for users and impose penalties on social media platforms that fail to comply. Undoubtedly, stricter and more effective regulations need to be in place to help combat the rise in hate speech and the spread of disinformation on social media platforms.

It is essential to highlight the detrimental effects of fake news and hate speech and build extensive public education and awareness programs that equip individuals with the tools to identify and counteract such harmful content. Moreover, government initiatives that aim to raise media literacy could help promote critical thinking among individuals making them more capable of distinguishing fact from fiction.

Social media actors have become infamous for encouraging the spread of false information just to obtain more likes, shares, and increase their followers. The internet has given everyone a chance to share their point of view and social media platforms have made it possible for people with all kinds of agendas to promote their beliefs, ideals, and products. Unfortunately, it has also become an easy avenue for spreading false or misleading information making it challenging to decipher what is true or false.

One of the primary reasons why social media actors would seek to disseminate false information is to satisfy their need to attain popularity, visibility, or influence. In this digital age, the number of likes, followers, and shares their work receives often translates to their ability to reach and affect more people. This drive for popularity and an increase in viewership leads social media actors to make false statements, exaggerate claims, and spread fabricated stories knowing that it will attract more likes and shares.

Another reason for the spread of false information on social media platforms is political propaganda. Political actors and parties often use social media to spread their propaganda promoting their agendas. The creation of fake news and misleading stories is a common trend in politics and they are often used to attract people to a particular cause. Anyone can publish news or create stories online making it difficult to monitor or verify the authenticity of such information



promptly.

The financial gain that comes with viral content is another driving force behind the spread of false information. Creating viral content often gives rise to numerous marketing opportunities which in turn means more businesses are willing to pay for advertisement space, increasing revenue for the creator. Social media influencers who share viral content can command high fees for sponsorships and adverts, thus, motivating them to create more and more sensational content.

To curb the spread of false information, there is a need for social media platforms to enforce stricter guidelines and regulations to ensure accountability for violators. Clear frameworks and guidelines must be put in place to help people distinguish between true and false information that is being shared online. Platforms should also consider algorithms that detect and remove fake news and promote quality journalism and fact-checking services to help counter misinformation.

The need for effective guidelines, accountability measures, and educational programs to help people distinguish between true and false information is essential. Social media must be regulated to ensure that it is not misused to create hostile environments for people to promote their agendas or disseminate false information. Everyone must play their part in building a responsible and authentic digital society.

The implementation of regulatory measures is required to curtail the alarming misuse of digital platforms by social media actors involved in the dissemination of hate speech and fake news, experts suggested.

From Addis Ababa University Journalism and Communication School, Anteneh Tsegaye (PhD) told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the expansion of the media landscape not only allowed people to entertain diverse views, but also opened the door for groups and individuals to instigate unrest.

The fact that the majority of false information is well planned and targeted and the negative effect it has on the public is devastating, he said adding that false information is widely shared due to the nature of the platforms regardless of

Ethiopia's limited internet penetration.

"As to the study conducted by Addis Ababa University, over 85 % of the social media content is political," he noted.

Emphasizing the destructive role of manipulative social media contents in inciting the unrest in different parts of the country, the academician stressed that the trend has pushed the country to pay unnecessary price.

According to Anteneh, the absence of effective social media regulation that ensures the accountability of violators has aggravated the problem. "The hate speech and disinformation law gives protection to public figures, and politicians, among others. Nonetheless, mostly these are the ones who are spreading disinformation."

Similarly, Hawassa University Research and Technology Director Gebrekristos Nuriye (PhD) said some social media actors and their devotees are the main instrument of misinformation in digital platforms.

Social media actors have largely encouraged disseminating false information to get more likes, shares, and increase followers, he stated while suggesting "Government's disclosure of timely and accurate information as an instrument to curtail the spread of fake news on social media."

Anteneh also mentioned a system dubbed 'linguistic' which enables individuals to be accountable by tracking their social media posts and images as well as tracks hate speeches.

He further stated that Ethiopia is undertaking several activities to put the system in place. The government's close partnership with owners of social media platforms including Facebook and YouTube is also beneficial to hold individuals involved in disinformation and hate speech accountable.

"Institutions, on the one hand, should introduce and promote their official social media accounts as well as must be alert in unveiling false information. Moreover, activities that could enhance the public's media literacy must be carried out through the involvement of public figures, religious institutions, and higher education institutions," he indicated.

# Planet Earth



## Shading light on socioeconomic growth via infrastructure development

BY MENGESHA AMARE

In the era of modernization and radical transformation, the issue of developing infrastructure is increasingly becoming a pivotal element and a mandatory version of metamorphosis to bring about real change and sustainable progress. Of the myriads of majestic capacity unit of infrastructure, road and railway comes at the forefront.

True, road and railway development has required firm determination, immense capital and a lot of time to be made a reality. In clear terms, such an immense investment has demanded a lot of work on the ground. Hence, there is likelihood of impacting the environment.

The African continent has these days been working towards infrastructure development so as to speed up its economic and regional integration as well as to prettily respond to the socioeconomic development queries of the people everywhere enclosed under the circumference of the continent.

Considering the extent of the railway and road network that the continent still needs, there is a need to enhance collaborative works with partners. Especially China has been active stakeholder in the development of transportation infrastructure in the continent.

Ecosystem degradation and climate change are also hot issues in this regard. Therefore, it is important to give due attention to safeguarding the ecosystem while developing infrastructure.

One important venture is the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). It eyes at connecting China with important trade and investment destinations across the world including Africa. China is already actively working on infrastructure development in Africa.

So the two sides should work towards ensuring the safe development of infrastructure.

Africa has a vast infrastructure deficit, especially in the sub-Saharan region. When it comes to water and electricity specifically, there are significant disparities across the

region. According to McKinsey, South Africa, Cameroon, Botswana, Nigeria, and Namibia have electrification rates that surpass 50% of the population. Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Angola, and Zambia's electrification rates range between 35-49%. Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, and Mauritania's electrification rates range from 20-34%. Niger, Chad, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Congo's electrification rates are lower than 20%. While North Africa has almost reached universal access to electricity and water services, in sub-Saharan Africa, only about 45% of the population has access to electricity and around 60% of the population has access to water service. This means some 600 million people do not have access to electricity. The lack of electricity is more prominent in the rural areas, where electricity coverage is only around 28 percent, compared to coverage of 65 percent in urban areas (African Development Bank).

The United Nations also asserts that, despite the gains registered in improving regional infrastructure connectivity across the continent since the establishment of the African Union along with NEPAD, Africa still faces serious infrastructure shortcomings across all sectors, both in terms of access and quality.

For instance, only 38% of the African population has access to electricity, the penetration rate for internet is less than 10% while only a quarter of Africa's road network is paved. Studies have shown that poor road, rail and port facilities add 30% to 40% to the costs of goods traded among African countries, thus adversely affecting the private sector development and the flow of foreign direct investment (FDI).

Unequivocally, stimulating economic growth and development of road infrastructure in economically behind parts of the nation is quite decisive. This is because road infrastructure plays a crucial role by providing mobility for the efficient movements of people and goods, as well as providing accessibility to a wide variety of commercial and social activities. However,

focusing on road infrastructure development alone would not be sufficient to achieve a sustainable economic growth. Hence, the contribution of road infrastructure development and other socio-economic factors need to be well acknowledged. To shed light on this issue, road infrastructure development should be implemented hand-in hand with other progress policies, in order to realize a justifiable economic growth, of course via developing eco-friendly approach.

Here, discussion forums on infrastructure development have to bring together the academic and policy-making community to exchange knowledge and insights regarding the roles that infrastructure can play in catalyzing development and fostering sustainable growth.

Infrastructure affects growth through several supply and demand-side channels. Investments in energy, telecommunications, and transport networks directly impact growth, as all types of infrastructure represent an essential input in any production of goods and services. In addition, infrastructure can also reduce the cost of delivered goods, facilitate the physical mobility of people and products, remove productivity constraints, and increase competitiveness.

While infrastructure can lead to beneficial economic outcomes, the concrete development impact of infrastructure depends significantly on how infrastructure investment strategies are defined and implemented. Undeniably, spatially coordinated development of different types of infrastructure can help amplify returns, and infrastructure investment must be accompanied by policy reforms aimed at mitigating tradeoff between social and environmental sustainability.

The construction of large dams can give rise to social conflicts in affected communities, particularly if these are poorly designed and consultation with affected populations is not adequately pursued. Yes, growth is positively affected by the stock of infrastructure assets, and income inequality declines with higher infrastructure quantity

and quality.

It has long been widely witnessed that investments in infrastructures such as energy, water, transportation and communication technologies promote economic growth and help alleviate poverty and improve living conditions in developing countries like ours.

The relationship between infrastructure and economic growth is quite complex. Although infrastructure development is important and necessary for industrial take-off and economic growth, the desire for growth does not necessarily mean higher or increased need for infrastructure and more infrastructures do not necessarily guarantee more economic growth. Infrastructure services exhibits high network effects.

As the proper state of development and change in Ethiopia is mainly affected by lack of resources to undertake groundwork development, lack of infrastructure development framework that adequately delineate stage-by-stage project requirements in many places of the country, inadequate planning, and mismatch of projects with society demands, are lagging the all-rounded progress behind, they should be addressed and all required inputs and ingredients have to be fulfilled.

An adequate supply of infrastructure is a prerequisite factor for economic growth. Intuitively, one would think that various infrastructure developments interact with the economic growth in complex processes as intermediary goods. The improvement in both quality and quantity of infrastructure affects the productivity of overall industries.

In sum, as promoting adequate investments in the building and maintenance of infrastructures is a socially desirable goal, it needs to be given due emphasis since infrastructures are often associated with increased productivity, improved mobility of the factors of production, and ultimately economic growth and sustainable change. Infrastructure development is expected to be well intensified as infrastructure has been ultimately been the prime driver of growth of the entire nation.