



# The Ethiopian Herald

**AGI** CONSTRUCTING THE FUTURE AFRICA  
Abyssinia Group of Industries

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

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

Vol. LXXX No 053 11 November 2023 - Hidar 1, 2016 **Saturday** Price Birr 10.00

## Ethiopia shares Green Legacy success in Saudi- Africa Summit

• Premier confers with Djibouti, Somalia leaders

BY BILAL DERSO

ADDIS ABABA- Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) shared Ethiopia's Green Legacy success in curbing climate change to participants of the inaugural Saudi-Africa Summit in Riyadh, calling for cooperation from Middle East actors.

A high-level government delegation led by Premier Abiy left for Riyadh yesterday to participate in the first-ever Saudi- Africa Summit that aims to foster the Kingdom's multifaceted partnership with the African continent.

Since 2019, Ethiopia has been taking practical measures to avert climate change and through a massive afforestation

See Ethiopia shares... Page 3



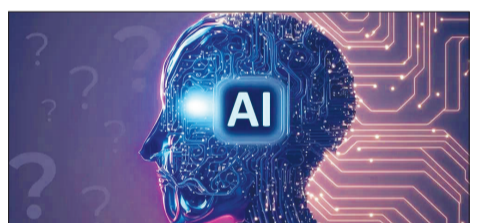
## Ministry resumes efforts in addressing Mekelle's water woes

BY MENGESHA AMARE

ADDIS ABABA-Ministry of Water and Energy (MoE) stated that equipment procurement at an outlay of one million USD has been carried out for maintaining water projects in Mekelle city of Tigray state.

Having a stay with Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), MoE Sanitation Infrastructure Section Chief Executive Nuredin Mohamed said that the government has managed the procurement of a million USD equipment to continue undertaking

See Ministry resumes efforts ... Page 3



## Institute aspires to become global AI hub

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – The Ethiopian Artificial Intelligence Institute (EAI) said it has fostered the partnership with relevant actors and executed concrete tasks to enhance its global competitiveness in the field of artificial intelligence (AI).

Approached by the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), EAI Director General Worku Gachena said the institute is carrying out extensive activities to realize its vision

See Institute aspires to ... Page 3

## EPA, The Korea Times ink MoU

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA-The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) and Seoul-based English-language newspaper *The Korea Times* signed yesterday a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for a partnership in information sharing, fact-checking and capacity building.

EPA Chief Executive Officer Getenet Tadesse and *The Korea Times* Managing Director Cho Jae-hyon signed the agreement that was held in a video meeting.

Speaking at the ceremony, Getenet indicated the common position of the two media institutions on rich and historical resources that could be shared and utilized by their respective professionals.

Getenet further noted that the EPA has been instrumental in providing timely and accurate information to both local



and foreign audiences in its over 80-year existence in the media industry. As the oldest publisher in Africa, the agency has also a noble place in recording the major happenings of the country.

EPA is one of few media, which reported the establishment of the African Union and other major happenings and has great resources

that could help historians, researchers, journalists and media enterprises to get original reports that represent the past.

The CEO also acknowledged *The Korean Times* has also synonymous history and experience mentioning the two countries' longstanding relationship is an additional

See EPA, Korea ... Page 3

Not only a singer but also a strong freedom fighter

Page 6

A collective resolve, enthusiasm to make national dialogue a success

Page 7

The agenda at AfricaNenda is to enable inclusive instant payment systems in all African countries by 2030,



Sabine Mensah

Page 8



# News



Photo: Gebabo Gebrie

## Call for active participation in NEBE's chairperson nomination process

BY ASHENAFL ANIMUT

**ADDIS ABABA** – The Management Board Recruitment Committee of The National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) has officially announced the criteria and schedule to receive proposed nominees' applications.

Briefing the media yesterday, Committee Chairperson Kesis Tagay Tadele said that the committee has been establishing rules, schedules and setting criteria for NEBE's chairperson candidates as per the proclamation since their appointment.

The chairperson further indicated that the nomination form is to be distributed to the general public, political parties and civil society organizations and would be effective as of 13 to 22 November, 2023 during office hours; application forms delivered out of the domain will be invalid.

"The nominees need to meet the following criteria: Ethiopian nationality, impartial state of mind, competent, disciplined, responsible, volunteer, loyal, kind to establish team spirit," according to the committee.

"The nomination appointment forms would be made via platforms such as Email, WhatsApp, telegram, postal services. Besides, as learnt from the committee, the applicants are expected to appear in person at the House of People's Representative Reception Office located around Arat Kilo," the committee noted.

Moreover, the committee members have also announced that the nominees are expected to present the application properly filling the required format in written form.

The committee has also indicated that the evaluation process would be made in three rounds.

The chairperson urged the political parties, stakeholders and the general public to support the entire process of applicant nomination with a view to having committed, impartial and transparent candidates.

It is to be recalled that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) has recently appointed eight-member recruiting committee to nominate a chairperson for the National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE).

## Confederation unveils 'Union Platform'

BY FIKADU BELAY

**ADDIS ABABA**—The Ethiopian Confederation of Trade Unions (ECTU) introduced a new union platform yesterday that aims at establishing closer rapport between workers and the confederation trade unions.

Briefing media in connection with the occasion, ECTU president, Kasahun Folo said that technological advancement is of paramount importance in raising workers awareness for their rights, promoting peace in the workplace, and strengthening worker unity.

He stated that it is the first platform in Africa operating across the entire nation without delay because of its direct connection.

He emphasized that workers will now have the means to address issues, complaints, and other concerns directly to their coworkers and submit them to ECTU from any location using the Android mobile app or website.

According to him, this platform is made accessible in Amharic and English languages



in a bid to accommodate the diverse linguistic needs of the nation; its capacity to receive information from basic trade unions and approximately one million members thereby enhancing the transmission of crucial information exponentially.

He further stated that Confederation's commitment to doubling the information transmission capacity and incorporating as many widely spoken languages in Ethiopia as

possible in the future.

The platform provides employees with options to submit complaints in written, audio, or video format to the federation via making a versatile and user-friendly experience available. He has also made clear for employees that the platform only requires the name, phone number of the individual and the domain/range where their salary does fall, not the exact one and they are expected to be free in due course of filling the as personal information will remain confidential and unaffected.

He remarked that this union platform marks a significant milestone in Ethiopia's labor landscape, empowering workers, and fostering a stronger bond between trade unions and their members. With its innovative features and commitment to workers' rights, ECTU sets a new standard for union engagement and represents a major step forward in ensuring a fair and harmonious work environment for all.

The development of this communication platform has been a year-long endeavor he said highlighting the dedication of the Confederation towards improving worker engagement and representation.

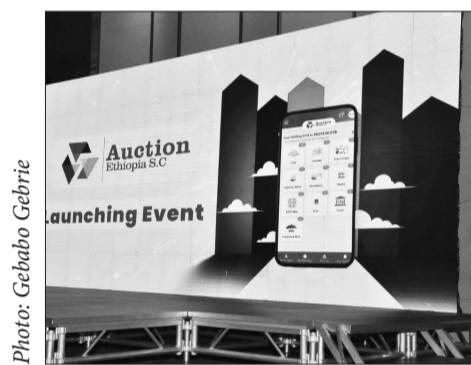


Photo: Gebabo Gebrie

## Company launches digital auctioning platform

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

**ADDIS ABABA** - Auction Ethiopia Share Company officially launched the first online auctioning platform, which is implemented via open and closed processes in East Africa yesterday.

Speaking at the occasion, Technology and Innovation State Minister Yisherun Alemayehu (PhD) stated that the introduction of a new online auctioning platform would contribute to the realization of 'Digital Ethiopia 2025' vision. The new landscape would also build trust and credibility among the target audience as well as enable to bring great improvement in the business sector.

For his part, Company CEO Yoseph Anku indicated the new platform supports all types and processes and brings more foreign currency for Ethiopia. Furthermore, the platform allows anyone to sell assets to bidders.

"The launching of online auctioning marks a significant milestone in the realm of digital sales. With our innovative approach, cutting edge technology, and commitment to providing an exceptional user experience, the company committed to transform the way auctions in the digital landscape."

The system would highlight potential users, sellers and buyers to participate in the auctioning processes without limitations of place, the CEO elaborated.

## Experts stress joining forces towards inclusive instant payment system

BY ZEKARIAS WOLDEMARIAM

**ADDIS ABABA**—Governments should discharge their indispensable role in promoting inclusive instant payment systems in Africa by 2030, so urged experts in the field.

Launching the annual 'State of Inclusive Instant Payment Services 2023' report, the team of experts indicated that they are working to see all citizens in Africa enjoying inclusive instant payment services by 2030.

The non Profit Team of experts called AfricaNenda launched the research report it jointly conducted with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) on 8 November 2023 here at the UNECA.

The report, which is the second edition, indicated that 350 million people in Africa are still excluded from Instant Payment Systems (IPS), in 2022. The major reasons for such a large number of people left behind IPS are, among others, lack of capable mobile phones, poor network connectivity and trust building issues.

Currently, only 32 IPS providers are working live in the continent, according to the report. Out of these 29 providers are operating at country level in 21 countries (as some countries have more than one IPS operator), while 3 operators are working at regional levels.

Out of the 32 IPS, 22 have carried out close to 32 billion transactions valued at some 1.2 trillion USD during the year 2022; the report indicated adding that data for the remaining 10 IPS was not available during the research period.

Furthermore, inclusivity is still a burning issue as most of the IPS are delivering service at basic level while only three of them in Zambia, Malawi and Ghana have delivered service at the Progressed level of inclusivity. The report further indicated that none of the IPS has reached matured level of inclusivity while 27 African countries do not yet have IPS at all.

AfricaNenda Deputy Chief Executive

Sabine Mensah told The Ethiopian Herald that in order to be inclusive IPS providers should be able to deliver the service regardless of the type of phone, the network service provider ... etc which means ensuring interoperability.

She also reiterated that the IPS services should go beyond sending and receiving payment and enable people get all banking or financial services. "It also takes into account what you can do with digital money, if the only thing you can do is send money and receive money, we haven't solved much. We have to be able to do everything we will do with cash, but better."

The IPS service providers should also make sure that there is a responsibility for the financial sector to protect consumers in the digital space and making sure that there are recourse mechanisms in place.

As Africa is moving towards creating a common market, the IPSs are likely to have immense role in facilitating intra Africa trade, Sabine noted.

"We at AfricaNenda contribute to this work and provide technical support and make sure that the Inclusive Instant Payment rails what is needed in Africa to accelerate intra Africa trade are in place, working interoperable and inclusively."

"Governments should also contribute their decisive role in realizing inclusive instant payment system in the continent. As the journey to inclusivity cannot happen without governments, they provide the biggest incentive for population who are outside of the financial ecosystem to come into their financial ecosystem. That is an opportunity for government to lead the inclusion of all of our people so that we make sure that digital transformation that's happening in Africa leaves no one behind."

Sabine further expressed AfricaNenda's expectation in the next five years, to enable IIPS in all countries in Africa by 2030. "We believe that IIPS can help all Africans access universal financial services, and will help us accelerate our journey to onboard more than 350 million people into the digital ecosystem.



# News

## USAID commits to enhancing investment in Ethiopia

BY STAFF REPORTER

**ADDIS ABABA** – The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) expressed commitment to enhance investment in agriculture and health sectors.

USAID Mission Director to Ethiopia Scott Hocklander emphasized his agency's commitment to enhancing agricultural production, supporting private sector investment, delivering quality public health services, and improving access to safe water supplies and basic sanitation.

The Director has visited agency's agricultural and industrial investments and projects in Jimma town of Oromia State.

In a press release sent to *The Ethiopian Herald*, USAID said that the projects are examples of the continued cooperation between the American and Ethiopians for providing decent jobs and nation-wide economic growth through increasing agricultural production.

During the field visit, Director Hocklander has discussed with representatives from Jimma Chamber of Commerce about USAID's long-standing partnership with the people in and around Jimma, and across



USAID Mission Director to Ethiopia, Scott Hocklander visiting coffee production in Jimma town

Ethiopia, it was stated.

Hocklander visited the Jimma branch of the federal Agricultural Research Center while developing next-generation drought-resistant coffee tree varieties, and other coffee, tea, and vegetable oil plant studies being conducted at Jimma, the release mentioned.

The Director also visited the center's coffee cupping laboratory, which USAID has provided with vital scientific equipment.

Likewise, Director Hocklander visited Soreti International Trading, an avocado processing facility at Jimma Industrial Park which produces 40 tons of avocado oil per day.

USAID said in the statement that it has partnered with the company by establishing an avocado seedling nursery, providing specialized training to farmers and extension workers, and establishing woreda-level avocado collection points.

The Jimma Industrial Park management and leadership expressed appreciation to USAID for its vital support to Ethiopia's incredible agro-industrial capabilities, according to the release.

The statement showed that USAID invested more than 1.8 billion USD in Ethiopia through humanitarian and development aid in 2022.

## EPA, Korea...

asset for the partnership. Ethiopia is the only African country, which sent peacekeeping forces during the Korean War. "Therefore, the signing of the MoU will help both sides to foster their relationship."

Ethiopian Ambassador to South Korea Dessie Dalkie also congratulated EPA and *The Korea Times* for the signing of the MoU, saying the agreement would allow both sides to learn from each other.

"It is a historical agreement since both media institutions have existed in the industry for a long time and there is a lot to be promoted together." The Ethiopian Embassy in Korea is also working on media diplomacy for the furtherance of the two countries partnership.

For his part, *The Korea Times* Managing Director Cho Jae-hyon said that the agreement is of great significance to exchange information and media resources easily between the two institutions.

The EPA runs six newspapers namely *Addis Zemen*, *The Ethiopian Herald*, *Al-Alem*, *Bariissaa*, *Wegahta*, *Bakkalcho*, and a quarterly magazine *Zemen*.

Established in 1950, *The Korea Times* is the oldest daily English-language newspaper in South Korea.

## Ministry resumes efforts...

the Mekelle Water project that was interrupted due to the recent conflict.

"Since there are water projects made dysfunctional by the wars in Mekelle and around Adigrat, the government has attached due emphasis to the water project to get them fully functional."

As to him, the ministry has planned to expand clean water and sanitation undertakings in towns and cities.

Procurement contract has been concluded and purchasing has been well underway so as to substitute electromechanical equipment and the burnt pumps in the aforesaid towns as a result of the war, he noted.

According to Nuredin, equipment procurement for Mekelle city water projects has already been done, and that of Adigrat town is well in progress.

Citing the presence of other woredas and small town projects, he said a number of promising projects including the construction of common toilets and other sanitation centers are running well with a view to benefiting the long affected citizens.

The projects are predominantly targeting at addressing water and sanitation problems through fixing

them with the already procured large water pumps and generators, Nuredin stated.

He further elucidated that multifaceted projects have been run attaching special attention to war and drought prone areas like in Afar, Amhara and Oromia states in a bid to bring about lasting solution using the finance secured from African Development Bank.

## Ethiopia shares...

program, which mobilizes over 25 million citizens annually; the country has planted 32.5 billion seedlings, Abiy told the participants.

By the end of 2026, Ethiopia will have reached its total target of 50 billion trees planted since the launch of the Green Legacy initiative. The impact could be equated to removing 64 million gasoline-powered cars from the roads for a whole year.

"In alignment with the Middle East Green Initiative, our Green Legacy initiative will have far-reaching and positive generational consequences. We must therefore accelerate cooperation on green development, enhancing the synergy of our green development initiatives," he pleaded.

On the sidelines of the Saudi-Africa Summit, the Premier conferred with President Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti and President Hassan Sheikh Mohamed of Somalia on bilateral and regional issues of mutual interest.

He also exchanged views with Saudi

Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on ways to strengthen the two countries multifaceted relations and partnership.

It was learned that the Saudi-Africa Summit aims to enhance political coordination, address regional security threats, and promote economic transformation through research and the local development of new energy solutions.

In connection with the summit, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman announced the launch of King Salman's Development Initiative in Africa and unveiled developmental projects and programs across the continent, totaling over a billion USD over 10 years.

Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia have strong cooperation in areas of trade, investment and other sectors.

Diplomatic relations between the two countries began in 1948, when Saudi Arabia opened its embassy in Addis Ababa, placing it among the first Arab countries to do so.

## Institute aspires to...

of becoming a global player in the sphere of artificial intelligence.

The director further noted that the institute is preparing AI policy and working with universities to ensure the proper functioning of the system and bringing fundamental change in the sector. Consolidated efforts are also underway to address the apparent skill gap in the area. "We are working in collaboration with Adama Science and Technology University (ASTU) to offer a PhD program in artificial intelligence technology."

Different European states, the United Arab Emirates and others have been giving the AI education up to PhD level and they obtained significant advantages from the technology and managed their resources properly and efficiently. Currently, EAI is making commendable activities to systematically store and analyze various forms of data to allocate for intended purposes.

"Information would become the engine of progress of any nation. Thus, Ethiopia is

expected to install a modern information management system in order to protect the resource and ensure adequate benefit from the artificial intelligence sector," Worku added.

Currently, the EAI developed a data application on health and agriculture sectors using four local languages: Amharic, Afan Oromo, Tigrigna, and Somali and the application used for converting sound data into written form.

Nowadays, artificial intelligence is the main frontline where different countries are competing for global dominance. Therefore, Ethiopia should create an enabling environment for AI development including adequate infrastructure, skilled labor force, technological modernization, and the likes to become competitive globally.

Creating public awareness on the technology's significance would also play a pivotal role in repelling cyber-attack attempts and exploiting the resource wisely, the director emphasized.



# Opinion

## High time to praise nation's commitment and revise decisions on AGOA

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

The issues of inflation and unemployment have become the major concern for many nations as the whole world is facing grave danger regarding the economy. Unleashing nation's economic potential has become one of the unwavering notions of most government. These days, any problem in any part of the world creates challenges for many people and countries across the globe as globalization become dominant and people have become intermingled to one another. With such problems, extra pressure and economic isolation would highly affect any nation.

With such challenges looming around the world, the issue would even be bigger when it comes to nations with poor economic power. Again, those superpower countries must show their responsibility when it comes to supporting other nations in the time of dire situations. It would be inhuman if those economically powerful nations use their power to put extra pressure on any nation in such economic fallout to secure their benefits and make their cliques happy.

Speaking of unemployment and inflation, nations especially countries in African continent have been passing through difficult times as their economy have no power to resist the existing and upcoming economic waves. To this regard, the continent has been trying to work with those world's superpowers to curb the economic problem.

The same is true when the issue comes to Ethiopia. A year before, Ethiopia was in an active war in the northern part of the country that prolonged for two years. The war has put things out of the frying pan into the fire and caused numerous economic challenges. To this end, the nation faced an expulsion from international agreements including African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

In the present climate, the people and the government of Ethiopia have left no stone unturned to cope up the economic challenges that have been brought by numerous causes. Starting from the internal conflict that was caused in the northern part of the nation to the Russia and Ukraine war, and the recent war between Israel and Hamas, the country's economy has been hit by a number of problems. The government of Ethiopia has taken several steps that were believed to be the solution for the economic pressure the nation is struggling with. Besides, the economic pressure has caused many changes on the way things are done.

With all these pressure, the government and responsible stakeholders have exerted the utmost effort to curb the existing



inflation on the cost of living. Concerned bodies have taken actions to create new jobs for citizens and expand the economic potential of the country.

Ethiopia might have no power in adjusting the issues caused externally, but the nation has been trying to be the part of its own solution for the problems happened within the country. The two year long war on the northern part of the country was one of the major concerns not only for Ethiopia but also the whole world. Ending the war and silencing the guns, the current incumbent took the big step to find a solution to internally exited problems by bringing the issue to the table.

It has been a year when the Government of Ethiopia and Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) signed the agreement of Permanent Cessation of Hostilities (CoH) in Pretoria, South Africa. According to the latest statement from the Government Communication Services (GCS) in accordance with the first anniversary of the "Agreement for Lasting Peace through a Permanent Cessation of Hostilities (CoH)", the government of Ethiopia stated that the nation counts on the continued engagement of friends and partners for lasting peace.

The current incumbent stated on its press release that the Peace Agreement has been a key in relation to silencing the guns and paving the way for the gradual normalization of life in northern Ethiopia. Throughout the course of the implementation of the agreement, the government has shown its unwavering commitment through a number of bold and decisive measures to build trust and consolidate peace, the statement said.

The statement further elaborated the measures that the government of

Ethiopia has taken so far. It states that the government had put an end to all military operations and hostile rhetoric against the TPLF.

It also stated that the government of Ethiopia has worked with responsible bodies in order to set up and put into operation a Rehabilitation Commission aimed at facilitating the process of Disarming, Demobilizing and Reintegrating (DDR) the ex-TPLF combatants. "We are finalizing the formulation of a comprehensive National Transitional Justice (TJ) policy to ensure accountability and reconciliation," according to the statement.

The government takes this opportunity and milestone which affords us to take stock of the situation and appraise Ethiopia's friends and partners on the progress in the implementation of the Peace Agreement, the statement indicated.

In addition, the government confirmed that the Agreement has not been fully implemented yet as peace needs the commitment of both parties. Similarly, the disarmament process requires an inventory of heavy armaments handed over and a full handing over of small and light arms, which still remain rampant in the region, it mentioned.

The statement also stressed that friends and partners of Ethiopia should continue to support and encourage all actors to adhere to the agreement and refrain from behavior that would jeopardize peace and security in Ethiopia, the government noted. It has also pledged to redouble efforts to consolidate peace and ensure the full implementation of the Peace Agreement.

Some countries including Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Japan,

Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom jointly congratulated the parties and appreciated their effort to choose peace than war.

With all the efforts and actions taken by the government and the support from those friendly nations, Ethiopia is still crying for changing the rhetoric. Due to the war, the nation has been expelled from different agreements and stopped its relation with international organization to get loans and other monetary agreements by those superpowers.

Since the time of the war and up to this time, some nations and international organizations have not changed their stands on Ethiopia. A simple example might be the act of expelling Ethiopia from the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

Government of the United States of America, on its statement through its Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken, showed its support saying, "The United States welcomes the significant progress made on COHA implementation, including the establishment of the Tigray Interim Regional Administration, resumption of essential services, provision of humanitarian assistance, facilitation of access for international human rights monitors in Tigray, and implementation of the AU Monitoring, Verification, and Compliance Mechanism. The government and Transitional Justice Working Group of Experts have taken important steps toward the establishment of a national transitional justice policy."

Though the US Government has shown its support and appreciated to the efforts and commitment taken by both sides, the administration has not pulled Ethiopia out from the expulsion from the Act yet. The US administration should know all the current economic pressures that Ethiopia and the world are going through. The rate of unemployment in the country will be able to lower if Ethiopia gets back to the act as many investors want to invest in the country and employ thousands of citizens.

This should be the right time to the US Administration and other international organizations to sleep over on the issue and observe the actions taken by the government to normalize things. Apart from congratulating and appreciating the efforts taken in the past year, the US Administration must revise its stance on Ethiopia and support the nation in all endeavors. Let Ethiopia be where it was and should be.

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

# Editorial

## Towards bolstering multilateral, inclusive relations

Ethiopia has entertained multilateral and inclusive relations with countries across the globe lining up its national interest. Consequently, it has established long standing relations with the Middle East countries like Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia have had long standing relations for many centuries both in terms of business relations and people-to-people contacts. Cultural bonds are deep-rooted, strong and ancient. These relations have been consolidated over years as a result of strengthened diplomatic and economic relations among them.

Indeed, this is witnessed by the discussion held between Ethiopia's Minister of Finance, Ahmed Shede and his Saudi Arabian counterpart Mohammed Al Jadaan recently.

The discussion was held as a side meeting of the Saudi African Economic Conference in Riyadh. On the occasion, the two ministers have discussed the issues of economic reform, development that the government of Ethiopia is undertaking and debt restructuring, according to the Ethiopian Embassy in Riyadh. To this end, the Saudi Arabian Minister has expressed the strong support of the Saudi Arabian government for the development activities taking place in Ethiopia.

The relations between the two countries go back to the time of the Prophet when he told his family and followers to take refuge in Ethiopia when threatened by persecution in Mecca.

Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia opened formal diplomatic relations in 1948. Despite fluctuations encountered at times for various reasons, the two countries have enjoyed ever flourishing ties. There have been a number of exchanges of visits over the years by high level government officials between Ethiopia and the Royal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and a number of agreements have been signed to enhance relations. There is a Joint Ministerial Commission that is meant to meet annually to review the progress in all areas of cooperation. The Commission also has the task of suggesting new areas for cooperation and of working towards their implementation.

Trade relations have been on the rise and expected to increase significantly in both quantity and quality. Ethiopia and Saudi Arabian production is compatible rather than competitive. Since Saudi Arabia is endowed with petroleum resources and Ethiopia is blessed with the potential of producing varieties of agricultural crops and animals' resources, both can bolster their trade exchanges in the way mutual benefit is assured.

The geographic proximity is an encouraging factor. This has also been a factor in the increasing number of Saudi tourists visiting Ethiopia. Equally, more could be done to encourage tourism in both countries. Ethiopia certainly has a great deal to offer besides the hospitality of its people. Many Ethiopians live and work in Saudi Arabia, and many more travel to Saudi Arabia for the Hajj every year. This will, of course, continue and help to further enhance relations.

Investment is a growing area of cooperation, and a growing number of Saudi investors are engaged in different sectors in Ethiopia. By the same token, Ethiopia has strong relations with the State of Qatar. Their diplomatic relations began in 1995, after signing an agreement on establishing diplomatic relations between the State of Qatar and the then Transitional Government of Ethiopia.

As a part of strong political and economic cooperation they have, Ethiopia's State Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Mesganu Arga, received the Deputy Head of Mission of the State of Qatar to Ethiopia Jaber Jemal Al-Awami, at his office recently and discussed to capitalize on the existing potentials of investment and development cooperation between the two countries.

Ethiopia's smooth relations with the countries across the globe testify its multilateral and inclusive diplomatic stance. Such relations enable the country to ensure national interest via strengthening the ties.



## The Ethiopian Herald

Established in 1943

Published daily except Mondays  
By The Ethiopian Press Agency

### Office of the CEO

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

### Advertisement and Dist. Department

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

Editor-in-Chief: Worku Belachew

email- workubelachew@press.et

Address- Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-city

Woreda - 05, House No----

Tel- +251 111 26 41 98

### Managing Editor: Wakuman Kudama

Email: wakuma220@gmail.com

### Deputy Editors-in-Chief:

Alem Hailu  
Elizabeth Mengistu  
Zekarias Woldemariam  
Desta Geberehiwot  
Daniel Beyene

Website: [www.press.et](http://www.press.et)

email: [ethiopianherald@press.et](mailto:ethiopianherald@press.et)

Fb//Ethiopian Press Agency/

The Ethiopian Herald

# Opinion

## Social cohesion: The glue that holds us together

BY AMSALU BEDEMO (PhD)

(Associate Professor of Economics Department of Policy Studies Ethiopian Civil Service University)

How is social cohesion important in the existing social, political and cultural context of Ethiopia? What should be done to enhance social cohesion? The responses to these questions are really very important in Ethiopia, where we have developed tensions of conflict, disconnectedness and lack of trust to each other. Ethiopia is a diverse country with a long history of conflict and division. Social cohesion is particularly important in Ethiopia because it can help to build trust and understanding between different ethnic and religious groups, and can promote a sense of shared national identity.

In a world that is becoming increasingly diverse and interconnected, social cohesion has emerged as a crucial element for the well-being and progress of societies. It refers to the degree of harmony, cooperation, and inclusion among individuals and groups within a community. Like glue, social cohesion binds people together, fostering a sense of belonging, trust, and solidarity. It consists of shared values, norms, and goals, as well as a willingness to cooperate and work together for the common good.

Social cohesion is important for a number of reasons. One of its key benefits is its ability to promote stability and peace within a society. When individuals feel connected to one another and share a common sense of purpose, they are less likely to engage in conflict or violence. Instead, they work together to address challenges and find mutually beneficial solutions. This not only ensures the safety and security of communities but also paves the way for sustainable development.

Social cohesion plays a vital role in fostering economic growth and prosperity. In cohesive societies, there is a higher level of trust and cooperation among individuals and institutions. This leads to more effective collaboration, innovation, and entrepreneurship. When people feel supported and included, they are more likely to contribute their skills and talents towards collective goals, resulting in increased productivity and competitiveness.

Social cohesion also contributes to the overall well-being and quality of life of individuals. It promotes social inclusion and reduces inequalities by ensuring that everyone has equal access to opportunities, resources, and services. In cohesive societies, individuals feel valued and respected for their unique identities and contributions, leading to higher levels of happiness and life satisfaction.

In the social context, social cohesion can help to improve the quality of life for all Ethiopians. Strong social networks can provide support and assistance to people in times of need. In the political context, social cohesion can help to strengthen democracy and promote political stability. When people feel connected to each other and to the political system, they are more likely to support democratic values which can also help to reduce the risk of political violence and instability. In the cultural context, social cohesion can help to promote cultural diversity and understanding. When people feel connected to their own culture, they are more likely to be open to and respectful of other cultures.

Therefore, in my opinion the following measures should be done to enhance social cohesion in Ethiopia.

Promoting intercultural dialogue and understanding encourages open and inclusive discussions that celebrate and value the diverse cultural backgrounds of Ethiopians can foster understanding, empathy, and mutual respect. This can be done through cultural exchange programs, community events, and educational initiatives that promote intercultural learning.

Addressing the underlying conflicts and disputes by promoting dialogue, mediation, and reconciliation processes is essential for building trust and healing divisions. Encouraging peaceful mechanisms for resolving conflicts, such as community mediation centers and indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms can help in this regard.

Education can help to promote understanding and appreciation of different cultures and perspectives. Thus, integrating inclusive and culturally-sensitive curricula that teach respect for diversity, human rights, and peaceful coexistence can help foster a sense of unity among the younger generation. Education can also play a role in addressing historical grievances and promoting a shared national identity.

Empowering and supporting grassroots initiatives such as local community-based organizations and initiatives that aim to promote social cohesion can be effective. These organizations can focus on activities that bring people from different backgrounds together, such as community festivals, sports events, and shared community projects.

Enhancing social inclusion and equality can reduce social and economic inequalities by ensuring equal access to basic services, opportunities, and resources is crucial for fostering social cohesion. Policies and programs that address poverty, unemployment, and discrimination can contribute to a more inclusive society.

Strengthening social networks and support systems can create spaces and platforms for individuals to connect, share experiences, and support each other can strengthen social cohesion. This can involve establishing community centers, support groups, and mentorship programs that promote social bonds and provide assistance to those in need.

Finally, encouraging participatory decision-making that involves citizens in decision-making processes, especially at the local level, can empower individuals, create a sense of ownership, and foster social cohesion. Participatory governance initiatives that encourage citizen engagement and collective problem-solving can contribute to a more cohesive society.

In conclusion, social cohesion is vital for Ethiopia, given its diversity and historical tensions. Enhancing social cohesion requires efforts to promote dialogue, address conflicts, invest in education, foster inclusivity, empower grassroots initiatives, strengthen social networks, and encourage participatory decision-making. By prioritizing social cohesion, Ethiopia can cultivate a society where trust, understanding, and cooperation thrive, leading to sustainable development and a more harmonious future.

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



# Art & Culture

## Not only a singer but also a strong freedom fighter

BY NAOL GIRMA

Hallo was born in 1947 to Dawud Abdullah Ali and Fatuma Hassan in Biyo Awale village, east of Dire Dawa town.

Her birth name was Halima Dawud. As a child, she was a strong girl who quickly grasped everything she saw and heard, so her name was changed to Hallo Daawee. Hallo is the name of a hardwood tree found in the desert area. She was named after it to show her strength. While a kid Hallo Daawe moved to Dire Dawa and grew up with her aunt, Kadija Hasan. The secret of her ability, strength, knowledge, cheerfulness, nationalism and heroism was that she grew up in a happy, patriotic family and a community of Dire Dawa that love their identity, respect culture, embrace everyone with cordiality and live with peace and love. The senior artist had a great artistic gift as a child, loved her culture, played songs and dances, *Heellee and Shaggooyee* and entertained the community with her peers and young friends.

In 1961, a band known as *Biftuu biyya tenyaa* was founded in the city of Dire Dawa. It paved the way for the gifted lady to showcase her born talent with special gifts as a child.

The band was built by a broad community foundation, equipped with modern musical instruments with the help of the people. It solved the problem of shortage of female artists in Oromo bands. For the first time it was filled with strong female singers and dancers. She had contributed greatly to entertain the people and inspire them to fight and struggle against injustice and inequalities.

Artist Hallo Daawe joined the band to serve and contribute her part in the Band with other artist like Fatume Mahammad, Foziya Mahammad, Hajara Adam. She played a significant role in Oromo Music industry and she was the one who served her people throughout her life. She suffered a lot but overcame all difficulties with determination and heroism and served her people with fame and love. Hallo began her career with the song, "Barbanee walbara". It was a crucial time for her people to get to know each other, get closer to each other and fight for their rights and freedoms together. While serving as the source of the great artists in Dire Dawa, Hallo was one of the first Oromo artists from six parts of Oromia to gather in the capital of Addis Ababa, to present a public exhibition of Oromo art at the National Theatre. Hallo was known for her struggle-inspiring songs with the *Biftuu biyya tenyaa* band at the shows. She had won a lot of popularity.



*Biftuu biyya tenyaa* Band has grown to become a source of famous and well-known artists for the role of Hallo and has become known nationally.

Hallo Daawe was one of those who suffered severe torture in prison when the musical instruments of the Band were taken by the Derg. The artists who served in the band were arrested.

After the dissolution of the *Biftuu biyya tenyaa* Band by the then Government, Hallo moved to Harar after her release from prison and served in the Hararge Farmers Association and the *Coffee Gada* Band.

She used art as a tool of struggle and continued her struggle to promote Oromumaa or Oromo nationalism. She was imprisoned and tortured on various occasions.

Artist and activist Hallo had made 10 cassettes of songs on her own, 13 cassettes with her friends, and 23 albums or cassettes in total during her long career in the arts. Her songs entertained the people, showered love and inspired struggle.

Hallo will be remembered forever in the hearts of the Oromo people as the Mother of Oromo Art. Through her artwork, she had made a great contribution to the promotion of Oromo art and culture. She fought for justice to be served to the people.

Artist Hallo, who was a mother of three, passed away on October 14, 2023 at the age of 62 after a long illness.

On her funeral ceremony Deputy Mayor of Adama City, Hinsene Mahaammad, said that artist Hallo had been performing many songs that had caught the ears and hearts of the people with her melodic voice. Hallo is an artist who had contributed greatly to the development of Oromo culture by singing in Afaan Oromo during the time when Afaan

Oromo was under tacit suppression to the extent of not being seen qualified for airing on the radio.

The path paved by Hallo had helped produce many female artists. This artist is a hero that history will never forget. He wished her family, relatives, admirers and all the Oromo people patience and may Allah make let her soul rest in peace.

The president of the Oromo Artists Association, Artist Tsgaye Dandana, said that Hallo Daawe, who had been involved in the arts since the age of 15, was not only a mother of Oromo songs but also a mother of freedom, a mother of Oromo art.

Hallo was a strong female artist who had been fighting for the freedom of Oromo people by singing in Afaan Oromo during the oppressive regime. She was the mother of identity, alphabet, history, the oldest *Sinqee* who lived for the people, he said.

Artist Saliya Sami described Hallo as an example of freedom and self-being, confidence for women. Hallo used to inspire and encourage the youth of Oromo to resist and fight against the oppression of the Oromo people during the Derg regime.

We had seen the brutal treatment of Oromo artists like Eebisa Adunga, Mustafa Marawe who were dragged to the ground in the capital and treated so badly in public. Today, we are evaluating the condition of our artists and making them heroic leaders.

This change did not come easily. She said we need to strengthen the change we had brought with sacrifice by further strengthening our unity.

The Mayor of Dire Dawa, Kadir Jawar, said that we should not only bite our lips and mourn our artists when they die but also stand by them when they are suffering and sick.

Hallo was fighting not only by singing but also taking to the forest armed with weapons. Everyone will surely go to Allah at the end of his/her time. Life in the world had many problems and we should all help the suffering, treat the sick and live together in unity, peace and love, he said.

The head of the Oromia Bureau of Culture and Tourism, Hussein Fayiso, said that the artist Hallo inspired the youth and the elderly to resist oppression with her songs; she was also a strong fighter for equality of human beings. She is mentioned as an example for women in both song and struggle. History will never be forgotten.

The artist has proclaimed about unity and coexistence in her songs. She was proclaiming the oppression of the Oromo people through her songs. She did not remain silent even when the Oromo people were in dire straits.

She also played a major role in the development and dissemination of Oromo art. Our bureau works hard to ensure that Hallo's contribution to the generation will be remembered forever and passed on from generation to generation.

Some of the people who attended her funeral commented that our youth and elders should learn from Hallo to expose and reveal the hidden and buried heroism, nationalism and Oromummaa.

Overall, Hallo is the one who had paid a great sacrifice to bring Oromo art to the level it is today. Before her childhood, youth and social life, she was devoted to her people.

Hallo had been inspiring the Oromo people to fight for their rights and freedoms through her songs. Hallo had also sung many songs that connect and strengthen the unity of Oromo. Hallo was a strong artist who fought and fought heroically for the freedom of the Oromo people. She was singing to promote Oromo nationalism, bring Oromo together and strengthen and popularize their unity.

Hallo is an artist who has been fighting and working in every way to continue the work started by beating the older artists. She had been instrumental in the creation of the Qube Generation and the current changes.

Hallo was an artist who had been serving her people unto grave. She has done well and we will see many things in her name tomorrow. The present generation should learn from Hallo Daawe that it is prideful and honourable activity to leave a good history behind as a legacy.

## A lady that ticks all my boxes

BY ALEM HAILU G/KRISTOS

*Till today*

*A desperate lad*

*I've been pretending*

*To love many a lass*

*The tide of life*

*Disgorged on my bay.*

*But now*

*I've managed to acquire*

*A lady that fulfills*

*All what from a woman*

*I desire,*

*Atop the list*

*To my hearth*

*A blazing fire.*





# Law & Politics

## A collective resolve, enthusiasm to make national dialogue a success

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

The National Dialogue Commission (NDC) has been deeply encouraged and grateful for the overwhelming support and active engagement demonstrated by the people during its preliminary initiatives. Since the commencement of its endeavors, the NDC has witnessed enthusiasm from the public reinforcing their commitment to actively participate in the national dialogue process.

The commission has been greatly uplifted by the enthusiastic response it has received from individuals hailing from diverse backgrounds and sectors illustrating a collective dedication to fostering productive conversations.

The NDC's efforts to engage the public have resonated. The commission has been pleased to witness the immense eagerness displayed by individuals from all walks of life who have actively participated in the preliminary initiatives showcasing their unwavering commitment to the national dialogue process. This notable level of enthusiasm serves as a testament to the shared belief among the Ethiopian public that open and inclusive dialogue is crucial for addressing the country's pressing issues.

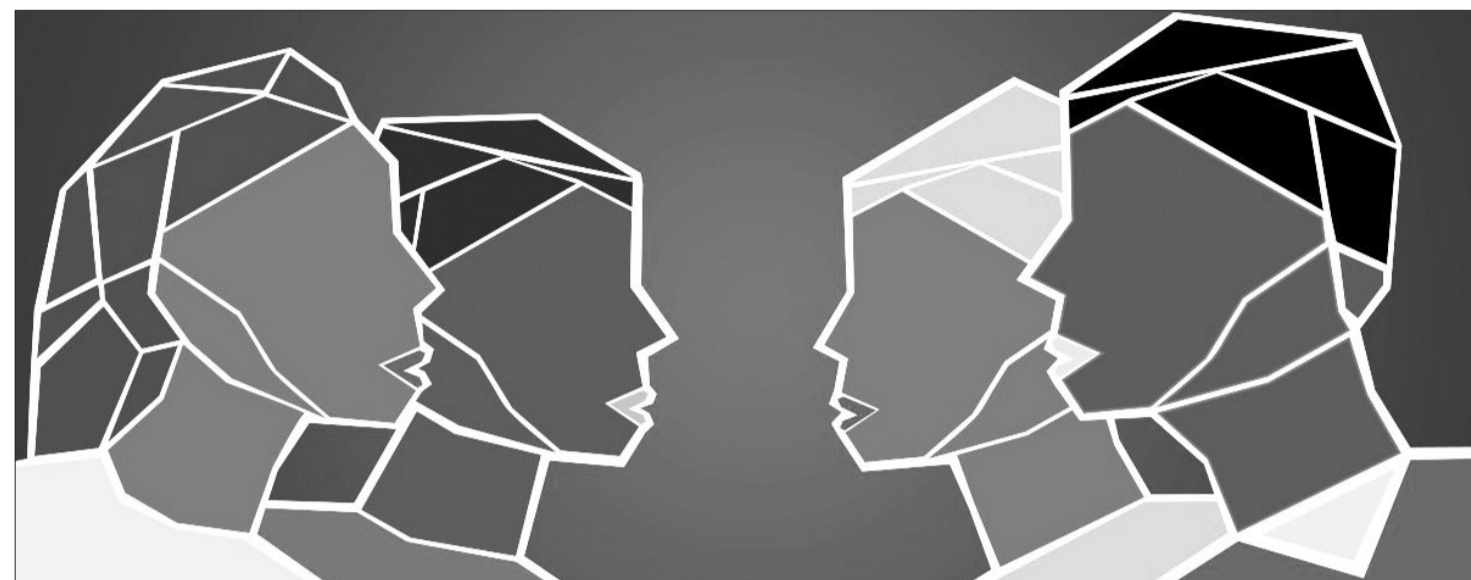
The commission acknowledges the invaluable input provided by individuals from various segments of society recognizing the significance of their active involvement in shaping the national dialogue. As the NDC aims to ensure that all voices are heard and considered, the overwhelming response and participation from individuals of diverse backgrounds have been pivotal in creating an inclusive platform for meaningful discussions.

The commission appreciates active engagement demonstrated by the public which has enriched the dialogue process with a wide array of perspectives and experiences.

Throughout the NDC's preoperational activities, it has become evident that the Ethiopian society is united in its shared commitment to contribute to the nation's development. The commission has been particularly encouraged by the enthusiastic participation of individuals from different societal spheres including youth, women, farmers, workers, and professionals. This broad-based involvement has ensured that the national dialogue encompasses a comprehensive range of perspectives and interests enhancing its ability to address the diverse concerns of the Ethiopian society.

The remarkable level of public support and involvement observed during the NDC's preoperational activities exemplifies the people's yearning to be heard and their profound desire to actively contribute to the betterment of the country. The commission recognizes and values the immense significance of the public's input as it strongly believes that collective efforts have the potential to foster positive change and pave the path towards a brighter future for Ethiopia.

The commission has been gratified by the enthusiastic support shown by the people in their participation in the preliminary initiatives. From the outset, the NDC's efforts to engage the public have been met with



remarkable enthusiasm. The commission has been heartened by the overwhelming response and active involvement of individuals from all walks of life demonstrating a shared commitment to the national dialogue process.

The NDC's preoperational activities have resonated deeply with the public, who have shown an eagerness to contribute to these important discussions. The commission has been encouraged by the number of individuals who have willingly come forward to express their views, share their experiences, and offer recommendations for fostering greater harmony and understanding within Ethiopian society.

Through various platforms the NDC has created spaces for open dialogue allowing the public to freely express their thoughts and concerns. This participatory approach has empowered citizens enabling them to become active agents in shaping the future of their country. It has been remarkable to witness the widespread support and engagement of various social groups in the NDC's preoperational activities.

The magnitude of their participation underscored their genuine belief in the transformative power of open and inclusive conversations. It demonstrates their collective determination to address pressing issues, fostering unity, and forging a more harmonious and prosperous future for the nation.

Their active engagement in the initial phase depicts their genuine faith in the ability of dialogue to resolve longstanding challenges and dilemmas. Their unwavering participation reflected their collective eagerness to explore meaningful solutions and promote a brighter future for Ethiopia.

The public showcased an extraordinary level of support for the effective realization of the national dialogue. They actively participated in determining the key areas to be addressed during the dialogue sessions clearly indicating their firm belief in the power of dialogue as a vehicle for resolving the nation's persistent issues. Their energetic involvement emphasized their unwavering dedication to achieving comprehensive and enduring solutions through a collaborative and inclusive approach.

Their active involvement in the initial stages, where they played a critical role in identifying

pivotal topics for discussion illustrated their sincere trust in the potential of dialogue to overcome the country's hardship and challenges. Their wholehearted participation exemplifies their collective commitment to driving positive change and securing a brighter future for Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian public expressed an overwhelming endorsement for the successful implementation of the national dialogue demonstrating an unwavering dedication to actively contributing towards the selection of key topics to be addressed during the dialogue sessions. Their enthusiastic engagement served as a powerful testament to their genuine conviction that dialogue has the potential to pave the way for lasting solutions to Ethiopia's enduring challenges and issues.

The public's belief in the transformative power of dialogue is deeply rooted in their desire for unity, peace, and progress. They recognize that by engaging in open and honest conversations, diverse viewpoints could be brought to the forefront, facilitating a better understanding of the complexities surrounding Ethiopia's challenges. In turn, this understanding would pave the way for innovative and inclusive solutions that could foster lasting change and development across the nation.

The extensive public engagement in the agenda selection process further demonstrates the Ethiopian people's commitment to inclusivity and democratic principles. The dialogue organizers actively sought to involve citizens in decision-making by providing accessible channels for input and feedback. Moreover, the public's belief in the potential of dialogue extended beyond the immediate benefits it could bring.

The public's unwavering support for the national dialogue reflects their faith in the country's collective wisdom and their commitment to the principles of democracy, inclusivity, and progress. Their active participation in the agenda selection process showcases their dedication to finding sustainable solutions and creating a more prosperous and harmonious Ethiopia. Through their engagement, they demonstrate that true change begins with open and respectful dialogue empowering all members of society to shape their common destiny.

The National Dialogue Commission (NDC) said it has witnessed the public's

overwhelming support and participation in its preoperational activities, adding that the participants' identification process is well underway.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Commissioner Mohamud Dirir (Amb.) stated that the public demonstrated overwhelming support for the successful conduct of the dialogue and actively engaged in the agenda selection process. "The public is telling us that the dialogue is a durable and ultimate solution for the country's current and emerging challenges."

The commission has also collected opinions and inputs from civil society organizations, political parties, religious institutions, think tanks and from other societal associations. "We have made consolidated efforts to hold inclusive and participatory preliminary discussions across the country. However, the security challenges in some parts of Ethiopia are hindering such attempts."

Mohamud further noted that the commission has been working tirelessly to make the dialogue participatory and inclusive and to ensure the involvement of all segments of the society in the participant identification process.

About public comments, which the NDC has received so far, he indicated the public understands about the existence of some problems that need the active involvement of every actor. "We have invited scholars, community leaders, and others to present best mechanisms that could not be comprehended by government officials."

"We have seen many countries fail due to the absence of peaceful resolution mechanisms. Therefore, the dialogue is the living solution to set the roadmap for dispute resolution. It may not end all contentious issues once in a time. But, it is expected to lay the foundation for future dialogues which Ethiopians are in dire need."

Most crises, which Ethiopia experienced in the past years, are a result of failure to bring agendas to discussion. It is crucial to learn from such experiences too, the commissioner emphasized.

Mohamud further mentioned the agreement reached with the Tigray Interim-Administration to establish basic structures needed to conduct the dialogue. "The processes we have been through in the past dialogues are also encouraging."



# The agenda at AfricaNenda is to enable inclusive instant payment systems in all African countries by 2030,

*Sabine Mensah*

BY ZEKARIAS WOLDEMARIAM

With a population of more than 1 billion people, Africa has one of the largest number of mobile phone subscribers in the world. The large number of mobile phone users and the growing internet service penetration have the potential to expand digital financial services.

Yet more than 350 million people of the continent, almost one out of three people are financially excluded. This means this huge number of people do not have access to either banking services as well as digital payment services that are carried out through mobile networks or internet.

Several hindrances can be mentioned like availability of capable tools like mobile phones, strong network connectivity and building trust.

To address the factors that hold the large number of Africans as financial excluded, it is important to encourage the development of Inclusive Instant Payment Services (IIPS) in the continent. According to AfricaNenda, IIPS process retail transactions digitally in near real-time and are available for use 24 hours a day, 365 days a year or as close to that as possible. They enable low value, low cost push transactions that are irrevocable and based on open-loop and multilateral interoperability arrangements.

Based in Nairobi, Kenya, AfricaNenda is a team of African experts in digital payment, financial inclusion payment systems working on the continent. Among the activities it is engaged in conducting research on the situation of instant inclusive payments in the continent. As part of this, it conducts research on the State of Inclusive Instant Payment Systems (SIIPS) in Africa in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

This year's report, SIIPS 2023, is the second edition of it. According to the report, in the year 2023 there are 32 live payment systems of which 29 are country based and three regional ones. The 29 payment systems operate in 21 African countries.

The already operational payment systems have carried out about 32 billion transactions and a total of 1.2 trillion USD only in the year 2022. The researchers indicated that the stated volume of transaction refers only to 22 of the 32 IPS provider's data from the remaining 10 operators was not available. This means

the actual transaction exceeds far more than the aforementioned figure.

It is also a stunning fact that 27 African countries do not have such payment system at all. At the moment 17 countries are planning to start while three regional systems are also under preparation or planning level.

Today's Herald Guest is Sabine Mensah, the Deputy CEO at AfricaNenda. Sabine has strong leadership experience in digital payments and mobile money across multilaterals and the private sector.

As the Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Sabine oversees AfricaNenda's capacity-building and partnership efforts through convenings and thought leadership, with the aim of strengthening the payments ecosystem across Africa.

Prior to joining AfricaNenda, Sabine served as the Regional Digital Hub Manager for the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), where she led the development of inclusive digital economies to accelerate financial inclusion across West and Central Africa. She also successfully drove UNCDF's global digital infrastructure work stream.

As the Regional Director responsible for domestic and international remittances at Western Union Canada, she specialized in agent network management and remittance product design.

Sabine is a Certified Digital Finance Practitioner by Digital Frontier Institute, and an alumna of the Institut Franco-Américain de Management in France and Central Michigan University in the United States.

During her brief stay with The Ethiopian Herald, she has explained about the objective of AfricaNenda in promoting IIPS in Africa collaboration with African countries. Enjoy reading!

**Could you tell us about AfricaNenda's objectives in promoting SIIPS in the continent?**

Our sole objective is really to work with government, regulator, private sector Association, and the rest of the development sector partners to develop or support the scale up of inclusive instant payment systems across Africa. We do that through providing technical assistance with our experts providing support for pre project depending on where the journey is for each of the countries. We also provide



a lot of research, like the State of Inclusive Instant Payment Services (SIIPS) reports, benchmark for policymakers to see what has been done in other countries. Because we believe that the digital journey is not one to be done alone. It's one to build on best practices and lessons across the world to fast track our journey.

**When we talk about payment services we mention the words inclusive and instant. Why are these two "I" s important? Can you explain in that?**

Thirty years ago, instant was defined differently than today. I remember, when I did a wire transfer from Burkina Faso to Cote d'Ivoire, it took two weeks for instance, when I was a student. And the only way I had to connect with my current husband was through mail, and it took a week to receive information. Then we had mobile phones that came in, then instantly I can call, I can talk to somebody and have it then we have now video calling and it's right there. While the journey for payment also has improved. Today, instant payment means that within seconds, you can transmit a payment to somebody or you can receive a payment to somebody I think we even say you can tap some payments, you can waive for some payments, you can type for some payments, but that transaction goes within seconds. So this is what instant payment is; the ability to make payments, digital payments that are in real time, and are available 24/7, 365 days a year, as much as possible. That is the instant payment.

And that is what customers are demanding, particularly in Africa. We want money, we need money, and it has to be right away. If the solution is in three days, you are going to get it, we are missing on the opportunity. So that's the instant piece. But there is another "I" in that; that's the Instant payment system (IPS). And then we have IIPS, inclusive instant payments. So we believe that it's not just about sending money instantly. There are so many other

layers. For it to be inclusive it has to cater to all channels, doesn't matter which phone you have. Doesn't matter which provider you are with, you should be able through a unique interaction on your simplest mobile phone to send and receive money to anybody else in the country. That is interoperability. So inclusivity takes into account the interoperability piece. It also takes into account what you can do with digital money, if the only thing you can do is send money and receive money, we haven't solved much. We have to be able to do everything we will do with cash but better. So I can send money, I can receive money, I can even have access to a loan with the digital money, I can receive a government payment, I can pay the government. If I have a small business, I can facilitate transactions for my suppliers, and I can receive my payment from customers as well. So the broadest range of use cases so that the value of digital money is far superior than that of cash. That's how we're going to facilitate the transaction that's part of the inclusivity. It has to be affordable, because inclusive means that all of us can benefit from this digital rails and making the cost entry point as affordable as possible is part of inclusivity. Last but not least, there is a responsibility for the financial sector to protect consumers in the digital space and making sure that there are recourse mechanisms in place. If the service does not work, I have to be able to complain. And I have to know that there is a system, which is going to take my complaint investigate it and provides a solution for me, that is the expectation of an inclusive system that enable all channel, all service providers, interoperability all to all enables low cost, low value transactions seamlessly enable also a customer protection framework that is out there. And but in the governance of the system, regulator, whether it's a central bank or order, sitting in that governance

*Continued to Page 9*



Continued from Page 8

## The agenda at Africa...

framework to make sure that the system is going to be focusing on bringing the more than 400 million Africans that are still financially excluded.

**So inclusivity is a central issue here. So how do we evaluate the inclusivity of the operators and countries in Africa currently?**

We started the state of inclusive instant payment system in 2021. What the landscape? What does inclusive mean? We need to understand. And in the report, while we're doing it, we came up with the important components of the inclusivity journey from a consumer standpoint, and how do we offer a framework to be able to assess it, and we call it the instant payment system inclusivity framework. In this framework, we feel that inclusivity is not binary, it's not yes or no, it is, how inclusive is it. So there are different levels of inclusivity. The basic level of inclusivity is that at least the instant payment works, and you can send money to me receive money, so person to person transfer is enabled, and person to business so I can pay with instant payment. That is the most basic and of course, mobile is enabled. So the most used channel across the country is now the second level of inclusivity, which is progressed.

Inclusivity means that you have the basic elements already. But in addition to that, interoperability also all is enabled, like I said, I can send to anybody, any bank account, any mobile money account, any provider, any telephone doesn't matter, all to all with one single device one interaction. So that is one component of the progressive inclusivity. The second component for progressing inclusivity is really making sure that all financial service providers, bank and non-bank can provide services to our population. That third component is the central bank role or regulator role in the governance so that it's inclusive, and the system is focused on inclusivity mandate. And as a regulator, they are managing the diverse, sometimes conflicting priorities to private sector to bring everybody around; we need to deliver the basic digital rails, so that we enable universal access to financial services that is at the progress level.

The third level is what we call mature inclusivity. At that level, we want to expect a digital ecosystem that enables all the use cases you can do with money and more. So you can send money person to person you can pay businesses, person to business, but you can also receive government payments, government or person, you can pay government person, the government, and you can enable businesses business to business payments as well. So broadest use case is enabled. And also, from a consumer perspective, it is centered on the needs of the consumer enabling that it is low cost, so affordable to all of us are enabling; also the protection mechanism we talked about recourse mechanisms. If it doesn't work, who is going to solve my problem? If I



have a fraud, how do we get a response to my problem? Those components are also covered, into the mature ecosystem mature level of inclusivity. So this is the framework that we have used to assess the ecosystem.

And this report; State of Inclusive Instant Payment Services 2023 (SIIPS 2023) is showing you that we have now 32 live instant payment systems across Africa, but not all of them are inclusive. So we currently have at the Progressed level of inclusivity the country systems of Ghana, of Malawi and Zambia and there is also one regional system that GMAC pay and the Economic and Monetary Community of Central African States.

One of the findings of the report this year, compared to last year is that we have had three new systems that have come into play. One of them is Eth Switch here. The second one is Virement Instantane in Morocco. And the third one is Payshap in South Africa. And I think Eth Switch and the ecosystem in Ethiopia is coming at the perfect time to leverage the lessons that we have in the ecosystem on inclusivity. And ensure that the system is delivering that to all of the people. So we have been very happy in this launch to see great representation of Eth Switch, and we are looking forward to working with them. So that hopefully, next

year's report, we can showcase what they have been able to accomplish in Ethiopia.

**Africa is now bracing to implement one of the Flagship projects of the AU Agenda 2063: The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). So in what way can AfricaNenda or IPS contribute to facilitating this?**

When I think of trade, I think of two things, there's an extent of good value or service. And then the other side is an exchange of money, somebody has to pay and somebody has to be paid for trade to happen. The AfCFTA is really opening up a market of more than a billion people in Africa. And it's giving the opportunities for micro, small and medium enterprises, to not only cater to the consumers in your country, but go beyond borders, and build these multinational African enterprises we want to see for this to happen, it means that there are instant payment rails that are inclusive at a country level that are interoperable at the country level and also cross border level inclusivity. And that is where we all need to work together making sure that the instant and inclusive payment systems that are being developed are interoperable domestically. And we are also connecting them cross border to enable protocol interoperability.

On top of that for the AfCFTA ambitions to happen there was already worked by the Secretariat on the digital trade protocol. This is how key digital is in enabling intra Africa trade. And we had AfricaNenda contribute to this work, and providing technical support and making sure that the Inclusive Instant Payment rails that is needed in Africa to accelerate intra Africa trade are in place, are working, interoperable and inclusive.

**What do you expect from governments of each African country to enable two IPs to operate more or to be more inclusive and effective?**

The journey to inclusivity cannot happen without government. And as far as I'm concerned, government provides the biggest incentive population who are outside of the financial ecosystem to come into their financial ecosystem. If government were to use instant, inclusive payment systems real to enable all payments, citizens, for government, a person payment, millions of people will start the first interaction with digital financial services; there is an opportunity for government to digitize payment. That is an opportunity for government to lead the inclusion of all of our people so that we make sure that digital transformation that's happening in Africa leaves no one behind. And there are several places that government can intervene. The regulatory and policy environment has to enable Instant Inclusive Payment System to happen has to enable interoperability of all the financial sector providers to come together and be able to deliver this system. The government can also through incentives for our population to adopt digital work with the digitization agenda, what are its benefits payment in the agricultural sector, in each of the sector, where it enables us more inclusion, government has an opportunity to really provide the incentive for this to happen. And government also has an opportunity to make sure that the consumer protection mechanisms that need to be there to protect us and protect the financial ecosystem are there and enforces them so that we are not leaving anybody behind in the digital economy.

**What do you expect in the coming Five or Ten years in terms of IPS in Africa?**

Today we have 32 Instant Payment systems that are live in a country. What is important to remember is that there are 27 countries in Africa today, which don't have instant payment capacity at the national level. So, what we expect the next five years, and hopefully, this is for us the agenda at AfricaNenda to enable inclusive instant payment systems in all countries in Africa by 2030, because we believe that inclusive instant payment system can enable universal access to financial services for all Africans, and will help us accelerate our journey to onboard more than 400 million people into the digital ecosystem.

**Thank you very much for your valuable explanation!**

**My pleasure!**



# Society

## Improving health literacy to prevent, contain AMR

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Health professionals are urging concerned bodies to act early on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) prevention and containment because it is posing grave global threat to human, animal and plant health and the environment.

According to documents globally AMR is causing an estimated 700 000 deaths every year; and high economic costs due to its health burden. Failing to tackle antimicrobial resistance could, by 2050, cause an estimated 10 million deaths a year and cost up to 100 trillion USD. The highest impact likely will be in Asia and Africa, which likely will account for estimated 4.7 million and 4.2 million deaths respectively.

In cognizant of the seriousness of the case, the Ministry of Health has been working unwaveringly to address the challenges through advocating proper use of antibiotics and mobilizing communities to improve health literacy.

As part of this sustained effort, the Ministry has recently organized a consultative workshop for media professionals on AMR prevention and containment.

Speaking on the occasion, AMR Prevention and Containment Advisor with the Ethiopia Food and Drug Authority, Wondie Alemu said that AMR is posing a challenge to human wellbeing and it is becoming one of the pressing public health concerns. Unless the needed measure is taken in advance, and acted accordingly, it could wipe out human beings and damage the health system of countries.

“Though Ethiopia was one of the pioneers in developing Antimicrobial Resistance Prevention and Containment Strategy, the recorded performance is minimal. More work should be done in enhancing and improving health services and increasing awareness towards the problem.”

Moreover, efforts should be further strengthened to control the illicit drug transaction across the borders and the import of substandard antibiotics, he added.

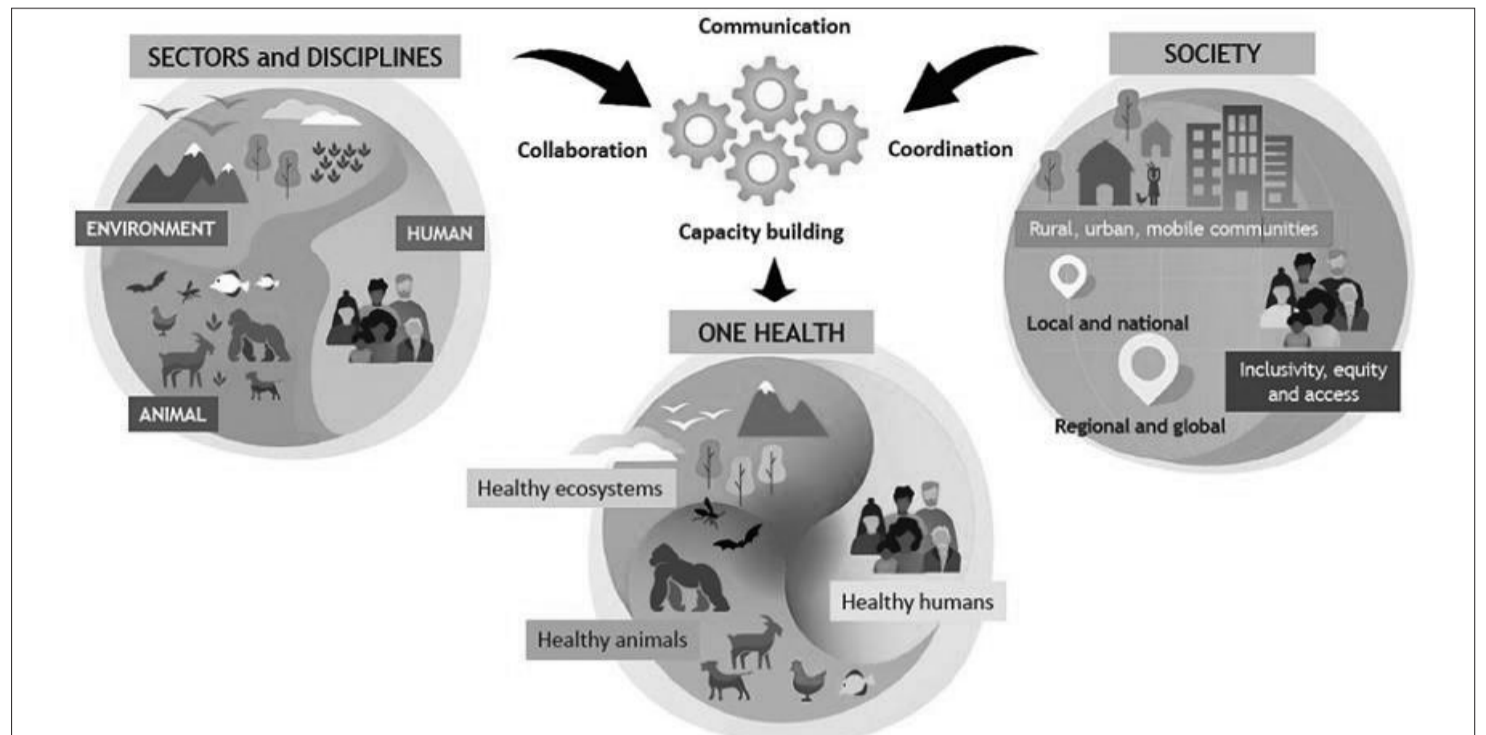
According to him, organisms, such as bacteria have become increasingly resistant to many antibiotics in recent years.

“Although antibiotic resistance is a natural phenomenon, the process of resistance is accelerated by overuse and misuse of antibiotics, and intercontinental travel.”

He also called on stakeholders to act early otherwise there will be another tsunami because of AMR, he concludes.

The media has the power to arm communities with health literacy and help them develop skills on how to obtain, process, and understand the health information necessary to make informed health decisions.

Countries with a high number of informed population yet low GDP have the highest



ability to apply these skills to health situations than countries with super GDP. The difference is the effort made on improving health literacy.

Health Minister’s AMR Focal Person Tesfaye Yeheyis also said that the Ministry, in collaboration with pertinent stakeholders, is working to increase health literacy and address the burden of AMR.

The Ministry is keeping on working joining hands with stakeholders. Realizing the widespread of and the emergence of antimicrobial resistance and the grave consequences on the country’s health, economy and security, the incumbent joined the global community in seeking to better understand and disable the threat.

The country launched a National Strategy for the Prevention and Containment of Antimicrobial Resistance in 2011.

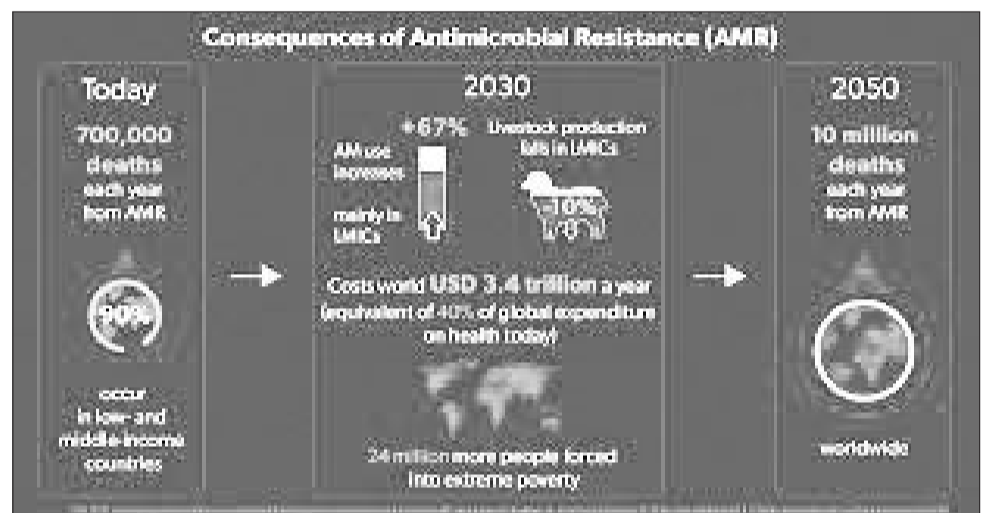
As per the strategy, the government has put in place a framework with this strategic plan to address the threats that antimicrobial resistance poses to the welfare of the people and livestock of Ethiopia. The strategic plan sets out a coordinated and collaborative ‘One Health’ approach, involving key stakeholders in government and other sectors. The national AMR advisory committee is keeping on coordinating the work to be done and monitor the progress.

This year the Ministry of Health is planning to organize a number of platforms starting from October 17, 2023, targeting to arm communities and health professionals’ towards AMR prevention and containment.

The Ministry is advocating for appropriate use of antibiotics. Enquiring health service professionals both in human and animal as well as pharmacists to discharge duties and responsibilities as per the set standards is vital.

According to him, the Ministry is seeking to work with range entities, the communities, health sector institutions; development partners and media houses to improve health literacy.

It is high time to act early, because it has the



**The Ministry is seeking to work with range entities, the communities, health sector institutions; development partners and media houses to improve health literacy.**

potential to emerge as a serious healthcare threat and transform into another pandemic if left unchecked.

“We had set up a collaboration platform along with the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment Protection Authority to prevent and contain AMR through organized fashion.”

The impact of AMR is not limited to a single country; rather, it is boundless to the boundary. It is affecting the efficacy of

antibacterial agents making the treatment of patients difficult, costly, or even impossible. The impact on susceptible patients is more obvious, resulting in prolonged illness and even mortality.

Ministry of Agriculture AMR Focal Person Gashaw Adane for his part said that antibiotics are also widely used in animal health. The availability and use of antibiotics is of vital importance in protecting animal health and welfare, increasing productivity and facilitating the production of safe, nutritious food. If antibiotics lose their efficacy, there is a lack of suitable medicines that farmers can avail of to protect animal health and welfare. This will impact on farm productivity and profitability.

According to him, we should combine efforts to reduce AMR transmission along the food chain in food and agriculture through improving health literacy among the concerned bodies and the community at large.

Acting Public Relations and Communication CEO with the Ministry of Health Yordanos Alebachew for his part said that working with media houses to reach the communities in the hinterlands is critical because it helps to create an informed community that could make decisions.

The Ministry will continue working along with stakeholders to improve the health literacy of the society via media.



# Verbatim and Caption

## The upcoming National Dialogue needs participation of the people: HPR

*Active participation of the general public is vital in the upcoming national dialogue process to achieve lasting peace and national unity. So far, the activities of Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission are encouraging. The commission should strengthen its efforts to ensure inclusivity in the remaining preparation period so as to make the dialogue achieve its goal. All citizens have to actively take part in the national dialogue. Ethiopia set the dialogue to bring lasting peace and national harmony through consensus. The engagement of all segments of society at all levels is vital to entertain diversified ideas and to achieve the goal of the dialogue.*

*Tagesse Chaffo, Speaker of the House of Peoples' Representatives*



.....

### Agreement for lasting peace through a permanent Cessation of Hostilities



*The Peace agreement signed at Pretoria last year paves the way for gradual normalization of life in northern Ethiopia. The Peace Agreement has been instrumental in silencing the guns and paving the way for the gradual normalization of life in northern Ethiopia. The government of Ethiopia has shown its unwavering commitment to the implementation of the peace agreement through number of bold and decisive measures to build trust and consolidate peace.*

*The government sets up and put into operation a Rehabilitation Commission aimed at facilitating the process of demobilizing and reintegrating ex-TPLF combatants. To put this process on a solid foundation, we are finalizing the formulation of a comprehensive national transitional justice policy to ensure accountability and reconciliation.*

*Ethiopia counts on the continued engagement of our friends and partners for lasting peace in Ethiopia.*

*The Government Communication Service of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia statement in connection with one year anniversary of the Pretoria Agreement*

.....

### Ethiopia, Czech Republic enjoy excellent cooperation

*Ethiopia and Czech Republic are enjoying excellent bilateral relations. The relation of the two countries in the realm of development dates back many decades.*

*We are celebrating the presence of our development cooperation in Ethiopia, just these days. It is something to celebrate because there are big achievements, especially in the field of hydrogeology, protection of the environment and agriculture. We have excellent cooperation in multifaceted spheres. We have Ethiopia as number one on our list for development.*

*I would like to stress cooperation on health, agriculture and cultural exchange as well because both countries have rich cultures.*

*Miroslav Kosek, Ambassador of Czech Republic to Ethiopia*



.....

### Enhancing the manufacturing sector

*The Government of Ethiopia is providing all the necessary support to investors engaged in multiple areas of the manufacturing sector.*

- *Necessary support and capacity building is being provided to investors engaged in the manufacturing sector. The government is working on ways of enhancing the product and productivity of investors engaged in manufacturing industry. The support will continue aiming at boosting the productivity of the manufacturing sector.*

*Melaku Alebel, Industry Minister*



.....

### Youth voluntarism building national consensus

*The ongoing youth voluntary services program in Ethiopia is contributing a positive impact in building national consensus among communities.*

*The national voluntary community service is playing a constructive role in building national unity by enhancing solidarity among the youth.*

*Although the youth that participated in the voluntary service hail from different political, cultural and religious backgrounds, they have expressed that they stand together for the unity and prosperity of Ethiopia.*

*Binalf Andualem, Peace Minister*

