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Premier, Gen. Abdelfattah exchange views on current issues

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA – Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) accorded a state welcome to General Abdelfattah Alburhan, President of

the Transitional Sovereignty Council of the Republic of the Sudan up on arrival at Bole International Airport yesterday.

The two sides later exchanged views on current issues of mutual interest at the Office of the Prime Minister.

“Today I have welcomed to Ethiopia Gen. Abdelfattah Alburhan, President of the Transitional Sovereignty Council of the Republic of the Sudan for discussions on key current issues,” the Prime Minister said.



Aregawi Berhe (PhD)

Ethiopia's bid to gain Red Sea access serves common interest

BY MENGESHA AMARE

ADDIS ABABA— Ethiopia's quest for a Red Sea harbor based on 'give and take' policy would serve the common interests of all, so said a politician.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), a renowned politician Aregawi Berhe (PhD) said that it is high time to Ethiopia and its neighbors to reinforce cooperation towards the security of the Red Sea.

He said: “Ethiopia's bid to secure Sea port is a matter of growing together among/between countries.”

See Ethiopia's bid ... Page 3



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ETHIOPIAN NATIONAL DIALOGUE COMMISSION

Inclusivity determinant of Nat'l Dialogue outcomes: Academician

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – The fair participation of different actors in the National Dialogue would enable Ethiopia to conduct a trustworthy discussion that would resolve the longstanding contentious issues in a lasting manner, an academician said.

For the Ethiopian Civil Service University

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Ethio-China enjoying all weather strategic partnership: House Speaker

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA—Leaders' commitment enables Ethiopia and China to enjoy all-weather strategic partnership, Speaker of the House of Peoples' Representatives said, calling for more push to inter-parliamentary relations.

The Speaker Tagesse Chafo held talks yesterday with a Chinese Parliamentary delegation led by the Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) Losang Gyaltzen on ways to consolidate the two countries interparliamentary relations.

Speaking at the occasion, Tagesse noted that Ethiopia and China have critical cooperation and vibrant partnership at not only bilateral level, but also in multilateral



Photo : Eyob Teferi

arenas. “Ethiopia is committed to becoming China's leading partner in Africa.”

Mentioning the two countries' thriving cooperation in various areas, the House Speaker lauded China's

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Call for African countries to accelerate inclusive water access

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA—World Bank (WB) called on African nations to pave the way for the private sector to engage in basic water supply and sanitation development schemes.

Speaking at Wash Leadership Summit of Eastern and Southern African nations on Tuesday, WB Regional Vice President for Eastern and Southern Africa, Victoria Kwakwa stated that institutional reforms, partner coordination, and innovation are decidedly needed to attract more funding, particularly from the private sector so as to expand the pool of resources for WASH impact via creating conducive environment.

She said, “We must move away from business as usual and engage the private sector to accelerate and scale up access of water in the region. The private sector still perceives substantial risks in the water sector in our region. To pave the way for this paradigm shift, we need a sector de-risking strategy to create enabling environment, embracing a roadmap to improve service provision efficiency and relevant stakeholders with government to foster this program.”

“Without progress in water and sanitation access, Eastern and Southern Africa will be hard pressed to deliver on the promises of poverty reduction and shared prosperity, and enhanced climate resilience. The financial needs to meet the growing demand for basic water supply and as domestic funding remains constrained. The average government budget allocated to WASH in the countries in the region is less than 1%. This falls far below the recommended threshold of 4%,” she added.

The vice president further stated that the public and development partner funding is also insufficient. Though, the WB is the largest development financier in the sector, with a large portfolio and strong potential for increase, our contributions remain a drop in the bucket compared to the ever-growing needs.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, over the last 20 years, access to basic water supply and sanitation, also known as WASH, has not kept pace with population growth. Today, there are 37 million more people without basic water supply, and 247 million more without basic sanitation compared to the year 2,000. And every day, 85 million people are forced the indignity of defecating in the open. If we don’t act now by 2030, 345 million people will be without access to basic water services in Eastern and Southern Africa, as to her.

She said that they are looking forward to witnessing progress in the region as countries embrace strategies that align with these principles and opportunities. “When a child is sick because of poor water quality and hygiene, when a girl is compelled to drop out of school to take care of the households’ water needs, we have a human and economic crisis on our hands,” she remarked.

Ministry lauds Chinese companies’ social corporate responsibility activities

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA- Chinese companies’ efforts in ensuring corporate responsibility and promoting universal benefits are appreciable, Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA) said.

Briefing the media yesterday, Chinese delegation along with the MoWSA underlined the significance of cooperation in keeping the social corporate responsibility in Ethiopia.

MoWSA State Minister Huria Ali said that Ethiopia and China have had a long standing, all-round relationship and strong bilateral connection since the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries in 1970.

The Ministry is strengthening social protection by building a system to address Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), youth, elderly and other poor and vulnerable groups.

As to her, the two countries cooperation in different sectors are deepening and expanding.

For instance, both are actively engaging in bilateral trade volume, attracting Chinese direct investment to Ethiopia, responding corporate social responsibility, and continuously promoting sustainable development as well.

She remembered that Premier Abiy Ahmed last month held a fruitful discussion with President Xi Jinping where the two countries elevated their existing comprehensive strategic cooperation to the high level of “All-Weather Strategic Partnership.” This is the



Photo: Eyob Teferi

high level of diplomatic bilateral relationship in the international arena.

She further stated that China has made significant investment in Ethiopia over the past two plus decades.

For instance, Chinese companies have been investing around 4 billion USD and employing some 110,000 Ethiopians at permanent and contractual bases.

In this regard, manufacturing, mining, agriculture, ICT, and tourism are among the priority areas of Chinese companies’ interest for investing in Ethiopia.

Similarly, the country funded and built major projects in Addis like African Union Headquarters (AU), the Africa center of disease control (African CDC), the center of African leadership study (CALs), and so forth.

Alliance of Chinese Business in Africa for Social Responsibilities and Lead Delegation Executive Chairperson, Diao Chunhe on his part said that Chinese companies are interested in engaging in various sectors of

investment in Ethiopia.

Out of the 1,000 villages that are to be built in African continent by 100 Chinese companies, Ethiopia will take the greatest portion.

He added that Ethiopia and China have been enjoying good partnership, and the Chinese companies have attached due emphasis to Ethiopia.

Chinese companies will focus on ensuring the adequate benefit of Ethiopian people through sharing experience and knowledge, improving of the livelihoods of the society, widening jobs, exploiting technology as well as increasing business.

To end this, Chinese higher academic institutions are striving for making strong linkage with African academia in the same line, which help realize the sustainable development goal in the African continent.

It is to be recalled that from 300 to 400 Chinese companies are operating in Ethiopia involving in various investment sectors and responding social corporate responsibility.

Nordic Black Theater Group conducts successful mission here

• Vow to portray Ethiopia’s positive image

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – The Nordic Black Theater Group, which is currently staging performances and presenting shows here, said that its stay in Ethiopia is fruitful in exploring ways to collaborate with local artists and foster cultural exchange.

The Nordic Black Theater Production Managing Director and Tour Manager Jarl Solberg told *The Ethiopian Herald* that their mission to Ethiopia is also fruitful in paving the way to experience sharing in art and culture arenas.

“Our tour in Ethiopia is productive and we are discussing with Ethiopian artists on ways to cooperate in the art sector and solidify the partnership in culture and theatre arenas and exchange our rich experiences. We would try to promote Ethiopia in a good way and be ready to tell the good story of Ethiopians whenever we would stage performances.”

Nordic Black Theater Film Production Director Cliff Moustache for his part stated that the African Diasporas have to look towards the continent and witness how the art is developing. “As a result, we could tell



the reality of Africa to the rest of the world, even Africans living in the western world.”

Although Africa is rich, it does not have the capacity to tell its truth because the market is closed for it. Coming here gives us a chance for us to collaborate in the sector in the future. It is a good journey we are taking now both to perform and to learn.

“I came here because I am still aware about the growth, quality and craft of art in Africa that I can also be lifted a little bit,” the director emphasized.

“We need African leaders to come together to talk about African problems. Today, we have the African Union, but still the same part of Africa, it is renewing dynamism and people have to understand. Nordic Black Theater celebrates African Day every year on May 25.”

Ethiopia in music and dancing is in a good position. It requires taking it to a high level, he remarked.

Nordic Black Theater Group has performed in various African countries, but it is the troupe’s first mission to Ethiopia.

Sidama Bank, DARA sign MoU to partnership

BY MISGANAW ASANKE

ADDIS ABABA- Sidama Bank and the Documents Authentication and Registration Agency (DARA) signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that would enable them to work together in various spheres.

Sidama Bank CEO Tadesse Hatia and DARA Director General Degato Kumbi signed the agreement at the Bank's Head Office yesterday.

Speaking at the occasion, Tadesse stated that the partnership with the agency on online platforms helps Sidama Bank to become more legal and reliable onwards. The agreement would also enable the bank to provide online verification to customers, change the previously agent-based transaction process, and prevent forgery.

"The agreement avoids third person authentication, man-made manipulation and fraud and thus, it will control the bank system on a daily basis. The National Bank of Ethiopia contributes a lot by filling the gap, advising us on how to run the system

and operate it."

"The link is one part of digitalization and we are implementing a bank to bank transfer system with all banks and ethio telecom," he added.

The CEO further noted that building the digital economy is changing the working atmosphere and helping the bank to obtain great achievement in its activities. "We work for our common benefit and further development by fostering strong connection with all relevant stakeholders."

DARA Director General Degato Kumbi on his part said that the agency has so far signed Memorandum of Understandings with 28 banks that enabled the latter to provide seamless and secured service for their growing customers. The agency has 14 branches in Addis Ababa and provides service for about 6000 customers in a daily operation.

"We evaluate our agreements with banks in each quarter to inspect the security of transactions and to protect the safety of the people."



Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, Tadesse indicated Sidama Bank is integrating with over 30 banks in a bid to provide seamless and convenient service and to ease the transaction process to

customers.

Mentioning 40 branches that are spreading across the country, the CEO revealed the bank's plan to expand the access.

Ethiopia's bid to gain...

According to Aregawi, since there are no causes that can potentially push people to get into the state of skirmish and antagonist scenario having lived together for long, change and growth would be at their palm if they are determined to boost collaboration.

As to him, because there are a range of unutilized resources and uncultivated acres of land in Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt, they themselves and even the region can bring

about real change through solidifying cooperation and unity.

"Ethiopia would never present sea port request by means of war, but its query over the Red Sea in a peaceful manner and amicable way for common affluence is a legitimate and quite acceptable one."

He further stated that so long as the concern of sea port has been in the minds of the people, the Prime Minister's bold move to get the issue publicly discussed is worth

considering.

The subject raised in relation to the Sea Port will never lead countries into warfare unless one fails to understand circumstances and belittle the essence of common benefit and mutual advantage, he opined.

He said, of course, Ethiopia does have the right to question sea port and it needs to flow through a channel of peace and firm fraternity that can buttress mutual progress and shared advancement.

Remembering that Ethiopia had owned sea ports for many years in its history, law and proclamations promulgate that Ethiopia deserves sea port as per its big population and enormous landmass.

As the request for sea port is a matter of exercising right and peaceful move, he said, it has to be tabled on discussion; hence contending parties, civic associations, activists, among others, should partake in dealing with the substance.

Inclusivity determinant...

Leadership and Administration College Vice-Dean Mohammed Ali (PhD), a trustworthy discussion is a timely and significant measure to create a meaningful public consensus and ensure lasting peace and stability.

Mohammed told *The Ethiopian Herald* that paving the way to diverse points of view in the dialogue and the neutrality of participants are crucial to overcome the current and emerging problems in the country. "Most of today's problems emanate from a malicious political system and wrong narratives that are passed from the past and the National Dialogue Commission (NDC) is expected to cover such issues widely."

According to him, the involvement of people from all walks of lives and supporting the commission's activities including agenda selection process in scientific research are something worthwhile. Due attention should also be given to include religious fathers, women associations and representatives of

all nations and nationalities among other stakeholders.

"So far, the NDC has been selecting the agendas to be tabled for discussion and the participants should ready themselves to discharge responsibility in the process and lead the country to enduring peace and stability. In addition, the commission ought to utilize the society's values and assets to achieve its mission.

The academician further advised the commission to equip its capacity with skilled professionals and other frontiers in a bid to address contentious issues that have been raised in different parts of the country. Political elites, activists and other actors are expected to forward constructive ideas and promote the public's concerns.

NDC Chief Commissioner Prof. Mesfin Araya repeatedly expressed commitment to ensuring the inclusivity of the much-anticipated political discourse.

Ethio-China...

principled stance in international relations and its non-interference stance in the domestic affairs of other countries. "Ethiopia and China have been enjoying a long-standing relationship based on mutual benefit and their collaboration is exemplary for others."

Currently, the two countries are working on peace and security issues not only in the Horn of Africa, but also in the globe and have strong association in countering terrorism and climate change.

Praising the Chinese government's all rounded support, he called for more assistance to Ethiopia's post-war recovery of the conflict-affected areas. China is the leading country in supporting the construction of various projects in Ethiopia and expected to maintain this role in war-ravaged areas.

For his part, the Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National

People's Congress (NPC) Losang Gyaltzen said Ethio-China cooperation produced so many outcomes and it has been transformed into a new chapter of all weather strategic partnership.

China is ready to put the existing relationship into high level and the win-win cooperation of the two countries that is based on mutual interest joined the South-South solidarity and cooperation in the shared future. "China will continue to support Ethiopia's effort in all sectors."

"We would like to support Ethiopia's Ten Years Development Plan and other development strategies as well as the implementation of important measures."

The vice chairman also reaffirmed China's non-interference policy in the internal affairs of other countries.

The parties also expressed interest to foster the two countries inter-parliamentary relations.

Opinion

The dark side of flower business: *Lessons learned from others*

BY MEKONNEN SOLOMON

(Horticulture Export Coordinator at the MoA)

It is evident that the world is full of wonderful entrepreneur and lovely natural resource, but it can be really easy to get caught up in negative events and customary action like health and environmental catastrophes, setting of very low wage rate, discrimination, and work place harassments. Luckily, we don't have any superpowers to save the world. But still there are so many things we can do at work place, office and in our community to make the business a better place. Even the smallest things can lead to bigger changes, so we should not be afraid to get out there and start moving.

There is a growing global concern regarding the social, ecological and economic impacts of floriculture business, partly because the cost of restoring degraded environments and stabilizing ineffective socioeconomic systems can be enormous. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2010). Finding a permissible level of change and insuring sustainability is a key to success for effort geared toward economic growth and development and vice versa.

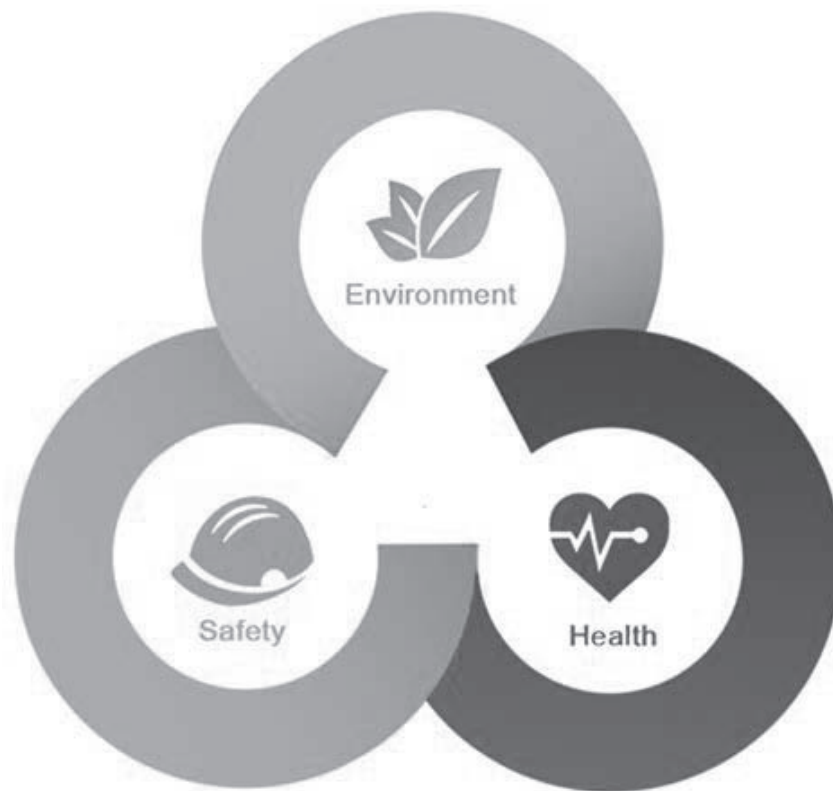
"Flowers," wrote Goethe, "are the beautiful words and hieroglyphs of nature, with which she shows us how much she loves us." Then again, he never had to make a living by picking them.

Up on the high plains of the Savanna region around the Colombian capital of Bogota, you get a different view. Here flowers are hieroglyphs not of nature, but of exploitation. "For some flowers mean hard work, bad conditions and bad health," says Elida Duarte, a 29-year-old flower picker working for the Dole corporation, which now controls one fifth of Colombia's exports.

Today, Colombia is the second largest source of flower business to the world market after Holland. The giant greenhouses dotted across the landscape generate more than \$600mln a year in export revenue. Only coffee and coca earn more. One of every two flowers sold in the US now originates on the Savanna; and the chances are that the last bunch of roses you got - or gave - on Valentine's Day included a Colombian bloom.

The flower boom has generated huge environmental costs. The water table on the Savanna has been shrinking almost as quickly as export earnings have been rising. Around the town of Madrid the aquifer has fallen from 20 metres to 200 metres, and water is now imported from Bogota. Highly toxic residues of pesticides banned in Europe, such as lindano, have been found in dangerously high levels in groundwater.

But the flower trade has created jobs. Around 80,000 women now work in the greenhouses, many of them seeking an escape from rural poverty. Wages are low. On an average day, one woman will pick over 400 top grade carnations. Four of them will cost you £2 in your local florist, which is more than a flower worker earns in a day.



The country has adopted code of Practice for Sustainable Flower Production that aims to protect both the sustainability of Ethiopian flowers as well as the communities in which they are cultivated

But in an area with 40% unemployment, a job in the flower industry offers hope.

Kenya has a long history of growing flower for both domestic and export markets, which significantly contributes to the country's economy next to tea. In total, 95% of Kenyan-grown flowers leave for international markets, and the EU and the UK are the main export markets. The flower sector provides direct employment opportunities to about 150,000 people, the majority of whom are women. Indirectly, the industry supports over two million.

However, according to anti-slavery report (3rd November 2022), through Workers' Rights Watch's work in the flower-cut sector, it has been identified cases of workers being exploited in the industry. It's common place for people to be forced to work under threats, retaliation, intimidation and fear of losing their jobs.

Workers are given very high targets, which they are unable to meet despite working more than 12- or 14-hour shifts. Having failed to meet these targets, female workers are forced to finish the target the next day without pay or offer a bribe or sexual favors to a supervisor to retain their jobs. Workers have no room to refuse these requests given their dependence on the income provided by their jobs.

Worker conditions are deplorable, disregarding gender-based needs in the workplace. For example, there is no time allowance to breastfeed. Women are not provided with transportation options, despite living far from the farms. Some of them opt not to go at all or have to leave their children in hazardous day and night care centers.

Ecuador is the biggest producers of cut flowers globally. The warm and humid climates of this country and its low labor cost, contribute to their dominance in the global flower market but with a high cost in terms of sustainability and environmental pollution. Fresh-cut flowers are treated with synthetic pesticides like glyphosate that pollute water flows and land.

Flora and fauna contribute to the concerning decline of pollinator species, like bees. They are also harmful to human health where glyphosate is known for its carcinogenic effects. While there are strict rules for using synthetic pesticides on edible crops and for the Agro-alimentary industry, the flower market can skip these constraints since its products are not classified as food. For example, methyl bromide—a highly effective gas fumigant—has been used in floriculture to eliminate pests like rodents, insects, and fungi. However, it is highly toxic, and long-term exposure can result in neurological effects in humans and animals.

In addition to this already concerning scenario, flowers are thirsty plants and need intensive irrigation, contributing to high water use and chemical runoff. For example, the drought-stricken Lake Naivasha in the centre of Kenya, has seen half of its water drawn off for use in flower greenhouses, impacting the environment and other industries in the area. On top of pesticides, water use, and workforce concerns, flowers can generate severe carbon emissions because of refrigeration and long-haul transport.

In Ethiopia floriculture subsector sustainability concern is in its infant stage. Very recently, the floriculture industry faced many criticisms not because of its improper cultivation and worsening of social well-being and the environment at such, but because of the bad news of other countries experience that spreads like wildfire at home.

The tendency to focus on bad news in Ethiopia floriculture began since the start of 1997 National Election Campaign when many competing parties oppose Floriculture Investment. This period provided significant insights that can shape the future of the country trade and investment, by highlighting major challenges of the sector and opportunities to be explored by the industry and the government to ensure the sustainability and competitiveness of the Ethiopian flower industry.

Thanks to the infant stage of the flower industry in Ethiopia, the industry has learned from the dark side of flower business and other countries' secrete experience, which eventually enable the sector to move forward.

To date, the country has adopted code of Practice for Sustainable Flower Production that aims to protect both the sustainability of Ethiopian flowers as well as the communities in which they are cultivated. Many Flower companies in Ethiopia are tried to comply with technologies and identification of best practices (i.e., biological control and organic farming) and strong frameworks for collaboration and mutual accountability and transparency between chain actors (the government, growers and consumers) related to safe and proper use of pesticide, water and social justice.

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

Editorial

Building resilient economy

On the parliamentary session yesterday, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) mentioned that the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has grown in the past five years, as witnessed by international finance and economic firms. Indeed, the overall economic growth in the country is undeniable even though some incidents like conflict, price hike have the ability to cloud it. Yet it is possible some of the important development and ventures that the country has made in recent years that depict the growing trend of the economy.

Ethiopia has done strides in the banking and finance sector. Accordingly, he indicated that the nation has got over 100 finance service providers of which 31 of them are commercial banks, 48 are small finance institutions, 6 are payment service companies, 6 are on capital commodity import companies, and 7 mobile wallet service companies.

Another recent and important development in the country is the launching of the Ethiopian Security Exchange, ESX, which is part and parcel of the Ethiopian Capital Market. The ESX enables the government and private sector actors to bridge their growing need for financing economic development projects, governments' socio-economic projects as well as opening a good chance for the finance industry to have a wide option to invest their capital and become profitable.

This is a good step forward as the banking and finance sector is a backbone of the country's overall economy. Expanding and widening it plays vital role in speeding up the ever growing economy that has to pass through the tough challenges surrounding it. This will lay a good foundation for the country as the whole continent is working towards putting in place an inclusive instant payment system that aims towards, among others, ensuring growth and social justice among the people of the continent.

While the finance sector is a fundamental sector that plays role in the overall economic activities, they cannot perform alone to ensure development at national level. All other sectors should also get along with it. According to the PM's explanation, many of the sectors have also scored promising performance that can be built up on.

For instance, in the agriculture sector which is the main stay of majority of the population as well as the source of revenue the country has performed quite well compared to the previous year. By cultivating more than 22 million hectares of land, 800 million quintals of crops is expected to be harvested. In addition, it has planned to cover 3 million hectares with irrigation and summer wheat production.

Similar growths have also been registered in many other major sectors like manufacturing, construction and power generation. The famous initiative, Ethiopia Tamirt or 'Let Ethiopia Produce' has also played a vital role for the success of the manufacturing sector. The initiative has raised the nation's production capacity from 47% to 55%.

The textile, technology, leather and chemical industries have also shown growth in the year while promising outcomes have been registered in import substitution.

Though the country's journey towards the economic growth is not a bed of roses, it is important to note that it is moving on the right track. Furthermore, it is the right time for local and international companies to enhance their investment activities in the country whose economy is scoring encouraging outcomes despite local and international shocks.



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Opinion

Workable move towards nation building

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

Addressing queries posed to him from members of the parliament (MPs) at the 6th tenure 3rd year 4th regular session of the House of Peoples Representatives (HPR) on Tuesday, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said that distorted narrations, fanaticism as well as self-centered attitude have been harming nation's stride towards prosperity. As to him, as a divisive, distorted and incomplete narratives would be in favor of one group and belittle others; these aspects need to be done away with thereby fostering nation-building process, which does in turn requires unity in diversity.

Attempting to magnify one-sided contribution at the expense of the rest in a prettily heterogeneous society would unequivocally lead nowhere. Instead, the Premier recommended that all Ethiopians have to advocate 'a grand and unifying narrative' that fosters cohesion and promotes collective purpose. Grand and unifying narrative promotes togetherness and unity among the people and nurtures a sense of fraternity and collective thought for common good.

"Though there are a lot of problems in Ethiopia that disrupt the peace and stability, the major problem exacerbating the existing problems is divisive, self-centered, narrow and extreme narration. Plus, this narration is a disturbing factor as it fails to recognize the role of other Ethiopians, which have equal role in the nation building process. Hence, giving due focus to a narrative that transcends divisions has to be the call of the day.

Underscoring the role of every Ethiopian in the nation building process, PM Abiy stated that Ethiopia is the outcome of every Ethiopians languages, cultures, traditions, belief and activities that develop through time. He condemns the rhetoric that denies the fact that Ethiopia is a multinational country with variety of diversities. In a country like Ethiopia, which accommodates diversified languages, cultures, religions, and beliefs, a narrative excluding others and promotes self-centeredness is a destructive factor for development, peace and peaceful coexistence.

"It is not optional to respect and recognize differences in Ethiopia to lead a harmonious way of life. If everyone praises only their own tribe/nation, tradition, religion and identity, it is impossible to live with others harmoniously," the Premier underlined.

Considering the negative impact of extremism and narrowly framed ideology within a diversified country like ours, Ethiopians have to prefer having the grand and unifying narrative that can confidently recognize others contribution and promote peaceful coexistence to adding fuel to fire on destructive moves. As to the Premier,

narration has the power to shape the nation-building process and the relation groups do have among/between each other/one another in the country.

Hence, considering the role that narration has the power in making and breaking the nation-building process, PM Abiy underscored the priceless significance of being united., Focusing on a narrations that promote peaceful coexistence, harmonious relationship with others and inclusiveness to halt the disturbing factors of peace and stability in Ethiopia.

Nation-building is a process, not an end itself, so citizens have to embark on elements that can immensely contribute to it. Every Ethiopian from all corners of the nation needs to be recognized and to be respected as everyone wants to own a country that can equally recognize, respect and promote their comprehensive values.

The "Nation Building and Diversify," article stated to build a strong, stable and sustainably peaceful country, every generation should play a constructive role in strengthening the survival of the nation. Hence, to build harmonious and peaceful country, instead of competing to dominate the national narrative by one group, promoting harmonious coexistence, respecting and recognizing the role of others in the nation and give credit for others values is a critical step on which every citizen of the nation has to capitalize. In so doing, the generation to come follow suit.

As learnt from the PM, grand constructive narrations have the power to unite the people of a country, whereas divisive narration widens the difference and disturbs coexistence. Instabilities, chaos and suspiciousness are outcomes of a single-sided narration as it promotes one group and excludes others in the political activities and nation-building process in Ethiopia. Cognizant of the fact that continuing with such a destructive and naysaying mentality that holds ill-intended move would lead the nation to the wrong direction, all Ethiopians have to arduously work on peace, stability, development and nation-building.

As the Government of Ethiopia is striving for building a unified, peaceful and prosperous Ethiopia, all citizens have to sing the song magnifying unity, togetherness, peaceful coexistence among citizens with a diversified culture, language and so forth.

In sum, as ill-intended narration is denying the diversity and values of others, inclusive and impartial dynamism should be inculcated in the minds of all if citizens are to build a great nation. The narrative incorporating respect, equity, inclusiveness, among others, has to be well nurtured and taken care of.

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

Business & Economy

Digitizing the auction system to realize cost effectiveness

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Ethiopia aspires to make its economy digitized by 2025 and to that end; various steps have been taken so far. Currently, all over the world, digitization has been applied in various sectors and transforming the economy. The technology serves social media and enhances creativity and helps economic integration among various stakeholders.

It helps to ease bureaucratic hurdles which hinder economic activities. It is applied in various sectors such as education, finance, health, agriculture, marketing, transportation, tourism and many others.

Cognizant of the multifaceted values of digitalization, Auction Ethiopia Share Company recently displayed its new software utilized for bidding platform.

On the occasion, the Auction Ethiopia founding member and manager Yosef Arku said that the introduced technology is the first of its kind in the Horn of Africa and helps to accelerate creativity skills and it is a startup business by its own. Through the technology, one can participate in the bid from anywhere on the globe with no place restriction.

The auctioneer also can sell his/her property by feasible and deserved price as a result of the bid system makes the bidding process transparent and trusted.

It pursues strict procedures and helps only legible bidders to participate in the bid. It also helps for job creation, creates platform for banks and insurance companies to purchase and sell properties. The technology is created to be easily accessed by all citizens.

As to Yosef, the technology also helps bidders to participate in the bids in a safe way with no inconvenience. It accelerates cyber security activities and makes the system to be inclusive.

State Minister of Innovation and Technology, Yeshurun Alemayeh, on his part said that to modernize the bidding system, various studies and researches have been conducted both locally and internationally and the advent of the Auction Ethiopia in this regard is commendable. He further said that Ethiopia's aspiration for attaining economic development and reaching the goal might be challenging unless supported by digitization.

Currently, the advanced countries still continued to play a leading role in science and technology and without digitization, the journey of their development would have been of a snail pace.

Auction Ethiopia created a platform to bid on the digitization system for public and private institutions and for individuals and in such a way, they can purchase and sell properties.

The platform is conducive and reachable by ordinary citizens with no place bound. The technology enables them to save their time and money to bid through their mobile phone or laptop. The digital transformation



capacity plays pivotal role in accelerating business and trade cost effectively in a very short time.

As mentioned above, Ethiopia aspires to develop digital economy and the advent conducted by Auction Ethiopia can be said a supportive scheme in this regard. Digitization enables to change traditional trade in to the modern one and helps to accelerate economic development and create opportunity for stretching international value chain.

To develop the digital platform software used for bid, Auction Ethiopia took three years for study and research and the platform is a new one in East Africa. The major objective of the software development is to alleviate problems witnessed in the purchasing and selling of the bidding system.

The benefits that can be harnessed from the technology are multifaceted. In the first place, the bidders can access the auction easily from any places. A person from any part of the world can download the application by using his mobile phone and participate in the bid. In addition to these, it helps the winner to obtain the property or services in a blistering manner. The technology also helps many people to participate in the bid once in justifiable manner. The system also enables the properties dumped with no value in various parts of the country to gain value and to be sold in a feasible price.

The platform pursues strictly the reliability and significance of the properties provided to bid by sellers. In addition, it helps the purchasers to obtain correct information about the properties ready for sell and the bid procedures in a transparent manner. Such practice increases trustful sentiment among the bidders towards the auction system. It also brings opportunity to the international organizations and embassies residing in Ethiopia and other institutions to get access in any auctions conducted here locally.

As to Zelalem Gebrekirstos, Chief Executive Officer of the Auction Ethiopia, the company conducted study and research for three years to develop the software via participating PhD and Master's Degree holder professionals specialized in Information and Communication Technology.

The system enables Auctions to be conducted based on the nation's laws introduced with regard to auctions by minimizing time and labor. The software is recognized internationally and obtained ISO 9000 certificate. Participants can access the bid through transparent and fair competition.

If auctioneers forward similar property at the same time, bidder participants can purchase by preferring the lower price.

The traditional auction system that invites many bidders in one auction makes the competition very cumbersome. It costs time and energy of both the auctioneer and the bidders. Preparing documents needs huge money and make the procedures vulnerable to corruption. But the newly introduced software which utilizes the cutting edge information technology infrastructure alleviates the mentioned challenges and makes the matter easy and users' friendly. It is also globally reachable and one can engage in the bid through using auction ethiopia.com website.

As mentioned above, Ethiopia aspired to develop digital economy by 2025 and to realize that, various measures have been taken. Among others, the government established the Ministry of Innovation and Technology and allocated the necessary budget and employed sufficient skilled manpower. To accelerate knowledge and to introduce the digitized technology, the Ministry of Education has been providing courses in the public and private higher educational institutions since long ago.

Currently, looking well qualified software engineers in the country has been common.

Many institutions have already digitized their system and in this regard Ethio-telecom is a vanguard institution and provided its products through digitizing system.

Transferring and transacting money for various purposes, purchasing airtime for voice, internet, and text services, for salary payment and purchasing goods and services through utilizing various devices such as smart phone with digitized technology can be mentioned in these regard.

The technology is also utilized for medical examination and treatment, conducting research and preparing data bases. It also plays pivotal role in media and communication.

According to studies, the social media is currently outshining the traditional media of Television, Radio and Print. Of course it is proved that there is some deficiency in some social media and websites. They are engaged in inciting violence and disseminating hatred speeches. Nevertheless, the social media has become more vibrant and interactive.

The digital media also empowered citizens because they can receive and disseminate information with images with no place and time hindrance.

Ethiopia is one of the underdeveloped countries with less familiarization and utilization of technology and it can be said that it is one of the root causes for the nation's underdevelopment. Therefore, to eradicate poverty and achieve economic growth, the ongoing digitization of sectors such as agriculture, industry and service should be continued.

Agriculture is the main stay of the nation's economy and it is vulnerable to climate change. Hence, to overcome climate induced challenges, availing meteorological information to the extension workers and farmers is vital because it helps them to take precautionary measures.

Currently, most farmers utilize mobile telephone and the provision of information regarding the weather condition by the Ministry of Agriculture through text message helps farmers to educate themselves with regard to crops, insects and herbs and these enables them to raise their production.

The digitized technology also empowers farmers by enhancing their bargaining power when they supply their products to the market. They get information about the price of their product through their mobile phone.

Tourism sector which is part of the service sector is also enjoying the digitized technology. Currently, one can obtain information about tourist destiny located in various parts of the country from anywhere in the world; can book hotels and travel agents and such practice is boosting the sector's income and the government revenue as well.

Therefore, it should be understood that digitizing the whole aspect of the economy helps the country to stride in this regard.

Art & Culture



Dr. Haddis Alemayehu



Blazing the trails of fiction- The first short story writers

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

The history of telling tales, whether real or imagined, in Ethiopia goes back to a long time although the modern short story is a 20th century phenomenon. The short story did not always exist as we know it now but assumed different forms of expression depending on the times and social conditions. Even in Europe, “the short story is one of the oldest types of literature and had existed in the form of legends, mythic tales, fairy tales, tall tales, fables and anecdotes, in various ancient communities around the world. The modern short story developed in the early 19th century.”

If we look at the process of development of the short story in Ethiopia, we can safely say that it followed the above-indicated pattern, that is to say it first emerged in the form of tales (Teret Teret in Amharic), including the chronicles of kings and saints and angels as well as fictitious or real stories of people who had existed or did not exist at all. They are either the products of imagination or chronicles of real life events.

However, these early narratives were oral ones and some of them had been published later on while most of them have vanished as “collective memories” of the people who told them. According to available information, “short stories date back to oral storytelling traditions as which originally produced epics such as Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey.” The western tradition or art of storytelling started earlier in human cultural development and enjoyed opportunities to grow and spread throughout the world. Epics like Homer’s Iliad and odyssey are appreciated and enjoyed by many societies because they appeal to all human beings anywhere in the world.

In Ethiopia the Amharic term Teret (tale) was as old as society itself as it was coined to express a tale usually told to children in the evening while they gather around the fire before they went to bed. This was the traditional version of the modern bedtime story that is read to children by their parents. The difference between the traditional Ethiopian tales and modern ones is that the former were orally narrated while the latter are written and read from children’s books

of stories. In both cases however, there is a common denominator that links them and this is the fact that the stories are imagined and often fantastic and that was what made them appealing as literature in a different genre. The *Teret*, is still popular in Ethiopia whether in its traditional or modern form.

However, telling Teret or tales could not develop as it should, because it was neglected for a long time after modern education was introduced and with it Western literature was introduced in the educational system. Foreign stories were translated into Amharic and published while the traditional tale could not develop at the same pace.

Modern publishing in Ethiopia was introduced very late with the introduction of the printing and helped books to be published. Some of the traditional tales were also published although many of them had disappeared without leaving a trace because they survived in the form of oral tradition and little written records were left behind. The most important Ethiopian fiction writer, Dr. Haddis Alemayehu had written a book of tales entitled “*Teret Teret Yemeseret*”, thereby proving that the traditional tale had a potential for development into a modern short story writing in the subsequent decades.

The process of evolving from oral tale to modern short story was not unique to Ethiopia. African literature has started by taking the same pattern of evolution from oral to written short tales. According to Wikipedia, “African literature is literature from Africa, either oral or written in Africa and Afro-Asiatic languages. Examples of pre-colonial African literature can be traced back to at least the fourth century AD. The best known is the *Kebra Negast* or “Book of Kings from Ethiopia”

The first Ethiopian writer who published the first short story who published a short story that is largely considered as the first and modern one in world literature was a British author. This honor goes to a British writer by the name of Walter Scott whose story “The Two Drovers” was published in the *Chronics of the Canongate* in 1827.” The first short story in America was Washington Irving who, “was responsible for creating some of the first stories of American origin.” “The Legend of the Sleepy Hollow” and “Rip

Van Winkle” were also written by the same author. This was followed by Edgar Allen Poe, as the author of some of the earliest American short stories.

The short story form was very popular in European literature and more particularly in French literature that has produced some of the best stories by some of the best authors. “One of the most interesting writers of 19th century France is Alphonse Daudet...” and greatest French short story writer was Guy de Maupassant who penned hundreds of short stories in his lifetime. “Henri Rene Albert Guy de Maupassant was a 19th century French author, celebrated as the master of the short story.” Guy de Maupassant two best known stories were “*Boule de Suif*” (Ball of Fat) which is considered his best work while “*La Parure*” (The Necklace) is equally popular.

As we said above, Europeans introduced the modern short story to the world back in the 19th century while Ethiopians started to write modern stories shortly afterwards. Traditional tales in Ethiopia however go back to the times of early Orthodox Church literature and were written in Ge’ez and later on in Amharic, probably sometime after the 4th century when orthodox Christianity was introduced in Ethiopia.

In this sense, we can say that the history of the short tale in our country in its various manifestations grew and developed with the growth of Orthodox Church literature. Even the early modern short story writers in Ethiopia were educated in village church schools where they were apparently introduced to the Amharic Alphabet and the orthodox scriptures and later on to modern or European story writing techniques.

In Ethiopia, what is considered a modern short story, in its earliest form appeared as *Teret Teret* or fables. “Fables or *Teret*, is a type of oral literature which is passed down from generation to generation and told to teach a lesson about something. They are usually short stories that which illustrate or teach a moral lesson while entertaining at the same time.

The development of short tales, or short story took place against the background of the imperial palace whether in the form of sarcastic remarks, funny episodes and thinly

veiled portraits of aristocratic members of the imperial courts. The first oral tales dealt with the true or invented diaries of remarkable personalities and wise men and women.

The short and funny tales of Aleka Gebre Hanna, a priest who was close o the Menelik palace. His tales were popular around the palace as they were among ordinary members of society who enjoyed his witty remarks. Aleka Gebre Hanna had an amazing talent for telling stories whose twists and turns as well as their “surprise endings” that are also the main narrative techniques of the modern short story.

These tales had also useful lessons to teach society in a rather sarcastic manner and were popular in their times as well as in our time. Aleka Gebre Hanna’s short tales were collected in a book and published later on and still proved very popular for the immortal way they are narrated and their timelessness as far as their moral lessons were concerned.

The Modern Amharic short story started with the publication of the first story written by Temesgen Gebre and entitled “*Ye Gulelew Sekaram*” (The Drunkard of Gulele) written in 1949. This short story is considered a classic of Amharic long after it was written and the author had passed away. This is apparently the only short story Temesgen has written and nothing is known why he did not write other stories. This is similar to novelist Bealu Girma who has written only one short story entitled, “*Ye Mechereshiaw Mejemeria*” (The Beginning of the End) and proved popular when it was published.

The best period for the development of the modern Amharic short story was back in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s when new and established authors appeared on the literary scene to publish their works that were popular among the readers. Nowadays, there are few short stories books published by less talented authors who often complain that their books do not sell well or that there are few readers of the stories these days. However there is no reason to despair because boom and bust, like the economic cycles, are also characteristic of literary development anywhere in the world.

Indepth



The erroneous, smear intentions behind ICHREE

BY SOLOMON GIRMAY

The formation of the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE) was flawed from the gate-go and its report was dead on arrival. This is the byword to describe the mandate and work of ICHREE. For many, the beleaguered commission indeed was controversial and another political tool meant to serve the narrow interests of its creators.

For many, the so-called human rights violation investigating body was part and parcel of the unwarranted political pressure unleashed against Ethiopia under the pretext of human rights issues. The timings of its formation and termination in fact send a clear signal to the proponents and opponents of the commission and, lift the lead on the clandestine and far-fetched goals lying behind the misdeed.

In fact, the circumstances surrounding the formation of the commission said it all. Opposed by dozens of African nations with significant numbers of abstainers, the commission came into being only to serve the concealed ends of a few nations.

Above all, the terms of the commission came to a sudden halt and its work faded away following the Pretoria peace deal indicating that there were no concrete legal grounds and moral virtues to establish it. It is no exaggeration to call the whole process a sham and was of time and resources.

As a victim of external intervention, the Ethiopian government opposed the creation of the commission as it believed the measure undermined the reconciliation and peace-building efforts in the country.

It is to be recalled that Ethiopia has allowed its human rights commission and the UN rights body to conduct a joint investigation into alleged human rights violations in the northern Ethiopia conflict. And, the country also vowed to ensure accountability and bring perpetrators of war crimes before court.

“Apart from requesting that the commission be terminated, diplomatic work was done in a very streamlined and intensive manner”

Contrary to the assertions of the EU, the formation of this commission for the Ethiopian government was overstepping its sovereignty and political intervention. It was for these very and other valid rationales that the incumbent was calling for the termination of the mandate of the commission.

From the very beginning, Ethiopia sees the ICHREE’s mandate as contradictory to the peace agreement inked in Pretoria. It argued that the commission’s work could potentially disrupt the peace and reconciliation effort unfolding in the nation.

While calling for the termination of the ICHREE’s mandate, Ethiopia was doing its level best to redress human rights concerns through internal mechanisms.

As time went by and the situation in the country took a turn for the better, the call for the suspension of the commission only got louder. After doing much diplomatic work, the mandate of the commission was terminated.

On the heels of the termination, Ambassador Zenebe Kebede, Director General of Europe and America at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the decision was a great diplomatic victory for Ethiopia, adding that the country made peace on its own and has been engaged in various diplomatic activities to improve its ties with the European Union, America, and all international community and partners.

The formation of the Commission, which attracted disapproval from a number of countries, has led some to view it as a product of interventionist policies and modern-day imperialists. These critics argue that there were evil intentions and actions surrounding this political instrument. Furthermore, some actors have tried to impose a decree under the UN framework, known as Item 10, following the end of the first one. “The attempt to force a new decree has received backlash, and it laid bare the smear agenda attached to the Commission.”

“Apart from requesting that the commission be terminated, diplomatic work was done in a very streamlined and intensive manner; we agreed it would terminate in September. However, some elements wanted to offer an option called ‘Item 10’ to continue with the process or replace it, but we did not accept it, explaining to them and our partners that it would not be useful for either Ethiopia or them. Since Ethiopia was committed to fully implementing accountability and is not doing this under anyone’s pressure, but rather on its own will, it was inappropriate to allow the continuation of the commission’s mandate. We were able to avoid the ‘Item 10’ option which was meant to replace the commission’s role,”

Ambassador Zenebe added.

The ambassador went on saying, “The fact that the commission will not continue does not mean that the Ethiopian government does not respect human rights or is not accountable. The government is throwing its full weight behind the implementation of Transitional Justice, and is pushing for an inclusive National dialogue to make sure lasting peace is achieved.

Ambassador Zenebe further said: “The work done by foreign and internal anti-peace forces who do not like the peace, development, and progress of Ethiopia has made us pay a heavy price. Some have even tried everything they could to keep ICHREE functioning. However, the Ethiopian government was able to thwart the conspiracies through diplomatic engagements.”

The recent EU Commissioner for International Partnership, Jutta Urpilainen’s visit to Ethiopia was testimony to the improving relationship between both sides. The commissioner held discussions with various government officials during her stay. “Our relationship is in a good state as we are returning to normalization and reconciliation,” Ambassador Zenebe added.

The termination of ICHREE is a significant diplomatic victory for Ethiopia, demonstrating its capability to address internal issues independently. This sets a powerful example for East Africa and Africa as a whole, reinforcing the principle that Africans can resolve their challenges on their own. Ethiopia’s establishment of the National Dialogue Commission and Transitional Justice reflects its commitment to upholding international laws in practice, showcasing respect for sovereignty while enforcing these laws.

It is to be recalled the UN Human Rights Council formed the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE) in December 2021 and extended its mandate by an additional year last October.

Law & Politics

Accessing port via diplomacy

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

Having access to Red sea ports is crucial for Ethiopia because it allows unrestricted commercial activities. With reliable port access, Ethiopia can export its products to other countries and import goods that are needed domestically. This in turn can boost the economy and create more jobs for people.

Diplomatic engagement is a way for Ethiopia to build relationships with other countries. By negotiating, the country can foster a sense of understanding and cooperation along the Red Sea. This can lead to partnerships and collaborations that can be beneficial for all parties involved. The country can solve its problems and help everyone by trying to talk to other countries. This means using diplomacy, which is when countries discuss and negotiate instead of fighting.

The government knows that having access to Red sea ports is important for Ethiopia's economy to grow and become successful. The government's focus on diplomacy shows that it believes in finding peaceful solutions to problems. The country also understands that fighting or using weapons is not the best way to solve issues. Instead, the government is committed to using dialogue and negotiations to achieve its objectives.

Using diplomacy is not always easy, but it is the right approach. It requires patience, understanding and compromise from all parties involved. By engaging in diplomatic efforts, Ethiopia can demonstrate its commitment to peace and cooperation. Diplomacy allows for open communication and dialogue between countries. This can help to prevent misunderstandings and resolve conflicts peacefully. It also provides a platform for countries to express their concerns and find common ground.

Through diplomatic engagements, Ethiopia can showcase its potential for economic progress and prosperity. It can demonstrate its willingness to collaborate and engage in mutually beneficial partnerships. This can attract foreign investments and support the growth of various sectors within the country. By being proactive in diplomatic endeavors, Ethiopia can position itself as a reliable and trustworthy partner on the global stage.

This can enhance its reputation and credibility opening up more opportunities for economic growth and development. The government is determined to find solutions through diplomacy. It is committed to exploring different avenues and opportunities for dialogues. The government knows that by doing so, it can secure the necessary access to ports and ensure Ethiopia's future development and prosperity.

The government recognizes the importance of diplomatic efforts in its quest for access to ports. It understands that through these



dialogues and negotiations, the government can achieve its long-term goals.

The country is actively looking for opportunities to talk and negotiate with other countries. It believes that by having dialogues with other nations, it can find solutions that will benefit both sides. Its goal is to gain access to ports which will help the country develop and grow as a country. By talking to other countries, the country can work towards agreements and deals that will benefit everyone involved.

The government acknowledges the significance of dialogues and negotiations in unlocking its potential for economic progress and prosperity. It is aware of the positive impact that port access can have on the country's development. By prioritizing diplomatic engagement, Ethiopia can address its challenges and unlock its potential for economic progress and prosperity. This approach reflects the government's commitment to peace, cooperation, and finding peaceful solutions to complex issues.

The government understands the importance of diplomatic efforts. It knows that by engaging in conversations and negotiations, it can find ways to address the challenges caused by being landlocked. It is committed to exploring different options and opportunities to ensure that Ethiopia's growth and development are not hindered by lack of coastline. By the same token, the government sees diplomatic efforts and dialogues as essential in its mission to obtain access to ports.

When countries can trade with each other, they can make money and get the things they need. But if a country doesn't have access to the sea, it can be difficult for them to trade with other countries. Without access to the sea, some countries may struggle to enhance their infrastructure. It is true that improving infrastructure can be difficult if a country can't easily move things around or trade with other countries to get the materials they need.

Ethiopia has the opportunity to overcome its challenges by actively participating in diplomatic discussions and starting conversations with nearby countries and international partners. By doing so, Ethiopia can find solutions that benefit not only itself but also other parties involved. Engaging in diplomatic efforts and dialogues provides Ethiopia with a chance to establish positive relationships with countries that have access to the sea.

Through diplomatic engagement, Ethiopia can explore opportunities to collaborate with coastal nations on various development projects. These projects could involve the construction of roads, bridges, and buildings which would not only enhance Ethiopia's infrastructure but also contribute to the overall progress of the region.

Diplomatic engagement presents an opportunity for Ethiopia to strengthen economic cooperation with its coastal neighbors. By fostering partnerships, sharing expertise and encouraging investments, the country can create a supportive environment for business growth and job creation. This, in turn, can lead to improved living conditions for its citizens.

A successful outcome of diplomatic efforts and dialogues would greatly benefit Ethiopia's overall development. Besides, access to sea ports would facilitate faster transportation of goods, increased trade opportunities, and boosted economic growth. These advantages would create a more prosperous and flourishing society for all Ethiopians.

Ethiopia has no intention of threatening the sovereignty of any nation but would like rules-based access to the Red Sea, said Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said, calling stakeholders for discussions

Addressing the 3rd year 4th Regular Session of the House of People's Representatives Abiy also expressed Ethiopia's desire to a principle-based access to the Red Sea that will not harm the rights and benefits of any of its coastal neighbors. "Ethiopia

has no intention to violate or harm others' sovereignty and needs to make a business law to resolve the issue.

"Ethiopia's neighbors are expected to take its pursuit for sea access positively as the country could not manage such a large population without reaching an agreement on port use. Ethiopia called coastal neighbors just for discussion, not for conflict and if the situation is not managed by discussion, no one will be able to control what would happen next."

He also firmly rejected some groups' rumors about political conspiracy that associates Ethiopia's aspiration to sea.

He, moreover, underlined the importance of bringing balance to Ethiopians' historical lenses since it seems to occupy citizens the most.

"What we seek to accomplish as nation requires clarity of thought and hard work on a daily basis. Although there are many issues contributing to our challenges, particularly negative narratives, do not build a nation."

As to him, emotion ridden and conspiracy based problems analysis cannot help Ethiopians to achieve sustainable solutions. It rather pushes Ethiopians away further from the truth.

Taking about the existence of instability in some parts of the county, the premier said that the government has been thwarting continuously the attacks of those groups who aim to weaken this nation at every turn.

"Over the past years, the government has neither initiated nor planned any attacks against any group."

On the occasion, he also expressed the government's readiness to hold peace talks with any given party to ensure peace and stability across the country.

Regarding the status of country's media outlets, he noted that the media practice in Ethiopia is only at the beginning stages and requires care.

Women in Focus

The future belongs to those who believe in their dreams

BY STAFF REPORTER

The African proverb goes that “If you educate a man, you educate an individual. But if you educate a woman, you educate a nation.” This often heard saying puts a high value on the benefits of teaching girls and young women and its felt impact in the family, the whole community and even in each and every progress, be it social, economic or political advancement of the country.

Obviously, education is a pivotal element to break the cycle of persistent poverty and prevent diseases, to bring about substantial change within the community and society, as well as advance countries’ development.

As a matter of fact, an educated woman develops a better potential to earn her own income and be economically independent, educate her own children; maintaining a healthy family, and bring about positive change not only on her own life but also on the lives of people around her and at the wider societal level.

In this respect, giving equal opportunities with their counterparts and educating girls through providing the needed support, material, financial, psychological to boost encouragement and make them more motivated, has incalculable returns not only at individual and family level but also for the entire community and the country.

According to documents, an educated woman’s household is more likely to prosper as a result of a higher overall income. Just one extra year of secondary education can increase a woman’s income as much as 25 % a year. By participating in the labor market, an educated woman helps boost economic productivity, leading to greater wealth for her community as well.

However, for a variety of reasons, the enrollment of girls and young women at primary, secondary and tertiary levels is still not at the desired level. In some cases, even high achieving students are seen challenged in advancing their education including lack of motivation and a little encouragement. As a result, many failed to pursue their education and achieve their potential.

Recently, the Addis Ababa City Administration Women, Children and Social Affairs Bureau has given recognition and awards to high achieving female students who scored the highest graduation grades and achieved top university entrance results in the 12th grade national exams during the 2015 Ethiopian academic year from government universities and high schools that are situated in the capital,



While high achieving female students receiving the awards

Educating girls through providing the needed support, material, financial, psychological to boost encouragement and make them more motivated, has incalculable returns not only at individual and family level but also for the entire community and the country

Addis Ababa.

The recognition and award ceremony was carried out at a forum organized to share the experiences of successful women thereby to develop a culture of mutual understanding and promote support among women, according to the report from Ministry of Women and Social Affairs.

Speaking at the ceremony, State Minister at the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs Huria Ali said, “The achievement you gained today is the outcome of your hard work. The Award you received today for your best results will motivate you to work more, penetrate and be competitive and winner in tomorrow’s competitions at global level. You should not forget that you are responsible to accelerate Ethiopia’s overall development and realize its prosperity, and create a favorable environment for women, children, Persons with Disabilities, elderly and all citizens.”

Today for the reason you practically refuted the long attached assumption of those people saying “women cannot do it” and those who take womanhood as an excuse, you have built your own ladder for your future. In your future path, you need to develop the ability to conduct deep research works, teamwork, build effective communication and entrepreneurship skills, she said.

“You, high achieving female graduates and students, have the responsibility to work determinedly to prosper your country and make it comfortable for all citizens, beyond changing your lives,”

the State Minister reiterated.

In particular, with the aim to lessen the challenges working women face in relation to giving birth and maternity related responsibilities- to not leave their jobs after due date and become economically dependent, daycare centers were set up to support women to keep their children in a safe place so that they can work with undivided heart and fully committed to their work.

In this regard the City Administration is working to support working to secure their job, keep their children in safe areas, rely on themselves and ensure their equal participation socially, politically and economically. According to her, for this to happen, the city is being led by a woman and its leadership structure is being organized with successful female leaders; has created a favorable situation for the success.

Women Sector Deputy Head with the Bureau Mekdes Tesfaye on her part said that following the reform that occurred in our country, several women are coming forward in areas of entrepreneurship, leadership, and other fields that drive growth and elevate the country. Mentioning that education is the main area that enables to bring about the desired outcome in terms of realizing gender equality, the Head said that the achievements of those graduates and school students in the education sector is a source of pride and it is a gateway to prosperity that we are striving as a nation.

Society

Ensuring sustainable peace remains gov't top agenda: Premier

BY TEWODROS KASSA

The House of People's Representatives (HPR) conducted its 4th Regular Session of the 6th year and 3rd tenure on Tuesday in the presence of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed provided explanations in response to queries put to him by Member of the Parliaments (MPs) with regard to the current national issues of the country.

On the session, the House is expected approved a motion in support of the 2016 Ethiopian fiscal year government's plan which President Sahle-Work Zewde presented on 9 October 2023 while opening the 6th year and 3rd tenure of the joint session of the House of Peoples' Representatives (HPR) and House of Federation (HoF).

Ensuring sustainable peace and the efforts being undertaken by the government to restore peace in restive areas were among the questions that were raised by the MPs to the Prime Minister.

Responding to the questions Prime Minister Abiy emphasized that the government remains committed to solve any grievances and disagreements in a peaceful manner; through dialogues. Conducting concrete dialogue is the primary option to bring sustainable peace and security in the country, the Prime Minister underscored.

As to him, quality and productive ideas should be promoted. And ideas must be supported by hard work and persistence to ensure development, peace and good governance in an inclusive manner.

"Ethiopia has experienced conflicts and wars for many years. What we need the most is peace. So, we have to give dialogue a chance," the Premier stressed.

The concept of nationalism in the Ethiopian constitution is not against multi nationalism, the Prime Minister said, stressing the need to harmonize differences to promote inclusive democracy, development and good governance.

He called on opposition groups to seek peaceful solutions rather than armed struggles, affirming that the government is always open for dialogue to solve ongoing problems through peaceful mechanisms.

Members of contending political parties are currently serving as cabinet members participating in major policy related discussions and decisions, the Prime Minister said, pledging commitment to promote the inclusive approach to the future.

Regarding the recently declared State of Emergency, the Prime Minister said that the State of Emergency was declared to enforce rule of law; and the decree aimed



at restoring law and order. In consequence, it has enabled the federal government to bring relative peace in the Amhara State and prevented the regional government from a breakdown. However, Premier Abiy underscored that further work and discussion is needed to bring about lasting peace.

The general public demands that poverty be eradicated and democracy flourished in the country, the Prime Minister said, reaffirming the government's commitment to a prosperous nation.

Accordingly, the Prime Minister called on all stakeholders to support the National Dialogue Commission in its endeavors to bring lasting peace, national consensus and reconciliation in Ethiopia.

Asserting the need to seize the opportunity presented by the National Dialogue Commission, PM Abiy Ahmed said, "The opportunity that the National Dialogue provides us is immense and we must not miss this opportunity."

Regarding the disputed lands between Amhara and Tigray states, the Premier reminded that the government believes in following the referendum decision to resolve the issues, but if there is a better solution that can bring lasting peace from the regional states themselves, the government is ready to entertain it.

According to him, the government prioritizes solutions that bring lasting peace and the solidarity of the peoples of the two

states and the country at large.

The Prime Minister said, "Our solution is only ours to implement, our door is open to those who bring a solution for sustainable peace and people's solidarity. Our desire is to see lasting peace between the two states. The people of the two states' demands are not different from this," he said.

Regarding the role of the media, the Premier underscored that the media has the power to cultivate the positive and the negative aspects as well, depending on audience savvy. According to him, the media practice in Ethiopia is only at the beginning stages and requires care.

Moreover, the premier urged Ethiopians to embrace peace, harmony and forgiveness calling this a key to realize a prosperous Ethiopia.

According to him, the Prosperity Party is working hard to build an inclusive democracy taking into the diverse identities of nations and nationalities of the country, the Prime Minister pledging to realize a prosperous country where every citizen lives with equality and freedom.

"My advice to our brothers who are carrying guns in different places is, please let us not undermine peace. Let us protect peace because that is what we want," he emphasized.

The ruling party is clear that it is important to collaboratively demolish the wall that separates us and build the bridge for the present and next generation. The Premier

reaffirmed that there is nothing that can hinder the government to discuss with political parties and resolve differences through peaceful dialogue. Stating that the Prosperity Party (PP) values love, forgiveness, togetherness, and prosperity, he called on all to take peace seriously. Refraining from engaging in any conflict is essential as it prevents human suffering, death, destruction, and leads to prosperity, he said.

As to the Premier, peace can be achieved through peaceful dialogue and not through violence and armaments. And any demands should be addressed through a peaceful manner as forceful options are futile. In the current situation in Ethiopia, it is never possible to overthrow the government with a clash. Therefore, instead of weapons, we should give priority to discussing with a pen and idea. There is no purpose or gain that we can achieve by killing. What is best for Ethiopia is to build a prosperous country through dialogue.

Abiy said calling armed groups to refrain from destructive acts and come to peaceful dialogue.

In sum, the Premier urges the general public to be active participants for peace and dialogue rather than pushing the hand outstretched to peace. In doing so, everyone should be responsible to cultivate peace and contribute their own part to the efforts of developing a peaceful and prosperous country.