



The Ethiopian Herald

Vol. LXXX No 063 23 NOVEMBER 2023 - HIDAR 13, 2016

Thursday

Price Birr 10.00

PM Abiy holds talks with Cuban Vice President

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA- Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) held talks here yesterday with the visiting Cuban Vice President Salvador Valdes Mesa on bilateral, regional, and international issues of mutual concern.

The parties discussed ways of bolstering Ethio-Cuban cooperation in the medical sector, tourism services, and education and sugar industries, according to Office of the Prime Minister.

The Cuban Vice President, who is on an official working visit to Ethiopia, laid a wreath at the Ethio-Cuba Friendship Square on November 19, 2023.

In his remark at the time of placing the wreath, the VP said that the relationship between Ethiopia and Cuba is historical and blood-bound. "Since the beginning, the two countries' partnership have been constantly developing in various fields."

Information obtained from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicated that Addis Ababa Deputy Mayor Jantirar Abay and Ethiopians educated in Cuba attended the wreath laying ceremony.



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Gov't accuses Shene for talk's failure

- Expresses commitment for peace

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA- The Government Communication Service (GCS) announced that the second round of talks with a militant group *Shene*,

See Gov't accuses ... Page 3



Ethiopia provides education for 168,000 refugees

- Hosts nearly 1 million displaced people

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Why Sea outlet matter of existence for Ethiopia?

BY MENGESHA AMARE

After a three-decade of deep silence, the issue of seaport has become a discussion agenda among Ethiopians and the issue centered on the country's right to direct access to the Red Sea that would foster its international trade. The question is why sea gate is now considered as a matter of existence for Ethiopia.

Different historians confirmed that Ethiopia used to trade with Middle and Far East countries through the Red Sea.

A noted historian Prof. Richard Pankhurst in his book "The Ethiopian Borderlands,"

See Why Sea outlet ... Page 3



Game-changing milestone: Avocado export within green legacy initiatives

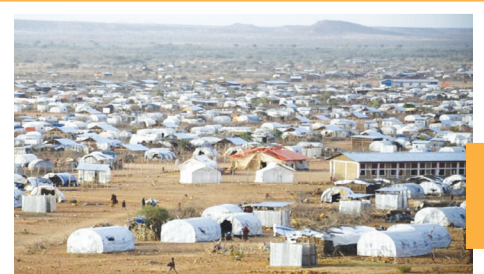
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International cultural exchanges for promoting peace, understanding

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Addressing refugee crisis in the Horn

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Japan working to expand medical service in rural communities

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- The expansion of a medical worker vocational training center in the Somali region is significantly useful in benefitting Jigjiga and its vicinity as college graduates can provide the community with reachable medical services, Japan Embassy said.

According to the press release Japan Embassy sent to the Ethiopian Herald, "A Japan Embassy funded project for expanding Jigjiga Medical Worker Vocational Training Center in Somali Region was inaugurated on November 21, 2023.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony, Japan Ambassador to Ethiopia, ITO Takako expressed that the new training center will play an important role in Jigjiga and its environs as the college graduates would start actively working to help people who are in need of medical services.

About USD 87,000 was provided through Japan's Grant Assistance for Grassroots and Human Security Projects (GGP) to build one equipped medical vocational training center comprising a warehouse and a latrine. This project will enable 240 additional students to get registered in the medical vocational training center, it was learnt.

The GGP was first introduced in 1989 in Ethiopia; over 400 projects have been implemented through this scheme centering sectors like education, health services, women empowerment and other basic human needs.

UNESCO underscores women empowerment to drive climate action

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – Advancing gender equality and empowering women are pillars for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and effective climate action, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) said.

In an exclusive interview with The Ethiopian Herald, UNESCO Liaison Office to AUC Director and Country Representative to Ethiopia, Rita Bissoonauth (PhD) said that her organization is aggressively working to achieve the 2030 SDGs via climate change education, protection of world heritage sites, conservation of water and other projects to combat climate change.

She further remarked that educating women and youth about climate change impacts would have a paramount importance to build competency and resilience on the impacts of climate change. Also, their involvement enhances creativity and introduces diverse perspectives thereby upholding effective climate policies and actions.

It is, therefore, crucial to backing and ensuring their inclusive participation and contribution to addressing the challenges posed by climate change in Africa and in building resilient responses, she stated.

Although being disproportionately affected by climate change, she elucidated that women play a pivotal role in climate adaptation and mitigation efforts worldwide. Besides, their wealth of knowledge, skills, and potential would also significantly contribute to climate solutions and sustainable development.

Mentioning women's role in building resilient



Rita Bissoonauth (PhD)

communities, fostering sustainable practices and driving innovation, she emphasized that her institution is committed to supporting women as agents of change in climate action.

She also lauded the tree planting initiative, which is being undertaken in Ethiopia annually, as a driving force for alleviating climate change. To reinforce this commitment, UNESCO is working with Ethiopian institutions and academia on climate action giving due emphasis to women and girls.

Emphasizing the urgency and immensity of empowering women on climate action, her institution is engaged in various activities that promote gender equality and amplifying the voices and contributions of women, the Representative added.

She called on all concerned bodies to empower women to achieve the common goal through awareness creation, women-led climate initiatives, advocating for gender-responsive climate policies and inclusive decision-making.

Foundation inaugurates school, water projects

BY MESERET BEHAILU

EJAJI – Menschen für Menschen Foundation has inaugurated the 71 million Birr worth projects of Ejaji water supply and secondary school in Elu Gelan District of West Shewa Zone of Oromia state.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony on Tuesday, Elu Gelan District Administer Abdu Hussein appreciated the foundation for its endeavor to improve people's lives and achieve societal change.

Constructing standard schools and providing potable water are valuable works to bring a number of students to school and combat waterborne diseases, the Administrator said.

Since the Woreda is semi-desert, people have been exposed to different diseases like malaria and pregnant mothers have been losing their life due to inaccessibility of health services.

He further stated that the inaugurated projects would benefit over 22,000 people in Ejaji town and the surrounding areas.

It was indicated that the water project and the school respectively shared 52 million and 19 million Birr out of the total 71 million Birr that has been spent for the general project undertakings.

Menschen Fuer Menschen Foundation



Management Board Chairperson Sabastian Birandis (PhD) on his part said that the organization is playing a crucial role in realizing rural integrated development in Ethiopia.

In addition to the aforementioned projects, this week merely, the Jama-Dogolo Technical and Vocational Education Training Institution in Amhara State and two academic institutions worth 116 million Birr, he stated.

The foundation would continue putting efforts to enable citizens to get access to clean water, quality education, and other services, he stressed.

Foundation Country Respondent, YilemaTaye said, "The foundation carried out over 2,800

ground water drilling projects in the past eight years across Ethiopia. As a result, eight rural towns have been benefited from potable water supply and millions of citizens are saved from disease in that regard."

Yilma added that the foundation is carrying out ground water drilling projects in Oromia, Amhara, and Somali States to address millions of citizens with clean water supply.

So far, the foundation has benefited 6,000,000 Ethiopians with the implementation of 14 integrated rural development projects related to environment protection, water and sanitation, education, health and human resource development by spending over 8.3 billion Birr, it was learned.

Ethiopia provides education for 168,000 refugees

• Hosts nearly 1 million displaced people

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- The Ethiopian government said about 168,000 refugee students is attending school in the country, mentioning the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan of Action also grants refugees to learn and work with freedom.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency, Refugees Affairs Senior Communication Officer Englize Ketema (PhD) stated that refugees are attending education in preschools, primary schools and secondary schools.

Totally, 168,269 refugees are attending formal education in 65 preschools, 53 primary and 11 secondary schools. In addition, some public schools nearby in refugees' camps are also delivering services. Public universities are also receiving and providing scholarships

to refugees without any special requirement and any refugee who has a pass mark in university entrance exam are also being treated equally.

According to him, the Ministry of Education in collaboration with aid organizations is providing the education service to refugees. Children nearby refugee camps are also learning with the refugees.

Ethiopia is the third African country for hosting refugee students following Uganda and Sudan. South Sudanese, Somalis, and Eritrean students take the largest number of refugee students in Ethiopia. Addis Ababa, Gambella, Somali, Benishangul Gumuz, Afar, Amhara, and Tigray are hosting a large number of refugee students, the officer elaborated.

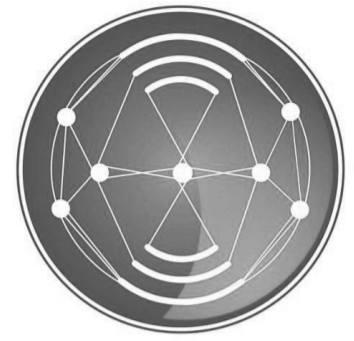
Refugees and Returnees Service Deputy Director General, Muluken

Desta also said that Ethiopia hosts nearly one million refugees.

Ethiopia is operating durable solutions for refugees and adopted a comprehensive plan of action to grant refugees the right to work, movement, access to formal and non-formal education and other privileges. The government has also made several commitments in legal frameworks to support refugees and they are included in the sixth series of educational sector development plan and management information system.

Muluken also called on relevant stakeholders to collaborate for refugees' safety.

To address the complex issues, the government of Ethiopia has validated and endorsed new commitments for the 2023 Refugee Forum in various areas including education, he remarked.



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FDRE Government Communication Service

Gov't accuses *Shene* ...

which has been held in Dare Salam Tanzania for the past two weeks, has ended without results.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, the GCS stated that the terrorist group could not bring a point of negotiation beyond its insistence of sharing government power unlawfully. "The government anticipated the group may learn from its past mistakes and will try to adapt its negotiation points to the phase the country has reached, but it did not happen."

The government has traveled more than half way and tried to resolve the issue due to its eagerness to restore peace in the country and turn Ethiopia's blessings into real wealth and ensure its prosperity, the statement added.

"But, the terror group chose to trade in the blood and torture of civilians. Thus, the discussion was dispersed without result and the government will continue to strengthen its mission of enforcing the law and keeping the constitutional order whilst retaining its commitment for peace."

According to GCS, without developing a culture of resolving differences in a civilized way around the table, there will be no peace and solidarity that can be developed.

The federal government shares power with parties that do not share a political program in order to expand the political space and it has been making efforts to develop an election system and country management practice that is conducted without killing. The government is always committed to ensure peace through dialogue and the principle of give and take with those who tried to take power by violating the constitution.

The statement further pointed out that the government is ready to resolve problems through dialogue with any power. "While this is maintained, the government believes that it is a dangerous trend for a country to establish parallel forces that would raise arms to political power."

The government will fulfill its constitutional obligation to strengthen the country by taking unrelenting measures to end the conflict in Oromia and any part of the country, the statement remarked.

Why Sea outlet matter of existence ...

pp. 68-169", quoted the Arab scholar "Shihabedin" from Yemen, the chronicler of Ahmed Gragn stated that Emperor Lebna Dengel send gold, ivory and the like to Arab countries using the Red Sea. Another historian named M Perham elucidated in his book titled 'The government of Ethiopia,' in 1948, stated that during the 8th century, not only were the Arabs and Ethiopians fostering trade exchange in the South Arabia territory, but they were also using the Port of Adulis.

"It is regrettable that Ethiopia, the country which had been utilizing sea ports for years including the Red Sea, has been losing its status for various reasons. Home to such a large population Ethiopia's status of being landlocked is quite awful," said Jemal Ahmed, an economist in Policy Research Institute.

Although Ethiopia is never colonized, the reason why the country lost its seaport is the influence of colonialism and colonial powers. Access to the sea is one of the leading issues that the people of Ethiopia have been concerned about and in terms of political and economic security; sea gate is considered the basis of the country's existence, the scholar elaborated.

"We will be entirely blocked if problems arise among Ethiopia and its coastal neighbors as industrial and military equipment, health supplies, and fuel are

imported from abroad. There may be a possibility of always being forced to accept the demands of these countries and this will cost Ethiopia a lot."

The economist further stated that as Ethiopia is landlocked, traders from other countries have monopolized the economy and created large economic zones and they mainly imported goods according to their needs. Because the laws of another country govern the traders, the Ethiopian government cannot force them and control them. As a result, foreign companies could control the Ethiopian market and economy and the situation has a negative impact in soaring the cost of living and increasing inflation.

Though the government raises Ethiopia's aspiration to seaports, it is a matter of people's survival as absence of sea access is considered a matter of survival as it harms the interests of landlocked countries and makes them vulnerable. "Currently, inflation is testing the survival of citizens and hampers supply of products and it is imperative for Ethiopia to have a sea gate."

Lack of sea access forced Ethiopians to face the immense pressure of cost of living though it is difficult to conclude absence of ports is the sole factor for the raise in the prices of imported goods, but most of the causes of price inflation

are due to lack of ports. If the demand is realized and a sea gate can be obtained, the problem caused by inflation can be solved, Jemal emphasized.

On the other hand, even if Ethiopia gets into conflict with other countries in this area, there will be a big pressure on goods imported through the port, including medicine and fuel. Therefore, the port is not considered a luxury issue, but a matter of survival.

One of the reasons for soaring increases in the price of goods is due to the influence of the big actors at the port that have focused on the Ethiopian market. Not having a sea gate can be costly."

The economist recommended that through give and take principle and strengthening the people-to-people ties, as well as fostering trade-oriented economic interaction and enshrining the strong relationship between governments, Ethiopia could materialize its aspiration for seaports.

Citing the Richard Burton's 1856 book titled 'first footstep and list of Haka' an author and historian Teshome Birhanu stated that after the birth of Christ in the 3rd and 4th centuries, the Axumite Kingdom expanded its control up to southern west region and the Ayla or Ayla and Ayulastregions were under its control.

Opinion

Ethiopia's port pursuit:

A call for collaborative progress, mutual benefits

BY HIZKEL HAILU

Some documents indicated that in ancient times, Ethiopia was a country blessed with a coastline that stretched along the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. The ports of Ethiopia served as vital gateways for trade and cultural exchange, connecting the country to the wider world. One notable historic port was Adulis, located in present-day Eritrea, which thrived as a bustling maritime hub during the Aksumite Empire. Adulis facilitated the trade of valuable commodities such as ivory, gold, spices, and exotic goods from Africa, Arabia, and beyond.

It is also important to note that Ethiopia had other ports along its coastline as well. For instance, the ancient city of Axum, which was the capital of the Aksumite Empire, had its own port called Matara. Matara served as an important link between the Aksumite Empire and the Arabian Peninsula, facilitating trade and fostering connections with civilizations across the Red Sea.

Furthermore, there were other smaller ports dotted along Ethiopia's coastline, such as Berbera and Zeila, which were important stops along the maritime trade routes of the time. These ports collectively contributed to Ethiopia's engagement in regional and international trade, allowing the country to benefit from the exchange of goods, ideas, and cultural influences.

Ethiopia's ancient ports were not only centers of commerce but also melting pots of diverse cultures and ideas. However, it is worth noting that with the changes in geopolitical dynamics over time, including shifts in regional power and borders, Ethiopia gradually lost direct access to these ports. As a result, the nation became landlocked; leading to the current challenges it faces in terms of securing its own port and ensuring efficient maritime connectivity.

This absence of a port poses significant challenges for the nation's economic growth and development. Cognizant of this fact and with a growing economy and increasing trade demands, the Ethiopian government has been actively pursuing the establishment of its own port to secure a direct sea outlet.

Undoubtedly, being an owner of port plays a crucial role for economic growth and trade expansion. It helps to facilitate international trade and economic growth. Through having its own port, Ethiopia would be able to reduce transportation costs, enhance efficiency, and boost its exports and imports. Currently, Ethiopia heavily relies on ports in neighboring countries, resulting in additional expenses

and logistical complexities.

Moreover, depending solely on neighboring countries' ports limits Ethiopia's options and leaves it vulnerable to potential political or economic disruptions in those countries. Developing its own port would provide Ethiopia with alternative trade routes, diversifying its options and ensuring a more resilient and secure trade network.

Coupled with the aforementioned ideas, Ethiopia's aspiration for a port should not be seen as an isolated endeavor but rather as an opportunity for regional integration and cooperation. Neighboring countries can benefit from Ethiopia's port by fostering closer economic ties, expanding their own trade networks, and sharing infrastructure resources. Collaboration in this regard can lead to mutually beneficial outcomes and contribute to overall regional stability.

It is to be recalled that in his response to questions raised by members of the parliament at the 3rd year 4th regular session of the House of People's Representatives (HPR) recently, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said that Ethiopia's quest for sea outlet and to have its own port is neither a new agenda, nor designed to threaten the sovereignty of neighboring countries in the Horn of Africa.

"What I want countries in the Horn of Africa, the world in the east and west alike and all others to understand in good faith is our genuine interest and our problems," the Prime Minister said.

The premier further 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'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."

There up on neighboring countries, such as Djibouti, Eritrea, Sudan, and Kenya, can play a pivotal role in supporting Ethiopia's quest for a port. Engaging in diplomatic discussions and negotiations, these countries can facilitate the establishment of mutually beneficial agreements that address Ethiopia's need for a sea outlet while ensuring their own interests and concerns are taken into account.

The establishment of a port in Ethiopia would create economic opportunities for these countries. It would attract foreign investment, promote regional trade, and encourage the development of ancillary

industries such as logistics, warehousing, and transportation. Neighboring countries can benefit from this economic growth by actively participating in cross-border trade and leveraging their proximity to the port.

Ethiopia's pursuit of a port can also be accompanied by the establishment of special economic zones (SEZs) in close proximity to the port. Neighboring countries can participate in the development of these SEZs, which would attract foreign direct investment, promote industrialization, and create employment opportunities in the region.

The collaboration between the neighboring countries and Ethiopia further streamline trade procedures and facilitate customs clearance processes. This would reduce bureaucratic hurdles and enhance the efficiency of cross-border trade, benefiting businesses and promoting regional economic growth. By implementing harmonized trade policies and simplifying border procedures, neighboring countries can foster a conducive environment for trade with Ethiopia.

These countries can also collaborate with Ethiopia to address potential environmental concerns associated with the establishment and operation of a port. This includes developing sustainable practices, ensuring proper waste management, and mitigating any negative impacts on coastal ecosystems. By working together, countries can ensure that the port's development aligns with environmental conservation efforts and promotes long-term sustainability.

Additionally, the establishment of a port in Ethiopia can open up opportunities for energy cooperation among neighboring countries. This could involve the development of joint energy projects, such as power generation facilities or renewable energy initiatives, to meet the growing energy demands of the port and the surrounding areas.

Regarding the infrastructure development and connectivity, neighboring countries can contribute to Ethiopia's port development through investing in infrastructure projects that enhance connectivity and trade linkages. This could involve improving road networks, railways, and border crossings to facilitate the movement of goods and people between Ethiopia and the port. Such collaborative efforts would foster regional integration.

The development of a port in Ethiopia can lead to the creation of infrastructure corridors that connect landlocked countries in the region to global markets. Neighboring countries can collaborate with Ethiopia to develop efficient transportation networks, including road and rail links that facilitate the movement of goods and people not only

to Ethiopia but also to other landlocked nations. This infrastructure development would enhance regional connectivity and promote economic integration.

Furthermore, ensuring the security and stability of Ethiopia's port would be in the best interest of neighboring countries. Collaborative initiatives for maritime security, intelligence sharing and joint naval exercises can help safeguard the port's operations and protect regional trade routes. By working together, neighboring countries can create a safe and conducive environment for Ethiopia's maritime aspirations.

The collaboration will also pave the way for knowledge and technology transfer among each neighboring country. Ethiopia's pursuit of a port requires expertise in various areas such as port management, logistics, and maritime operations. Neighboring countries with established ports can contribute by sharing their knowledge and providing technical assistance to Ethiopia. They can also engage in student exchange programs, joint research projects, and capacity-building initiatives to strengthen the knowledge base and expertise in the maritime sector.

This knowledge and technology transfer would not only support the development of Ethiopia's port but also strengthen regional capabilities and build human capital in the maritime sector. The presence of a port in Ethiopia can also contribute to the growth of tourism and hospitality industries in both Ethiopia and neighboring countries. Visitors arriving through the port can explore cultural and historical sites, enjoy local attractions, and contribute to the economic development of the region.

All in all, Ethiopia's pursuit of its own port is a significant step towards overcoming the challenges posed by its landlocked status. The establishment of a port would not only enhance Ethiopia's economic growth and trade expansion but also contribute to regional integration and stability. Neighboring countries should recognize the benefits of supporting Ethiopia's quest for a sea outlet and actively engage in diplomatic discussions.

Through recognizing the economic opportunities, investing in infrastructure, facilitating trade, addressing environmental concerns and sharing knowledge, these countries can contribute to Ethiopia's development while reaping the benefits of enhanced regional integration and economic growth.

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

Editorial

Opinion

Gov't's commitment to peace ought to be revered!

The FDRE Government Communication Service has recently stated that the second-round peace talks between Ethiopian Government and Shene group in Tanzania's Dare Selam ended without bearing the intended result; it is unfortunate that the desired peaceful accord has not been seen due to the anti-peace stance of the group. Unluckily, the Shene group could not learn from its repetitive and disastrous mistakes; hence, it continued rejecting the persistent call of the government for peaceful discussion. This group has been undertaking several attacks in different parts of the country targeting civilians and public infrastructure over the past three years. Sadly, communities have been suffering from the incalculable damages this group repeatedly caused.

Wisely, the government has pursued a number of means hoping that the group would accept the peaceful discussion and ultimately stop its evil attacks targeting the civilians since the chief aim of the government is to achieve lasting peace and stability across the country. Indeed, the government has carefully been managing things to bring this terrorist group to peaceful talks regardless of the group's persistent rejection.

More importantly, the Ethiopian government has consistently been demonstrating unyielding labors to avoid any possible conflicts in the last four years. Indeed, it has been undertaking decisive measures that would take the country on a different path of healing and national consensus against all odds. For instance, signing the peace agreement with TPLF at Pretoria, South Africa, and implementing the principles of the agreement to ensure peace and stability can be the clearest indications of its commitment for peace. Following this measure, it ended the two-year of devastating conflict in the northern part of the country. Obviously, the government neither planned nor started any of these conflicts; rather it has been striving to tear down the wall of hatred and build a bridge of harmony.

Moreover, it took several significant measures, including putting an end to all military operations and hostile rhetoric against the TPLF, accelerating and assisting the provision of humanitarian assistance, and facilitating the resumption of all essential services in the Tigray region. Restating its promise to intensify efforts to consolidate peace and ensure the full implementation of the peace agreement, it invited its development partners to support its continued endeavors for lasting peace in Ethiopia. Likewise, hoping for a similar positive result, the government requested the Shene group to accept the call to peace talks.

On the contrary, the group presented unrealistic preconditions to hinder the government's efforts to see meaningful peace talks. It seems to pursue its evil schemes attacking civilians and damaging public properties as usual. This group, in different parts of the country, caused a number of conflicts that resulted in huge human and property loss while triggering a dire humanitarian crisis and sparking unwarranted external pressure. As the group chose the path of conflicts, the series of negotiations suggested by the peace-loving government and Ethiopians could not meaningfully take place. Perilously, the population and many communities across the nation still face the risk of attack by this group which has constantly committed crimes against humanity and engaged in the massacre of innocent unarmed civilians.

In sum, the government continues pursuing all the peaceful means to ensure peace and stability for its people like inviting any group for peaceful discussions; nevertheless, it has to carry out its responsibility through foiling the schemes of the anti-peace group.

Business partnership in the making

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Since 1905, Ethiopia and Germany have had positive bilateral relations, which are sustained by reciprocal high-level visits.

Emperor Haile Selassie was the first foreign head of state to visit the Federal Republic of Germany in 1954. The most recent trip to Ethiopia by Federal Chancellor Scholz was in May 2023. In October 2018, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali paid a visit to Berlin. The visits made by the two parties have elevated the political, economic, and people-to-people aspects of relations to an advanced level.

In 2017, Ethiopia became a member of the Compact with Africa, while Germany was the G20 President. Ethiopia is a significant bilateral partner for German development cooperation, which focuses on agriculture, nutrition, and vocational training in addition to resource preservation. Increasing investment and creating employment are two other key goals.

Ethiopia is one of the 12 African countries with which Germany has formed a partnership. Germany has more than 80 projects in Ethiopia, which shows that the former is the second-largest donor country in terms of development cooperation with Ethiopia.

Germany is engaged in agriculture, health, education, and the promotion of good governance, as well as incisive and peaceful societies, as they think if any country needs to have sustainable development, it needs to have all three sectors of sustainable development, which are economic, ecological, and social development.

The trade relationship between the two countries is good, but it is not enough. Ethiopia is a country with great potential in trade. Germany is one of the countries that buy a lot of Ethiopian coffee. They love Ethiopian coffee very much, as well as textile and flower products. In order to make business-to-business relations more effective, the German Embassy in Ethiopia has organized an exhibition in Ethiopia and is preparing to do the same in the New Year.

One of the biggest markets for Ethiopian products, especially textiles and coffee, is Germany. Germany's primary export goods to Ethiopia are completed goods like automobiles, engines, machinery, chemicals, and pharmaceuticals.

Even more recently, the German Embassy, in cooperation with Giesecke+Devrient, held a special event on November 8, 2023, to conclude a workshop for the Ethiopian banking community on the theme of 'Towards Financial Excellence: Enhancing Ethiopia's Currency and Payment Systems', according to the press release sent to the Ethiopian Herald.

The workshop involved a wide range of presentations and discussions that enabled government officials, bank presidents, and the business community to learn about various solutions in the fields of currency management, payment systems, and digital security innovations.

The sponsor of this event, the German company Giesecke+Devrient, is a family-owned business that has a long-standing tradition in the banking sector and has seen many changes over the last 170 years it has been in business. The company's products and solutions range from printing bank notes to providing sophisticated solutions in the digital space. This experience and the perspective offer a potentially beneficial set of solutions to banks in Ethiopia as they are evolving towards the adoption of global standards in the financial industry.

On the occasion, the German Ambassador Stephan Auer remarked: "Giesecke + Devrient represents a model of German SMEs with both a long tradition of being in business while also remaining on the cutting edge of modern technology and advances. Lately, for example, Giesecke + Devrient is playing a major role in the critical field of digital security.

Every morning when I start my computer, the SINA logo pops up: a product of Giesecke+Devrient providing security for my online communication."

The workshop hosted by the National Bank of Ethiopia and sponsored by Giesecke+Devrient was an excellent opportunity to delve deep into a number of topics related to currency management, payment systems, and digital security innovations. This is only the first of a series of conversations with the banking sector and offers the chance to pro-actively drive change.

As the National Bank of Ethiopia has been spearheading reforms to modernize the financial system, the experience and offerings of companies such as G+D can potentially play a supportive role. The overarching goal for all stakeholders involved is, we believe, to provide accessible banking services to Ethiopians and Ethiopian businesses.

The German Embassy recognizes the ambitious reform plans the Ethiopian government, including the National Bank of Ethiopia, is working on. Germany encourages them to continue the path of reform and stands ready to support them where needed. Thus, we have been the single largest donor to the Multi-Donor Trust Fund, supporting reform in the financial sector.

This commitment by the German government to support change and promote a socially conscious yet free market economy is further strengthened by German enterprises, which embody these principles. The workshop series organized by Giesecke+Devrient is a prime example of knowledge transfer across continents and the importance of sharing experiences to find solutions.

G+D Ethiopia's Managing Director, Beide Worku, stated, "We take great pride in serving as a trusted partner to governments and institutions, aiding them in shaping their future according to their unique requirements. With a longstanding tradition of investing in and remaining dedicated to our customers' long-term success, our approach to Ethiopia is a natural extension of this tradition. We are immensely proud to be able to contribute to the promising future of this country."

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



The Ethiopian Herald

Established in 1943

Published daily except Mondays
By The Ethiopian Press Agency

Office of the CEO
Tel. 011-126-42-22
Fax. 251-011-156-98-62
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Advertisement and Dist.
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The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy

Game-changing milestone: Avocado export within green legacy initiatives

BY MEKONNE N SOLOMON

Avocado's origin can be traced to Mexico, where this fruit has been cultivated and consumed as early as 5000 B.C. Historically Mexico has also been the main player in the avocado export market. However, in the past 20 years, multiple emerging economies have been successful in growing avocados for the export industry. At the current moment, about 70% of the exported volumes of avocados at global level are originated in Latin America, where Mexico, Peru and Chile lead the way with respective market shares of 59%, 12% and 9% for brief historical account avocado is perceived as secretive edible plants by many traditions, customs and folkway. Over time, avocado has no longer been considered as an exotic or secretive edible fruit but has become a part of the everyday diet due to the growing demand of people for natural products. That is why the production of avocado and its export in the global market is continuously rising in the last decades.

This fruit, avocado, has got a large market and is sold as a fresh edible plant, processed food like guacamole, frozen, paste, etc. or oil. Since it is high in nutrients, consumers started excluding processed foods such as instant noodles and pizza and started incorporating healthy foods such as avocados.

In recent years, many consumers have been opting for snacks referred to as superfoods, including high levels of mono-saturated fat, potassium, fibre, folate, essential vitamins, and minerals. Hence, manufacturers are innovating existing avocado-based snacks to relaunch them in different flavours for consumers. The new line of avocado appetisers is available in different flavour in West Europe, Middle east and Latin America. Such innovations have provided consumers with options to choose according to their tastes and preferences, which eventually enhance market to grow over the years.

The popularity of fresh avocados among consumers basically attributed to the growing consumption of fresh foods and readily product availability. The high fibre content of fresh form helps with digestion, prevents constipation, maintains the health of the gastrointestinal tract, and reduces the risk of cancer. In addition to this avocado also has an important share in the cosmetics industry and beauty product factory like soaps, face creams and shampoos. Although processed avocados are gaining popularity, avocados are mainly eaten in their fresh form. The expansion of urbanization, the rising disposable income levels and changing lifestyles of people are also among the major factors driving the growth of avocado sector.

According to United Nation Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) report (2021) the volume of global avocado



production was grown from 2.2 million tons in 1994 to 7.4 million tons in 2019. United State is the top producer of Avocado which accounts 71.6% of the Global average annual production. Europe; Asia, Africa and other continents constitute about 2.1%, 12.1% 12.6% and 1.5% respectively.

Production of Avocado in African countries is dramatically rising in recent time. According to same report (FAO, 2021) volume of avocado production in Africa is estimated to be 250,000 tons in 1994 and reached 750,000 tons in 2019. Kenya has by far the highest production of avocado in Africa (almost 365,000 tonnes in 2019). Ethiopia (100,400 tone) Malawi (92,100 tone) and South Africa (92050 tone) have production followed by Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Morocco and Cote d'Ivoire less than 80,000 tone.

The largest areas where avocado was harvested in Africa in 2019 were in Kenya with almost 23,300 ha, Ethiopia with almost 21,000 ha, Malawi, South Africa and Cameroon with over 15,000 ha, followed by Republic of the Congo with more than 9000 ha. Lesser areas can be found in Cote d'Ivoire, Morocco, Madagascar and Ghana, while Congo, Zimbabwe and Central African Republic have less the 13,000 ha, and the rest even less.

Until 2011 the amount of world avocado imports was increasing steadily, but without large increases, at an average annual rate of 10.7% for the period from 1980 to 2011; however, between 2012 and 2019 imports increased, leaving the average annual yield at 15.3%. Global demand for avocados

has exhibited consistent growth. The observatory of Economic Complexity, a tool for visualizing international trade data, reported a notable 15.3% increase in the export value of fresh or dried avocados, rising from USD 6.71 billion in 2020 to USD 7.73 billion in 2021.

Europe and Asian countries, led by China, have emerged as prominent markets, prompting African producers, notably Kenya and South Africa, to actively engage in these burgeoning markets, with South Africa, once Africa's largest exporter, signing an export agreement with China recently.

Based on the latest Food and Agriculture Organisation of United Nations' (FAO) data, the largest exporter of avocados in Africa is South Africa, followed by Kenya. Lesser exporters are Morocco, United Republic of Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Cote d'Ivoire.

According to the newest International Trade Centre data, Avocados, (fresh or dried) from Africa have currently the biggest market in The Netherlands, followed by France, Spain, United Kingdom, Germany, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

The Netherlands, France and United Kingdom are also the markets with the greatest potential for Africa's exports of avocados. The Netherlands show the largest absolute difference between potential and actual exports in the value terms, leaving room to realize additional exports worth \$88.1 mln. Our neighbouring country Kenya has successfully made its avocado exports to Asia, tapping into a promising more than 1.4 billion consumer market.

Kenya has been steadily emerging as a global player in avocado supply, earning recognition from the UN FAO as one of the top 6 leading avocado exporting nations. Asian countries, led by China, have emerged as prominent markets, prompting African producers, notably Kenya and South Africa.

Despite Ethiopia has tremendous potential for exporting of avocado, the country remains behind many African countries in terms of avocado export (14th rank). The cost of transporting avocado to Europe is the main challenge faced by commercial and small growers.

Very recently, effort has been made to assess the feasibility of exporting avocado through sea via Djibouti Port. The Avocado fruit that has been grown in the northern Ethiopia, which amounts 25 tones were shipped via the new Ethiopia-Djibouti-Europe cool logistics corridor both by train to the Port of Djibouti, then shipped to Italy and transported to the UK by truck. The vast majority of the Global GAP-certified fruit has been sold to two leading importers who mainly serve UK retailers, with volumes being offered to customers in Belgium and the Netherlands.

This successful test with avocados creates a whole new perspective for a series of Ethiopian products that qualify for export to Europe. The main market for Ethiopian avocados is expected to be found in the Netherlands, UK, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates. These countries are expected to be able to absorb a total of 570.507 tons of avocado by 2027 of which the Netherlands has the largest share While the Netherlands' consumption rates are not among the highest in Europe, the country stands out for the largest market size among the studied countries. The Netherlands is in fact the world's second largest importer and re-exports about 80% of the product to other European countries (CBS, 2017).

Ethiopia has for the first time Shared National Vision for the protagonist of green economy. If achieved, this ambitious vision will result in a more widely green country with multifunctional carbon-neutral and middle-income economy

Today, the green legacy initiatives produced an unprecedented growth in fruits Agro Forestry system in Ethiopia. Planting avocado of large number of seedlings created green hub in different agro ecological corridor of Ethiopia. Following an extensive period of engagement and consultation about the role of green legacy and avocado plantation in Ethiopia, it is clear that there is a strong farmers' appetite for more avocado trees plantation as well as a very strong appreciation of the positive impact avocado can have in enhancing farmers' and commercial operators' incomes through domestic and global trade.

Mekonnen Solomon is a Horticulture Export Coordinator at MoA.

Art & Culture

International cultural exchanges for promoting peace, understanding

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

Nordic Black theatre from Oslo Nolak theatre is a self-run theatre foundation established in 1992. According to Ethiopian News Agency (ENA) The Nordic Black Theatre has recently visited Ethiopia to show its splendid performances and share professional experiences with its counterparts in the country. Follow up report by the same news agency said that, the group has staged performances and presented shows that were successful and its stay was fruitful in exploring ways to collaborate with local artists and foster cultural exchange.

“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.” the Managing Director and Tour Manager Jarl Solberg was reported as saying by the news agency.

Ethiopia has hosted a number of foreign cultural groups in the past while Ethiopian artists had the opportunity to visit many countries across the world in their bid to familiarize Ethiopian arts and culture to foreign audiences. This two-way exchange of experiences were taking place more regularly in the past than they are now. The development of communication technology has apparently discouraged this kind of cultural exchanges whereby the artists of one country were physically present in another country to display their shows.

The magic of high-tech communication has made it possible for people anywhere in the world to learn distant cultures and artistic events in the comforts of their waiting rooms; although live performances are more important and more impactful than watching pictures of such events. The difference between the two is similar to the one between illusion and reality.

More than 30 years ago, the first and biggest cultural troupe was formed in Ethiopia and launched a marathon musical and dance journey to many foreign countries with the sole idea of promoting people-to-people cultural exchanges with the hope of promoting peace and avoiding conflicts. “In March of 1987, one of the greatest exhibitions Ethiopian music to ever take place kicked off to go on a whirlwind tour of 60 cities around the world in 118 days. It was to be a tour de force of great impact. But there was more to its story than just the art...the music and dance troupe that was known in Amharic as “Hizb Le hizb” (People to People), was a 54 person strong ensemble of standout Ethiopian musicians and performers...”

Although Ethiopian artists are famous for staging performances in foreign countries, both within and outside Africa with the

objective of promoting African art and culture, there has never been a repeat of the 1987 grand tour of performers. However, small scale cultural tours and performances have taken place within the continent after that historic moment.

Sadly enough, Ethiopian stage performers have seldom visited foreign countries with a few exceptions. Ethiopian artists were present at the Dakar African Art Festival in 1966 under the auspices of UNESCO in which some 45 African countries have taken part. The other big cultural event is the world Festival of Black arts which is a month-long cultural and artistic festival that takes place in Africa.

It is a bit sad to realize that the old style forms of cultural exchanges have given way to the second kind of high tech media and that live performances are rare these days. This is occurring at a time when the word is facing the dangers of conflicts and misunderstandings that largely emanate from ignorance of other cultures and value systems and the prevailing global tendency for each country to look inwards to its cultures and values and ignoring the people next door.

The major cause of wars or conflicts in general is considered to be the lack of mutual understanding among different peoples or the spread of distorted pictures of different cultures and values that lead to wrong perceptions ultimately leading to hostility as a precursor to conflicts. That is why many people often say that conflicts start in the minds of people and then translate into belligerent attitudes that finally lead to active wars.

The opposite is also true. The more people of different cultures and values understand one another, the more they form positive attitudes in their minds and overcome hostile perceptions that are often formed by social media these days. This is all the more important in our time and age which has become exceptionally dangerous because of social media aggression that often distort the facts and spread false information that fan the flames of wars. As the saying goes, the truth becomes the first casualty during these times.

There are many ways of promoting positive values and overcome negative propaganda that causes conflicts among people or countries. And the best way to promote the values of peace and mutual understanding is through cultural and artistic exchanges between peoples who have different cultural values that remain unknown and intentionally or unintentionally cause disagreements and conflicts that could be prevented easily through regular cultural exchanges.

Cultural groups and more particularly theatre troupes, should make their presence felt in global artistic exchanges for many reasons. Theatre is an art form that is visual and appealing to mass audiences because it conveys vivid ideas through human

movements and dialogues. As such, it is easier to convey your message through drama than through music or dance that requires more sophisticated knowledge of the arts and the ability to interpret the messages.

Theatre or drama can be understood and more appreciated and the message is readily grasped thanks to the vivid quality of this art form. “Popular Theatre is theatre which speaks to ordinary people in their own language or idiom and deals with issues that are relevant to them.. It also concentrates on awakening the capacity of those involved to participate, to make their own decisions and to organize themselves for common actions.” We can add by saying that theatre can also promote understanding among people from different cultures and value systems.

Unfortunately, foreign theatre troupes rarely visit Ethiopia or display their works in Ethiopia for many reasons. The first barrier is language. The Ethiopian theatre audience cannot see and appreciate foreign plays simply because of language barrier. It may be a weird experience what it feels when you go to see a play in a language that you do not understand at least in part. One cannot of course see plays without understanding the language in which the dialogues are expressed, that is to say without understanding what the characters are saying. Dialogue could be said to be the soul of a play. Although theatre is said to be a visual art, you cannot understand what plays are about without listening to the actors’ dialogues.

In Ethiopia, there are many people who understand English although the level of English comprehension is said to have gone down in the last few years. Many members of the young generation in particular are proficient in English as many of them have decent education in addition to the many hours they spend browsing social media, watching movies and reading books that can improve their command of the English language.

Unfortunately, few of them go to the theatres to see plays even in Amharic. Watching a play is not as easy as reading a book in the comfort of our home. Seeing a play is an emotional as well as a physical engagement with the story, the characters and what they say from beginning to last. Attending live performances invites the audience to be engaged both in the story as well as share the feelings of the performing actors and then interpret the meaning of the messages thus conveyed.

It is however possible to make silent plays or mimes as they are called, “to tell a story effectively without words is a difficult task indeed. It is the art of narration or expression through body movement. Silent plays are not however as effective as silent films.

“Silent film is a film with no synchronized recorded sound or more generally with no audible dialogue” On the contrary, sound

movies can have much less movement and more dialogue because it is possible to tell the story through the characters’ dialogues whereas the absence of movement kills silent dramas because they are based on movement.

A play without dialogue cannot be enjoyable like silent films because gestures in those films are fast moving, more expressive and more understandable because movement acts like language. Silent plays or mimes cannot be as effective as silent movies for the simple reason that they do not create the same dramatic effects. Silent films were seen long before sound was introduced. That may be the reason why mimes are not popular these days as they were in the past. The interaction between the dramatists and the audience is what makes watching a play such an engaging experience. And language is the main dynamic that makes such an interaction possible.

In the final analysis, and despite the different attributes of the arts, what is important is that they can all be used to promote world peace, mutual understanding among various communities and thereby forge a common understanding of the most burning issues that are agitating our world these days. Hostile propaganda promoted by social media and inflammatory speeches or remarks made by politicians on a daily basis is tearing the fabric of societies apart leading to conflicts and bloodsheds in the world in general and in Africa in particular.

The world has more politicians and agitators than engineers and scientists and less artists and cultural personalities who could otherwise serve as a balancing force against aggressive and belligerent media rhetoric. To put the issue in a different perspective, Africa has for instance many artists and cultural personalities of world renown but they are not visible these days because they are shadowed by the vociferous voices of politicians that tend to make them invisible or inaudible.

The situation is even worse at grassroots level where poverty is rampant in most African communities and the struggle and daily hassle for survival diverts the communities from artistic pursuits as they are engaged in the daily war for the survival of the fittest. Nevertheless, there are also artists, although few in numbers who are struggling to make the human condition in Africa a lit bit tolerable or bearable by sharing their experiences through the theatre, music, dance, literature and other art forms.

In order to make up for the deficit of artistic interest across the continent, African artists should therefore work together with their counterparts from other countries and other continents. Artists in all countries share the common cause of serving the people in all places and situation to rally for peace, and build a better world free from the enormous greed, cynicism and violence that are rocking the world at this very moment.

Indepth

Ethiopia's quest for access to sea port

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

Ethiopia is one of the forty-four landlocked countries of the world but among the largest countries in terms of population. Ethiopia's position however is such that it is just adjacent to a long sea that given its proximity to the sea and the kind of good relations it enjoys with its neighbors it would not take a lot to come to an agreement to share access to a sea port with these countries. The countries of the Horn of Africa many experts say would be a big economic bloc if they pulled their resources together and collaborated in a huge economy rather than stand individually and fail to exploit all the potential they have.

Ethiopia is a country of more than 120 million people most of which are young below the age of thirty-five. This is a huge economic potential asset and with the current projection it could probably double in about twenty years. At the same time the economy has been experiencing steady growth during the past several years and with the current pace and trajectory its GDP could double soon becoming one of the largest economies in Africa. The bottom line is that such a country can hardly afford to be 'suffocated' from its natural growth as things stand today by being landlocked because otherwise the consequences could be an issue for the stability of the entire region. This is because if the economy cannot sustain the increasing population, there could be a push factor from the confines of the country to leave and migrate. Today we see the pressure of population migration from Africa to the outside world creating serious problems to the host countries.

If Ethiopia has access to a sea port, the growth of the economy would be stimulated to match with the growth of the population and the risks of migration are destined to remain low. Any commercial arrangement of access to sea to Ethiopia would be beneficial to the granting state as well. Ethiopia is requesting access to see from its neighbors on the basis of give and take.

Ethiopia's continuous growth is destined to be hampered by the need to access a sea outlet because depending on a single port such as Djibouti that serves as the heart of the country can raise certain issues. Djibouti is a country of brothers and sisters and Ethiopia's relations with it are the closest possible with a neighbor and the importance of this port to the economy of Ethiopia is vital. However, Ethiopia in the long run cannot rely merely on such an arrangement because the cost of the port and the turnover of the imports and exports of the country can hardly be accommodated there keeping the momentum of economic growth. And if the growth of the economy of the country cannot match the growth of the population, the pressure in the country could be hard to control.

Many experts prospect that with the costs of the port reaching unsustainable ceilings the economy would not be able to cope with

them. This would constrain the growth of the economy and this in turn would reflect on the work force of the country because if the economy does not continue to grow side by side with the population growth, what follow becomes high rates of unemployment and consequent economic crisis. Whenever there is economic crisis the first thing that happens is for the unemployed population to try and leave the country and migrate in search of better prospects.

A big country such as Ethiopia with an enormous population needs space to expand its economy to match such population pressure and one of the key elements in this equation is the existence of a free sea port that can facilitate its commercial relations with its trading partners all over the world. Ethiopia's export is bound to increase because it is bound to be industrialized and with its relatively cheap labor, the products to be exported are going to be attractive to importers. Now that it has joined the BRICS economic group Ethiopia is also bound to trade more at preferential terms with these economic giants.

Ethiopia needs to exchange a lot of things with its neighbors and such exchange of trade is bound to benefit all. There are things that these neighbors can export to Ethiopia and others which they import from it. Closer ties that call for more integration is the formula of the future because the current economic scenario of the world demands that smaller economies continue to integrate more so that they can cope better with the pressure of the bigger economies.

When a few weeks ago the Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed suggested that Ethiopia is presenting its bid for access to sea and that its neighbors be advised to consider such 'a give and take' deal with Ethiopia, many people were heard prejudging the premier's suggestion as a kind of 'beating the drums of war' against its neighbors. Accordingly, the premier dismissed these allegations as unfounded and that nothing is further to the truth than such an assumption. The idea was proposed to the benefit of the countries that are neighbors to Ethiopia and have full control of the Red Sea ports.

If we can agree that there are undeniable economic imperatives for Ethiopia to have access to a port and cannot afford to be landlocked with a variety of solutions right near its border, the question then must be under what terms could there be such an agreement with a neighbor that has an outlet to the sea.

In the past several days there have been a series of seminars and discussions on this issue and the premier's suggestions have sparked relentless discussions among intellectuals. The practices of other landlocked countries which managed to fix a deal with their neighbors have been mentioned by many scholars and it is only the good will that can create an atmosphere of cooperation that would benefit both the country with the port and the land locked

country such as Ethiopia. Mention has been made of Saudi Arabia and Jordan which reached land swapping agreement that enabled Jordan to own a port. Similarly, Angola got a port from Congo following the agreement in 1988. There are also international conventions which Ethiopia has ratified that would help the country to access sea through diplomacy and international law.

Ethiopia's bid for a sea port is also stimulated by the fact that it once had access to sea and even had two ports before historical developments that changed the geography of the area. Today, Ethiopia is landlocked and the negative consequences of such a situation are unfathomable and even very dangerous to the very neighbors with whom it has to live together. Any crisis in Ethiopia be it economic or political, is bound to spill over to its neighbors not only near ones but also those that are more distant. We know today that people move a lot and economic constraints are among the leading causes of migration besides conflicts and drought and other climatic aberrations.

A commercial arrangement for the use of a port for Ethiopia cannot be beyond the reach of these countries benefiting from long spaces of land that are linked to the sea. An economic arrangement with give and take can be very beneficial to both nations, the one that grants the access to sea and the one that receives the grant based on agreed terms. What is at play must be very beneficial to both entities. The Ethiopian premier was heard suggesting that Ethiopia can share its vast economic potential with its neighbors such as shares in the power production of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, the largest in Africa or in the Ethiopian Airlines, the biggest African airways or Ethio telecom, one of the biggest telecom plants or any other possible economic asset that could be of strategic importance for the growth of the country that grants a part of its sea port to Ethiopia. If the formula is one of give and take, the first prerequisite is the willingness to negotiate on trade deals with the country with the sea port.

Ethiopia is searching for a win-win solution to this prospective arrangement when it presents the suggestion. Leaving the things as they are now could in the future constitute a time bomb because Ethiopia's economic growth may be stifled by the absence of a sea port and that could result in an unpredictable sequence of results creating instability and economic crisis. What Ethiopia suggests to its neighbors is let us grow together each benefiting from what we can have in excess and could be shared.

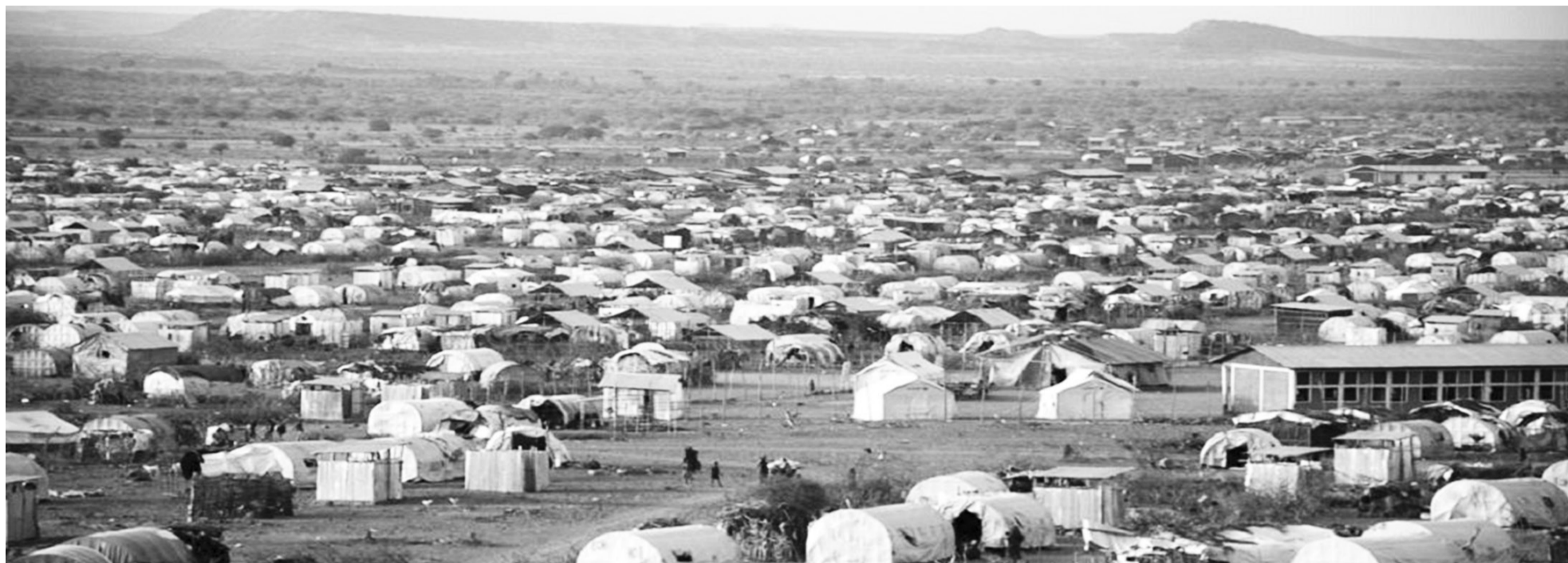
Ethiopia's request for access to sea does not come out of the blue but based on deep and serious considerations that can be matched by benefits to both parties. It is also because there is a potential issue that keeping things as they are today could be source of a potential dispute in the not too distant future. Some sort of economic

integration would be of benefit to all those that are involved in such a deal. Some say keeping the monopoly of a sea port without sharing it with neighbors would probably be tantamount to keeping the flow of Transboundary Rivers to downstream countries. Be that as it may, Ethiopia's borders to the Red Sea are so close that being deprived of its benefits just because of political miscalculations would hurt both countries instead of using them together for the advantage of both countries based on a fresh commercial and political arrangement. It takes only a bit of deep reflection and seeing all sides of the issue and reach an agreement as several other landlocked countries have managed to do. The question is if others have done it successfully, why cannot we do it?

It is good to remember and stress that when the Ethiopian premier launched this proposal a few weeks ago, he has also made it clear that this is not an aggressive move and that Ethiopia has no intention of forcing its way for its wishes and that all those who have been trying to accuse Ethiopia of a potential for aggression are wrong. He said Ethiopia is respectful of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its neighbors and that if it presents an interest in a sea port it is based on sheer economic arrangements that are bound to benefit all the parties involved in any eventual deal. After all he said if Ethiopia is interested in a port on the Red Sea which is very near its territory, what could be said of the various super powers which have even gone to the extent of building a base on the Red Sea coast? Ethiopia is for better reasons interested in whatever happens on the Red Sea because its economy totally relies on this route and hence it is a matter of to be or not to be when it comes to access to sea for Ethiopia. A country as big as Ethiopia cannot just be brushed aside when it makes certain reasonable proposals that would benefit not only the neighboring countries but also beyond because today we live in an interconnected world and conditions in a certain country are bound to affect others even far away.

Ethiopia is also a country that is intricately linked to the entire continent not only in terms of being the seat of the African Union and other important organizations but also in terms of its being the gate way for Africa and land of origins. Its historic significance for the continent in terms of being its standard bearer of independence and freedom also underlines its being a key country in Africa. Ethiopia's bid for African integration and eventually unity begins with more regional integration and one of the conditions of such integration is the one that can easily be fixed regarding the sharing of access to sea in exchange for other benefits from Ethiopia. If politicians have good insight they can easily convince their constituencies for some sort of arrangement that can bring this Ethiopian request to a pleasant conclusion benefiting all parties involved to a great extent.

Law & Politics



Addressing refugee crisis in the Horn

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

IGAD, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development can lead efforts to address the refugee crisis in the Horn of Africa. It is essential for IGAD to receive worldwide support to cope up with the staggering refugee crisis in the region. International support is necessary to ensure the well-being and protection of individuals who have been forced to leave their homes owing to manmade and natural conflict.

In fact the region is home to a large number of refugees who have fled their homes due to conflict, violence, persecution and other related aspects. These refugees face numerous challenges, including limited access to basic services such as food, water, and shelter. And, countries are trying too hard to meet the growing financial and material supports refugees do demand.

Finding durable solutions for refugees is a key step in addressing the crisis. This entails not only providing immediate humanitarian assistance but also addressing the underlying causes of displacement. The bloc will have the necessary tools to provide vital services like healthcare, education, and shelter to vulnerable individuals with the help of the international community.

Supporting IGAD in tackling the refugee crisis also contributes to regional stability and security. When refugees are provided with the necessary assistance and opportunities, it reduces the risk of tensions and conflicts within and between nations. By addressing the root causes of displacement, the regional bloc can lead collective efforts to create conducive to peace and stability in the Horn of Africa.

Refugees have the potential to be active contributors to the societies that host them. Many possess valuable skills, experiences, and knowledge that can benefit both the refugees and the host communities.

When refugees are given the necessary assistance and opportunities, they can contribute to society. Refugees are often forced to flee their homes due to conflict, persecution, or other forms of violence.

This displacement not only affects the refugees but also has implications for the host communities.

The refugee crisis can lead to tensions and conflicts between different communities. However, by providing support to IGAD, we can help to promote social cohesion. This can be achieved through initiatives that encourage interaction, dialogue, and mutual understanding between refugees and host communities.

Refugees often face numerous challenges including limited access to basic necessities and exposure to dangerous living conditions. By rallying behind IGAD, nations can collectively work towards improving their quality of life and ensuring their safety. The region is also hosting growing number of refugees displaced from the regional countries. More than 43 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance across Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia in 2023, 32 million of whom are acutely food insecure, according to information obtained from United Nations Population Fund.

The devastation wrought by the 2020-2023 droughts will be felt for years. More than 2.7 million people have been displaced across the three countries, and more than 13 million livestock have died – destroying not only livelihoods but an entire way of life.

Recent rains have brought some relief to many areas, but they also bring new threats, including fresh displacement and increased risks of disease, livestock loss and crop damage. Further floods are expected later this year.

Women and girls face a triple burden of finding ways to survive, care for their family and protect themselves from sexual violence. They are forced to shoulder the burden of extreme weather events driven by a climate crisis that is not of their making.

In 2023, an estimated 839,530 pregnant women across drought-affected areas of the Horn of Africa will struggle to access maternal health services, including antenatal, delivery, postnatal, and emergency and obstetric newborn care. Health care workers across the region report challenges and

shortages of equipment.

Malnutrition among pregnant and breastfeeding women is high – increasing their risk of severe, if not fatal, pregnancy complications.

Protection risks for women and girls have worsened, with soaring rates of gender-based violence, including rape, in drought-affected areas. Negative coping mechanisms, female genital mutilation and child marriage have all risen, and girls are dropping out of school at an accelerating rate.

In this regard, worldwide support for IGAD can contribute to the development of policies and initiatives that focus on long-term solutions for the refugee crisis. This may involve advocating for peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and stability in the affected regions.

Providing worldwide support to IGAD in tackling the refugee crisis is essential for promoting regional stability and security. When refugees are given the necessary assistance and opportunities, they can become active contributors to the societies that host them.

By pooling together financial, technical, and logistical support, the international community can maximize its impact in addressing the refugee crisis. This collaborative approach ensures that resources are allocated where they are most needed.

By providing financial support, countries and organizations can assist IGAD in meeting the immediate needs of the refugees. These funds can be used for essential supplies such as food, water, and medicines, as well as for building infrastructure to accommodate the increasing number of displaced people.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) announced that about 4.5 million refugees require international support.

In his opening remark on the Annual Ministerial Stock-taking Meeting of the IGAD Support Platform and the Implementation of the Plan of Action on the

Nairobi Declaration, IGAD Head of Social Development Unit, Mohamed Elduma said that the region is hosting 13 million internally displaced peoples and 4.5 million refugees while the number is still growing.

Conflicts, climate changes, and natural disasters are causing huge displacement in the region, he noted.

He called on member States of the regional bloc to strengthen their contribution to the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and refugees' program as the magnitude of international support is decreasing.

He also appreciated IGAD member states contribution and collective measures on the implementation of initiatives for the benefit of refugees.

“Much has been done, more needs to be done. I encourage all to do utmost” to make displaced peoples able to live normal life and be productive, he remarked.

United Nations High Commissioner Refugees (UNHCR) representative to Ethiopia, Andrew Mbogori also urged IGAD member states and its partners to show better solidarity with refugees.

Countries like Ethiopia, Chad, Djibouti, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Uganda and Zambia piloted comprehensive refugee response framework leading important policy reforms and innovative programme, he mentioned.

Deputy Director of the Ethiopian Refugees and Returnees Service, Mulualem Desta on his part said that Ethiopia is implementing supportive initiatives to the Nairobi Declaration.

Refugees are included in the sixth serious of education sector development plan and education management system which have been adopted by the government recently, he remarked.

He also urged all countries signed the Nairobi Declaration to take same measures in achieving common goal of durable solutions for refugees. Ethiopia is a home of nearly one million refugees, according to Mulualem.

Women in Focus

‘Never start business to make money but to make a difference’: *Helen Suraphel*

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

Helen Suraphel is co-founder and Managing Director of YeSu event organizer which is a private limited company that works on event organizing, consultancy, stationery, and Kids Activity Class or DIY. She was born in Addis Ababa and raised with her older siblings.

She went to Armenian community school from KG to grade 6 and joined Ledita catholic cathedral school from grade seven to 12. Helen pursued her BA degree in International Economics and Trade from the University of Huzhou, in Zhejiang Province, China. Currently, she is attending her MA degree in Project management at Unity University.

When she was in high school, she used to participate in extracurricular activities such as football club, and anti-AIDS club, where she visited orphan children and those living with the virus. Later, she mobilized money from families and relatives which and donated to muddy charity Association.

During her stay in China, she worked with university’s Environment club, which allowed her to get to know the policies and laws regarding environment protection and institutes responsible for it. She also had the opportunity to closely work with international students and the University administration.

The following is her stay with *The Ethiopian Herald* where she talked about her life experience, career journey as well as her accomplishment. Enjoy reading!

Can you walk us through your career journey?

Over the four years in China, I did different part time jobs besides my full-time classes. I worked as an English teacher for children and facilitated creativity class or DIY (Do it yourself) classes. I was coaching children to make different jewelry such as necklaces, earrings, bracelets, and key holders from Amber Resin, for Chinese students.

Upon returning to Ethiopia after my graduation, I worked with the Network of Ethiopian Women’s Association as an intern for six months. Then I joined Rened Consultancy trading PLC where we worked on business processes. Later, I was employed by the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia as bank front worked with the bank for four months.

Due to my desire to start my own business, I left CBE and founded YeSu event organizer’s PLC with my brother. YeSu works on event organizing, consultancy, stationery, and kids activity class or DIY.

Organizing and managing international & local events is not an easy task. So, as a young woman, what was the toughest challenge that you encountered and what

did you learn from it?

As a young Ethiopian woman with no prior experience of running a business was not easy at all. My biggest challenge was managing people because people have different backgrounds, interests, and priorities. In addition, starting a new business was never easy because I was not sure whether it would succeed or fail, even close family members and friends were not sure that I would make it.

The cumulative effect of all these have made me a better person and stronger than before. I also developed life skills that enabled me to treat people well which helped me to increase the number of my customers. I remember, I had customers who were not sure of the quality of work I do until I managed to do beyond their expectations, which was very frustrating at the beginning. As the days go by, I was able to refine and improve the work I do which helped me to be committed, persistent and courageous to realize my dream. Thanks to God now I am able to guide and advise startup businesses.

What are the biggest events or conferences that you have so far organized?

As YeSu Event Organizer’s PLC, we worked with an NGO called Kalkidan that was organized by a group of volunteer doctors who were supporting children who need medical care. The group of doctors was mobilizing financial resources by organizing fundraising events. YeSu was approached to organize a fundraising event for Kalkidan. As part of the program, there was a plan to hold race contest for the children from the main post office to Piassa. What made the event difficult was, there was heavy rain and flooding all the way from piassa down to the main post office. As it was very difficult to run in that weather, I had to quickly change plan and came up with indoor games (under a tent) which the kids enjoyed very much.

How did you move forward when women are mostly valued with their appearance/looks than with their thoughts?

I always try to demonstrate that only hard work and perseverance pays back. I also cherish the values I was nurtured with by my parents, do whatever task I am given to the best of my ability and demonstrate that I am able.

Is there any area that you are currently engaged in? If yes, share your experience on that?

I am working with an organization called Options Consultancy Service an International NGO based in Nairobi, works on stopping Female genital Mutilation (FGM). I work as a rapporteur, but I have gained a lot from the discussions and human stories shared during the training. Most of all, making sure that people who have



undergone traumatic experiences need to be supported to overcome anxiety and stress.

I was in Dubai last year for a best diplomatic conference organized in collaboration with the UN, which brought together young people from different countries and disciplines. I was elected as a delegate for Switzerland, which helped to study about Switzerland and explains to the huge gathering at the conference. It was a great experience, where I was able to show my communication talent. In addition, I was able to foster partnership and network with professionals from different countries.

What do you think have contributed to your success?

Well, I give all the credit to my mother (Yelfigne Abegaz Yimam) who is my role model and mentor. It is undeniable that when you have a great mother you become a great person, so I cherish the values I got from my mother which made me who I am today. I would also like to thank her for doing a good job with me.

What is your biggest accomplishment over the years?

While I was in China, I was granted a scholarship from the Zhejiang Provincial government which was a result of my hard work and commitment. That time was a test case for me, I was on my own, out of the country, but with the level of commitment I had I was able to perform very well and make my living by doing part time jobs. I was very happy with what I have accomplished, that exposure has taught me lessons that I am always building on. It has

made me believe in myself.

How do you assess Ethiopia’s progress in organizing international and local events and conferences?

These days, social media is bridging the physical distance and making the world one village. Technology has made it possible and easy to communicate with people far apart in a fraction of a second. We can educate and train ourselves on anything we want to acquire. By the same token, organizing local or international events have become easier using social media, though we need to use it wisely, because it may also have damaging effects if not managed well.

We just need to be smart enough to choose what we want and how to go about it. Unless we know what we exactly want to gain out of it, we may be wasting time. I would say do not be afraid to try out new things and adapt or apply new techniques that will add value to the work you do.

As the saying goes ‘Never start a business just to make money. Start a business to make a difference.’ we have to exert our effort to do best and benefit ourselves as well as the country through businesses.

What piece of advice that you would like to give to our readers?

Stay focused on what you are aiming at in life, be persistent, do not give up when you fall, you learn from your mistakes. If you have a dream, work towards it, act upon your plan, if you do that you are all able to reach wherever you want to be. It is always possible if you put your heart to it.

Society



Great Ethiopian Run: A spectacular sporting event in African capital

BY TEWODROS KASSA

In addition to its significance for physical fitness, sports play a substantial role in bringing people together and working towards a better future. International, regional, and country-level sports tournaments attract numerous spectators and garner significant attention. As a result, sports become a tangible tool for fostering social cohesion and contributing to the improvement of socio-economic activities.

Sports have a unique ability to unite individuals from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and nations. When people come together to support their favorite teams or athletes, they transcend differences and find a common ground through their shared passion for sports. This collective experience creates a sense of belonging and strengthens social bonds, fostering a spirit of unity and cooperation.

Founded in 2001 by the legendary Ethiopian long-distance runner Haile Gebrselassie, the Great Ethiopian Run has become an attractive annual event in the beautiful capital of Africa, Addis Ababa. This annual 10-kilometer road race held in Addis Ababa was began as a small gathering of only 10,000 participants and has now blossomed into a flagship event drawing over 40,000 runners from across the globe. The Great Ethiopian Run is not just a race; it is a colorful and vibrant celebration of sport and unity. The event takes place in November annually.

The race route winds its way through the heart of Addis Ababa. Participants from all walks of life gather at the starting line, eagerly awaiting the sound of the gun. Elite athletes sharing the course with amateur runners, children running alongside senior citizens to partake in the joy of running. The Great Ethiopian Run is famous for its vibrant carnival-like atmosphere. Colorful costumes, traditional Ethiopian attire, and face paint are ubiquitous, creating a spectacle of a sea of colors cascading through the streets of Addis Ababa.

Since its inception, the Great Ethiopian Run has grown into the largest road race in



Africa, attracting participants not only from Ethiopia but also from around the world. The race has not only become a celebration of running but also an important platform for raising awareness about various social issues and charitable causes. One of the most distinctive features of the Great Ethiopian Run is the incredible energy and enthusiasm that permeates the event. With thousands of participants and cheering spectators, the race embodies the spirit of unity and community.

The Great Ethiopian Run is more than just a race; it is also an event where Ethiopians reflect their culture, tolerance and unity. It has been contributing a lot in maintaining and promoting peace and unity among Ethiopians.

In its official release, the Great Ethiopian Run organizers stated that this year's Great Ethiopian Run that held in collaboration with UNDP and Ministry of Women echoed the fundraising campaign that will support UNDP's campaign called "Rebuild Her Business".

As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been using its flagship event, the Great Ethiopian Run 10km International, to support people in need in our community. "Running for a Cause" fundraising campaign serves as the platform to collect donations. Last year the

race enabled to raise over 1.6 million birr which made the total fund raised in the last five years to over 7.1 Million birr. This year, the campaign has set a fundraising target of 1 Million Birr. Great Ethiopian Run has supported financially and promoted the work of different organizations working with vulnerable children, women and the elderly. More importantly, in recent years hundreds of thousands of women across the country have lost their jobs and their means of supporting their families. With funds raised through our charity campaign the participants of the race will be helping women to gain back their business.

Italian Ambassador to Ethiopia Agostino Palese, who participated in the race, told local media that the event show marvelous events that align with global issues can be organized in Ethiopia.

"It is a good event that could show that in Ethiopia you could organize marvelous events that could cooperate with any event in the rest of the world. It is a very nice day. A lot of people enjoyed a nice race," he said.

Beyond its athletic significance, the Great Ethiopian Run has had a profound impact on the local community, contributing to health awareness and promoting the importance of physical activity. Additionally, the event has provided a platform for various charitable

initiatives and fundraising efforts. The Great Ethiopian Run stands as a testament to the power of sports in bringing people together and driving positive change. Its unique blend of athleticism, cultural significance, and social impact makes it a truly remarkable event on the global sporting stage. In recent years, the Great Ethiopian Run has also taken charitable activities as part of its goals. The event raises funds for various social causes, supporting initiatives such as education, healthcare, and community development projects. This aspect of the race highlights the spirit of compassion and empathy that runs deep within the Ethiopian people. The race serves as a platform to promote health and fitness, encouraging people to lead an active lifestyle. It inspires individuals, both young and old, to take up running and participate in future editions of the event, paving the way for the next generation of Ethiopian athletes. Running has always been a fundamental part of Ethiopian culture.

For decades, Ethiopians have dominated the global stage in long-distance running, showcasing their unparalleled endurance and tenacity. It is no surprise then that the "Great Ethiopian Run" has become a symbol of national pride and a testament to the nation's rich sporting heritage.

In sum, running the Great Ethiopian Run is not solely about individual achievements; it is about collective triumph. It serves as a reminder of the power of unity, transcending boundaries and divisions. Ethiopians embrace this ethos wholeheartedly, as the race unites people from all regions and backgrounds, fostering a profound sense of national pride and identity. Beyond the captivating spectacle and sense of unity, the Great Ethiopian Run has a more profound impact on the community.

The Great Ethiopian Run continues to evolve and thrive. It has inspired similar races in other parts of Ethiopia, such as the Hawassa Half Marathon and the Mekelle Great Run, fuelling a nationwide running movement. It has also sparked interest from neighboring countries, with events like the Great Ethiopian Run Rwanda taking place to strengthen regional ties through sport.