



# The Ethiopian Herald

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## Ethiopia: Mining investors eyeing int'l market

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA-** Investors engaged in Ethiopia's mining industry have envisaged penetrating international market.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Founder and CEO of World Gem Foundation, Geoffrey Dominy expressed ambition to penetrate international market with Ethiopian Gem product.

However, he said it requires the government's support in facilitating market linkage and raising public awareness about the merits of the mining industry.

"There is so much potential here [in Ethiopia]. It could create revenue not only for investors, but also for the government," he said.

He recommended the government to adopt initiatives that could help

*See Ethiopia: mining ...page 3*



## Ethiopia, Czech Republic to deepen cooperation

### • Premier also meets with Austrian Chancellor

BY STAFF REPORTER

**ADDIS ABABA -** Ethiopia and Czech Republic have vowed to enhance cooperation in the fields of agriculture,

mining and tourism apart from strengthening their existing cooperation in the defense sector.

This was noted when Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) and his Czech Republic

counterpart Petr Fiala met yesterday.

It was learnt Premier Abiy was accorded an official welcoming ceremony at the Office of the

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## Ethiopia shares Green-led industrialization success in UNIDO Conference

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## Ethiopia, UAE to solidify cooperation in BRICS family

### • Express partnership in COP-28

BY BILAL DERSO

**ADDIS ABABA-**Ethiopia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which are set to become full members of the BRICS economic bloc, expressed commitment to utilizing the platform to enhance their all-round relations and cooperation.

The above came at the 52<sup>nd</sup> National Day Anniversary of the UAE here Monday.

In his remark at the occasion, Director-General for Middle East, Asia and Pacific Affairs with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Gebeyehu Ganga revealed

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Can COP28 deliver for cities, climate migrants?

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# News



## Commission says working to curb inflation via creating market linkage

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

**ADDIS ABABA-** Addis Ababa Cooperative Commission disclosed that it is collaborating with manufacturers, development enterprises and consumers cooperative union to establish market connections so as to curb inflation.

Speaking at the discussion forum conducted yesterday by the commission focusing on product supply and market linkages, with industrial owners, importers, consumer cooperatives and unions, Habteyes Diro, Addis Ababa Cooperative Commission Deputy General Director, said that it is working to control inflation by creating market linkages with manufacturers and development institutions.

Industrial owners, importers signed an agreement to create market linkages with consumer cooperatives and unions during the event as the market linkage would ensure the mutual benefit of the owners of the manufacturing industries and the consumer.

As cited in the submitted document which comprises the process of providing products to the city is believed to help stabilize the market and shorten the chain between the consumer and the producer in due course of providing quality products.

As to him, the importance of the marketing linkage is to control the artificial market by connecting the manufacturers of the industry and the consumers as well as maintaining the flow of the product so as to reach out to consumers.

The aim of the marketing network is to make fair utilization of all marketing actors, help the manufacturer get the appropriate price for their products and shorten the unnecessary market chain thereby having a stable market system. In so doing, it is possible to come up with high quality product, he added.

In Addis Ababa city, there are 11 consumer unions, 151 basic cooperatives, 700 product shops, 228 mills and 20 supermarkets. Besides, there are problems in relation to product supply in spite of the presence of manufacturing factories supply to farmers through market linkages, he said.

## Germany pledges support to art's promotion of women's rights

• *Gov't calls women to take lead in advocacy*

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

**ADDIS ABABA-** Germany wants to support artists to contribute to empowering women and girls in their fight against sexual- and gender-based violence (GBV), the country's Ambassador to Ethiopia said.

As part of the international 16 days of activism, the Embassy of Germany and the Ethiopian Human Rights Defenders Centre organized an event recently under the theme: "Youth in Art for Women's Rights" at Goethe-Institut.

In his opening remarks, Germany Ambassador to Ethiopia Stephan Auer stated that the event aims to bring together artists from all arenas to explore together how to artistically approach women's rights. "Artists are one of the most vocal groups in society, and we want to support them to contribute to empowering women and girls in their fight against sexual- and gender-based violence."

Through the voice and works of Ethiopian artists, the Embassy wants to raise the public's awareness of women human rights defenders' movement. "Equality and commitment to women's rights are the heart of Germany's human rights policy. In Ethiopia, we support women's rights organizations to ensure women's rights and gender equality become reality."

Art provides an unlimited space to share messages of human rights resilience, strength and unity against GBV. In this regard, the strong artists will display the strength and resilience of Ethiopian women in the fight against GBV through their works, Ambassador Auer emphasized.

Kalkidan Tesfaye, Advocacy and



Communication senior Officer with the Ethiopian Human Rights Defenders Centre mentioned that the event highlights how youth artists portray women's rights in their works.

The center collaborates with musicians, poets, animators, filmmakers, and visual artists to promote the causes of sexually assaulted women and girls as we assist those affected by unrest and other situations.

So far, the center has formulated and provided training for over 12 Human Rights Defenders Centers in 12 universities that are believed to be vulnerable to instability.

Peace State Minister Taye Denda said at the event that conveying messages through art is significant as it reaches a vast audience in different forms. Campaigning for the rights

of women and children using art is crucial given the fact that they are the major victims of GBV as well as insecurity.

The state minister further noted that women and girls are expected to be in forefront to fight for their rights and take the lion share in sensitizing the society, as they are the most vulnerable groups in the times of unrest and crises. Women's participation in conflict prevention and revolution is also improving from time to time.

The government not only formulates and adopts laws but it is fully committed to ensure women's rights are respected. Human right activists also need to exert their responsibility in advocating women's rights and holding accountable individuals who commit sexual assaults, Taye pleaded.

## Ministry strives to edible oil import substitution

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

**ADDIS ABABA-** The Ministry of Agriculture said that it has been working on increasing oilseeds production to enable the nation cut importing edible oil through supplying local factories with required inputs.

Agriculture State Minister Melese Mekonnen (PhD) told The Ethiopian Herald that Ethiopia has been focusing on increasing oilseed production to substitute edible oil locally.

The sector is one of the government's priority areas in the ten years' flagship programs in the agriculture sector, he indicated.

The objective is to produce inputs for local oil factories thereby cutting edible oil imports, Melese expressed.

According to the State Minister, factories that produce cooking oil have been expanded in the country. Therefore, he said, the government has been working focusing on producing grass pea, sunflower and groundnut to supply these factories with necessary inputs.



Currently, the country is producing grass pea widely though farmers are facing challenges related to market linkage, he mentioned.

He also pledged that his ministry would work together with concerned bodies like the ministries of Trade, Industry and others to address market challenges.

He further said that the government identified ten areas that would be given a special focus in the ten year national flagship program in the agriculture sector.

The country has managed to cover some

one million hectares of land with rice this Ethiopian fiscal year which shows that areas that were not harvesting rice are now cultivating the crop, according to Melese.

Like the wheat initiative, this year Oromia state took great initiatives next to Amhara in rice production as part of the national effort to substituting import, he mentioned.

On the other hand, the country has been exporting avocado and supplying the product to local processors that export it by adding value, he stated.

# News



Geoffrey Dominy



Yeabtsega Zwudu

## Ethiopia: Mining...

gem extractors to make Ethiopian gems available in the international market.

Ethiopian gems are capable of penetrating global market easily because of their unique features and quality, Dominy noted.

He also said that MINTEX expo (which held recently) had created exposure by showcasing mining products.

The expo is also very important to understand how local and foreign companies are striving to develop their businesses in the mining sector, the CEO mentioned.

“Ethiopia, for example, has still untouched potential of opal gems. We need to develop a concerted effort to benefit from this particular sector,” he added.

Addis Ababa Sells Representative of Chinese Company, Di Yuan Ceramics for north Ethiopia and Addis Ababa regions,

Yeabtsega Zewduon his part said that the company is receiving raw materials from Ethiopian miners.

Di Yuan Ceramics has been manufacturing ceramics and construction inputs and satisfying large demand in the country producing 34,000 to 40,000 meter square ceramic per day, he said.

The government of Ethiopia has set directions to enhance the mining sector, so stated Mining State Minister, Million Matewos.

As to him, the government has reformed the sector in consideration of encouraging existing investors and attracting new ones to increase the earnings from the sphere.

However, he indicated that absence of technology and capital are still the major challenges despite the abundant mineral potential.

## Ethiopia, Czech...

Government of the Czech Republic in Prague by Prime Minister of the Czech Republic Petr Fiala.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and First Lady Zinash Tayachew arrived in Prague, Czech Republic for official state visit on Monday night.

It is to be recalled that the Czech Republic's Prime Minister Petr Fiala paid a two day state visit to Ethiopia and the two countries held extensive discussions on expanding bilateral ties in all fronts during the early November 2023.

Earlier, Ethiopia and Austria have agreed to strengthen economic and people to people relations as the leaders of the two nations conferred on the sideline of the 20th UNIDO General Conference in Vienna.

On November 27, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) discussed with the Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer on Ethio-Austria relations, development cooperation and potential areas for strengthened collaboration.

The leaders agreed to widening cooperation areas and consolidating the existing relations. After the discussion, Abiy posted on social media that he is grateful to Chancellor Karl Nehammer for the fruitful exchanges.

“Ethio-Austria relations are over a century old with current relations enhanced by robust development cooperation. We aim to build on our existing relations gearing partnerships towards economic cooperation,” he wrote.

Elaborating about the discussion to the media, Government Communication Service (GCS) Minister Legese Tulu (PhD) disclosed that Abiy used the opportunity to call on Austrian investors to engage in Ethiopia in various areas as the country is striving to achieve a multi-sectoral

development.

The Austrian Chancellor on his part expressed his interest in which Austrian investors engaged in Ethiopia in the areas of agricultural development, mining and infrastructure mainly in road and railway projects, the Minister stated.

The Chancellor also conveyed his country's interest on consolidating the longstanding bilateral ties and strengthening people to people relations between the two nations, he said.

The Austrian government has successful experiences in tourism and agricultural development. Completing economic revision in the past three years, the country is striving to mobilize technical and financial support to achieve its homegrown economic development agenda, he added.

Therefore, Legese noted that the discussion with the Austrian Chancellor also aimed at drawing development lessons and strengthening cooperation with the country.

Meanwhile, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) State Minister Ambassador Mesganu Arega held talks with the World Special Representative of the Austrian Chancellor, Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal.

The information obtained from the MoFA showed that the discussion focused on bilateral ties, economic opportunities and regional developments of mutual importance.

Ambassador Mesganu said the diplomatic ties between Ethiopia and Austria has been catalyzed to be sustained and deepened.

Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal on his part expressed Austria's long-term commitment to the relation it has with Ethiopia and shared his keenness to cooperate in areas such as Mining, Renewable Energy and Agriculture animal husbandry and poultry.

## Ethiopia shares Green-led industrialization success in UNIDO Conference

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

**ADDIS ABABA** – Ethiopia has shared its best green-focused industrialization practices at the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) stage, the Prime Minister Office said.

Office Press Secretary Billene Seyoum stated that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) shared Ethiopia's green legacy industrialization success, which embraces renewable energy strategy and policy frameworks, in the UNIDO's 20th General Conference.

According to Billene, the Premier also highlighted the country's remarkable industrialization progress that has created an enabling environment for investment and reformed the macroeconomic agenda. This success has helped to accelerate Ethiopia's industrial development and biodiversity sectors in the last five years.

“The PM has emphasized that Ethiopia's home-grown reform agenda identified agriculture, manufacturing, ICT, mining and tourism sectors as priorities that push the national economy the way forward.”

The press secretary further noted that the

conference helps Ethiopia to share and promotes the success of its green growth development strategy in bringing holistic change and progress. Besides, Abiy underlined the inclusion of the community in various sectors to ensure sustainable development and the benefit of the public. “The country has been cherished recognition for its greatest achievement on crops import and export transition.”

At the sidelines of the conference, the Premier reportedly held a discussion with his Austrian counterpart Karl Nehammer on the ways to further strengthen the two countries' bilateral diplomatic and historic people-to-people ties. Similarly, the leaders exchanged views on ways Austrian investors to engage in Ethiopia's Agriculture, infrastructure development, mining and railway sectors among others.

Ethiopia is among few countries undertaking various policy reforms, which are vehicles to ensuring food safety, reducing unemployment, and flourishing industry-led development and clean energy accessibility.

During the occasion, the Premier called on developed countries to enlarge their financial support as well as technology transfer to Africa.

## Ethiopia, UAE...

Ethiopia's keenness to employ the bloc to keep the thriving relations with the UAE.

According to the director, the two countries' accession to the economic bloc would avail a great opportunity to both parties to boost relations in social, economic and political spheres.

Ambassador Gebeyehu further expressed Ethiopia's deep admiration and appreciation for the UAE's remarkable achievement and strong bond between the two nations. “The UAE National Day Marks the historic union of the seven Emirates and the birth of a nation that exemplifies progress, unity, and prosperity.”

According to the diplomat, the Ethio-UAE bilateral ties are being consolidated and the visit of high-ranking government officials has paved the way for further cooperation. “In this regard, the recent visit of the UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan has marked a significant milestone in the bilateral relations between the two sisterly countries. The discussions, the signed agreements and MoUs, and commitments made during the visit reflect the shared aspirations for progress, mutual cooperation, and long-term partnership.”

Ethiopia also congratulated the UAE for hosting the upcoming 28th edition of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP-28) and expressed its desire to make a meaningful participation in the summit. Ethiopia will also look forward to working closely with the UAE on the green development and climate change arena.

The UAE has consistently demonstrated its commitment to humanitarian efforts, providing aid and support to countries in need, including Ethiopia during times of difficulties. This generosity has undoubtedly strengthened the ties between the two nations and fostered a spirit of unity and cooperation.

He said, “The UAE has become the second home for many Ethiopians, who have found

tremendous opportunities for employment and growth. The UAE's welcoming nature and inclusive policies have provided a safe and prosperous environment for Ethiopians, allowing them to contribute to the nation's progress while preserving their own cultural heritage.”

Together, governments of Ethiopia and the UAE can build bridges of collaboration and strengthen partnership to facilitate progress not only for the two nations but also for the entire region, the director general remarked.

UAE Ambassador to Ethiopia Mohammed Salem Al Rashidi said on his part that the two countries' accession to the BRICS family is of paramount importance to boost their relations in social, economic and political spheres.

Ambassador Mohammed indicated the Ethio-UAE diplomatic relations, which was formalized by his country's opening of its Embassy in Addis Ababa in 2010, has been evolving at bilateral, regional and international domains.

“The UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan's recent visit to Ethiopia is the manifestation of the two countries strong bond whereby various MoUs, which helped to consolidate the multifaceted ties, were concluded.”

Noting climate is one of the issues the UAE government placed great emphasis in the Year of Sustainability 2023, the ambassador expressed his country's readiness to the successful conduct of the COP-28.

Ethiopia and the UAE have a long-standing relation that can be traced back to 1973 and ever since, the political, economic and people-to-people ties have been getting stronger.

The UAE celebrates its national day on December 2, marking the anniversary of the establishment of the Union in 1971 to unify the seven emirates as one united and prosperous country.

# Opinion

## Some measures for enhancing foreign exchange earnings

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Ethiopia's foreign exchange earnings may be improved using strategies that boost its export capabilities. It also needs to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) for production of goods for export. These export items have to be competitive in the global markets. Such measures may improve the overall balance of trade of the country.

There are, however, several appropriate strategies that Ethiopia may apply for improving its foreign exchange earnings. Some of these strategies would be: diversification of exports; agricultural sector development; manufacturing and industrialization; services sector growth; trade facilitation and policy reforms; foreign direct investment (FDI); enhanced financial instruments; skills development and innovation; regional economic integration; risk mitigation strategies. The uses and benefits of each of the above strategies have to be considered seriously by the Ethiopian government policy makers.

The strategy of diversification of exports focuses on the promotion of non-traditional exports. This requires identification and promotion of new export products beyond the traditional ones. Experienced entrepreneurs have to be attracted to invest in the production of export items. Of course, identifying proper investors and markets for the new exports is of the essence. New products imply adding value and improving on existing products in the country.

Also it is of paramount importance to explore new economic sectors with the potential to produce and export new products. This measure presupposes the establishment and promotion of export processing zones in Ethiopia. These zones may attract foreign firms that encourage local production for export, and create employment opportunities for the local people. This process may generate income, which leads to demand for goods and services in the local markets. This requires promotion of sectors for new investment. Investors may be attracted to these sectors through provision of incentives for FDI.

Agricultural sector development and growth may require investment. This sector is the backbone of the Ethiopian economy with linkages to different economic sectors. It is, therefore, necessary to support and provide incentives to agribusiness initiatives that add value to agricultural products. Such products may be major foreign

exchange earners in existing and new markets.

Marketing intelligence provides new opportunities in external markets. This requires advance preparation for processing, packaging, and branding to meet international market standards. In this regard, it is essential to identify and promote high-value agricultural products that have strong demand in international markets. Along with these agricultural crops, it is important to encourage export oriented manufacturing and industrial enterprises. Owners of these enterprises have to be given special support as they are foreign exchange earners.

It is, therefore, crucial to promote and develop export-oriented manufacturing industries that produce goods with a competitive advantage in global markets. To support these enterprises, the state has to improve infrastructure, including transportation and energy. Such efforts would support industrial growth and reduce production costs. The provision of infrastructure, including roads, water, and electric storage facilities is very crucial for the export sector.

Apart from the productive sectors mentioned earlier, it is useful to expand the services sector. The promotion of tourism through investment in the sector helps to attract tourists to historic parts of Ethiopia. In this regard, improvement of infrastructure and marketing attracts more international visitors.

The flow of tourists into Ethiopia generates foreign exchange, which the country needs for importing basic goods and services. In like regard, Ethiopia has to expand its services to promote and facilitate export. It may develop and promote sectors like IT, software, and business processes for outsourcing with the objective of earning foreign exchange. Along with improvement in the service industry, the facilitation of trade through simplification of procedures attracts investment to Ethiopia. This demands the streamlining of customs processes for reducing trade barriers. This makes it easier for businesses, public as well as private, to engage in global trade.

Concerned agencies have to evaluate and adjust tariffs and non-tariff barriers to encourage imports and exports. The removal of trade barriers would definitely improve competitiveness of Ethiopian businessmen dealing with international trade. Also, those engaged in foreign direct investment (FDI) have to be encouraged to focus on sectors with high growth potential. There is a need to actively promote Ethiopia as an attractive destination for FDI, focusing on sectors

with high growth potential.

Foreign investors are attracted by other countries with provision of tax holidays. It is a precondition to design investor-friendly policies and strategies. It is extremely essential to implement policies and strategies that facilitate foreign investment, such as tax incentives, property rights, and regulatory transparency. Opaque transactions would contribute to illegal operations which must be discouraged by concerned agencies. Contrabandists and illegal operators deny the country of its opportunities to attract formal investment.

In addition to FDI, local investment has to be encouraged through improved access to finance for businesses. In this regard, special attention is given to small and medium-sized enterprises to encourage them in expanding and entering global markets. One way of assisting them is through export credit facilities. The concerned agency has to establish these facilities to provide financial support to producers of exportable items. This initiative has to be accompanied by skills development and innovation, including investment in relevant and appropriate education and training schemes. The development of a skilled labor-force is carried out through investing in education and training programs. Such schemes ensure that the labor force is fully equipped to meet the demands of emerging manufacturing industries in the country.

A workforce that is available in the labor market with the right skill demanded by the market would easily be employed and earn better income. This, however, is possible only if research and development schemes are in place to match the supply of and demand for labor in the various sectors of the economy.

Research and development should also be applied to encourage innovation in key sectors to create new products and services with global appeal. This process generates employment and income for skilled workers in different regions of Ethiopia. This has to be extended to the neighboring countries through regional economic integration. Strengthen economic ties with neighboring countries and regional economic communities enhance intra-Africa trade. In this regard, there is a need to explore participation in regional customs unions and trade agreements to diversity market access.

Diversification of export markets is based on avoidance of over-reliance on a few markets by diversifying export destinations. This ensures the reduction of vulnerability to economic crises in

some regions. There is, therefore, a need for developing and implementing strategies for risk management. Some of these strategies include hedging, to protect against fluctuations in commodity prices and exchange rates. Hedging is a mechanism that helps to limit losses and maintain assets. This can be used to survive difficult market periods. It gives protection against changes such as inflation, interest rates, currency exchange rates and others. It can be an effective way to diversify trading groups with numerous types of assets. This undertaking demands proficient and skilled personnel to manage market crises.

To avoid market crises, it may be advisable to hold foreign exchange accounts. Holding funds in a foreign exchange account can be helpful to diversify investments or to transact frequently in foreign exchange. Foreign exchange accounts offer investors the opportunity to invest or have access to a broader range of accounts with higher interest rates. These are generally seen as an investment, and can appeal particularly to investors that wish to diversify their assets. It is, however, important to realize that the income from interest rates may be eroded by fluctuations in the exchange rates, fees and taxes. It is also important to understand that there is tax liabilities that come with FDI used locally in Ethiopia. It is, therefore, advisable to get professional advice to make sure compliance with all legal requirements.

The enhancement of foreign exchange earnings requires measures that are holistic and coordinated. These measures help in controlling earnings and expenditures of foreign exchange in line with the rules and regulations of the government. This mechanism involves all transactions related to import and export in the various sectors of the Ethiopian economy. Implementing these mechanisms should be part of an overall and comprehensive strategy that deals with the distinctive and unique challenges and opportunities in the economic features of the country. Moreover, continuous evaluation and revision of these strategies will be helpful to guarantee and to ensure their efficiency and effectiveness through time. The effectiveness of these strategies is reflected in the enhancement of FDI that contribute to more foreign exchange earnings, high productivity, output and employment in Ethiopia.

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

# Editorial

## Timely step to curb unemployment!

The government of Ethiopia has these days built a system to make situations easy for job seekers to meet their dreams at home or abroad. Not only is the government working to help citizens secure job opportunities especially from overseas but it has also been capitalizing on respecting their individual rights and widening alternatives based on their preference and consent.

It has been recurrently heralded that the national job creation efforts are paying off as some 120,000 citizens have been employed within quarter a year. Yes, at national level, citizens have been sent after all the requirements are analyzed to easily identify the whereabouts of them, why, how and in what circumstance they are going to work via cementing ties with many countries especially with the Arab and Middle East ones.

Needless to state, the government has been capitalizing on making citizens entrepreneurs through vibrant technical and vocational colleges from which makers, innovators and renewed experts can be hatched. True, remarkable system is being entertained in Ethiopia to create job opportunities at home and/or abroad. For instance, over 411,000 citizens have been registered to be sent to overseas and the performance with regard to job creation has shown 30% growth concerning job creation within quarter of a year.

Those citizens who are sent to foreign countries for job opportunities, 120,000 ones, are not merely sent, but their rights are respected as the place where they are to domicile is well identified, and their preference for selecting countries or places for work is exclusively left for them to decide based on their inclination.

It is well remembered that a number of Ethiopians were highly exposed to hazardous circumstances and even life threatening aspects before, but this perilous trend is prettily altered now. Obvious, framing legal channels all the time has to be well promoted as citizens' wellbeing and rights could easily be secured.

Thanks to the Ethiopian government for its relentless effort to help citizens have a secured, reliable and devoid of threat place of work. As the fashion has now changed, citizens of all walks of life, peculiarly those who are categorized under the working group have been provided with the required training, awareness raising schemes and skills to help them deal with whatever they come across, make well aware of what is expected of them and where to go for work.

Such a noteworthy and lawful channel would be of paramount importance in supporting citizens confidently working hard thereby changing their lives and that of their family, too.

The government of Ethiopia has been trying all its best to well address the daunting challenges from which its citizens are suffering and committed to formulate broad-based policy reforms towards that end though unemployment, underdevelopment and social imbalances still leave negative repercussions among citizens. The government has continuously articulated the need to create sufficient employment opportunities to absorb the country's growing labor force and has put in place various short, medium and long-term employment creation measures that are meant to improve the income and livelihood of citizens both in rural and urban areas. This is really bearing fruits.

Of the various ways being put in place, overseas job securing comes at the forefront as a number of citizens are being recipients of a range of jobs. Yes, devising mechanisms in collaboration with development partners is a rewarding step, indeed!

In a nutshell, the government is working hard to get the roots of the sporadic skirmishes in some parts of Ethiopia dried for good thereby widening job opportunities for all citizens, especially for job seekers. In so doing, creating new jobs will be very much easy and all citizens can enjoy working at home and abroad.



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The Ethiopian Herald

# Opinion

## Amplifying the role of IGAD in land policy formulation

BY SALEH MAALIM ALIO

The 5<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Conference on Land Policy in Africa, convened by the African Land Policy Centre, the tripartite consortium consisting of African Union The African Development Bank (AfDB) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA) brought together delegates and experts from across the continent to deliberate on critical land-related issues and formulate actionable recommendations. Among the distinguished participants is Hon. Saleh Maalim Alio, the County Executive Committee Member for Lands, Physical Planning, Housing, Urban Development, Circular Economy, Solid Waste management and Sanitation representing County Government of Mandera-Kenya at this prestigious event.

The African Land Policy Centre, an institution of the African Union, has long served as a vital platform for African Union member states to collaborate on issues related to land policy. This year's conference, held in the vibrant city of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, was no exception. The theme of the event, "Promoting Sustainable Land Governance in Africa for Accelerating Implementation of the AfCFTA" while at the side events presentation included "Amplifying the Role of Kenya Counties in Land Policy Formulation," Saleh struck a chord with who has been a staunch advocate for county-level involvement in shaping Kenya's land policies.

Saleh who is renowned for their dedication to land-related issues and expertise in the field, seized the opportunity to emphasize the critical role county Governments play in land policy formulation in Kenya. Their participation in the conference was a testament to County Governments in Kenya's commitment to devolution, which has seen a significant shift of power and responsibilities to the county governments.

In Kenya, where land-related conflicts have been a persistent challenge, the need for effective land policy formulation cannot be overstated. Counties, being closer to the grassroots, are well-positioned to address local land issues and ensure that land policies are tailored to meet the unique needs of their respective regions. Hon. Saleh highlighted how counties have been working tirelessly to address land disputes, streamline land administration processes, and promote responsible land use.

During Saleh's presentations and engagement at the conference, shared success stories and best practices from Mandera Counties four selected Urban centers namely Khalalio, Sala, Rhamu-Dimtu and Kiliweheris physical and land use planning supported by IGAD-Land Governance Unit and Kenya, illustrating how IGAD a regional member countries in partnership with mandera county governments have successfully engaged local communities in land governance, urban, physical and land use planning and supporting the Lands Department, County attorney and the Judicial service commission to offer land dispute

resolution mechanism through the creation of AJS- Maslaha Center (Alternative Justice System). Their insights were well-received by delegates from other African countries who were eager to learn from Kenya's experience.

In addition to advocating for the importance of Kenya County Governments county executive members involvement in land policy as the Planning authorities at the County Level, Saleh also engaged in fruitful discussions with fellow delegates on various pressing land-related issues, including land tenure security, land governance, and sustainable land use practices for pastoralist and nomadic communities in the region. These discussions resulted in a set of actionable recommendations that will be presented to the African Union for consideration.

Saleh expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to represent Mandera County Government and other frontier counties Kenya at the 5th Edition of the Conference on Land Policy in Africa. He emphasized that the exchange of ideas and experiences at such events is instrumental in shaping effective land policies that can transform the lives of millions of Africans.

As the conference concluded, Saleh returns to Kenya with a wealth of knowledge, fresh insights, and a renewed commitment to championing the role of Kenya counties in land policy formulation. Their participation in this Continental and international gathering serves as a testament to Kenya's dedication to finding innovative solutions to land-related challenges and ensuring that the voices of local communities are heard in the policymaking process.

In the coming months, it is expected that Saleh will continue to work closely with his colleagues and stakeholders at the county and national levels to implement the recommendations and best practices garnered from the conference, further strengthening Kenya's approach to land governance and policy formulation.

The 5th Edition of the Conference on Land Policy in Africa has not only highlighted the "Promoting Sustainable Land Governance in Africa for Accelerating Implementation of the AfCFTA" importance of counties in land policy but has also positioned Hon. Saleh as a key advocate and influencer in this critical field. Kenya can undoubtedly look forward to a brighter future in land governance with dedicated leaders like Saleh leading the way.

Saleh's remarkable participation in the conference is a testament to Mandera County Government commitment to devolution and effective land policy formulation and implementation and it is a beacon of hope for better land management and governance in his county.

*Note: The author of this article is Hon. Saleh Maalim Alio, County Executive Committee Member-Lands, Physical Planning, Housing, Urban Development, Circular Economy, Solid Waste Management and Sanitation, Mandera County Government.*

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

# Business & Economy

## Lemi National Cement:

### A proven showcase to project completion

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

Ethiopia is striving to tackle its economic crunches through designing multiple escape routes by transforming the economy from agrarian to industry-led. Expanding the nation's capacity in manufacturing high industrial products with quality, the government of Ethiopia and responsible stakeholders have been giving due attentions to the issue and finding better ways to achieve the sought after goals.

The government of Ethiopia has built more than ten industrial parks and one free trade zone across the country so as to realize the objective of transforming the economy equipped with industrialization. As a result, a number of local and international investors have entered to those parks and started operating. The government has also established numerous bodies that can provide assistance and flatten the path to success.

From the many gigantic projects operating in the country; Lemi National Cement project has become one of the mega projects to address the nation's demand on cement as the country expects more benefits from such mega project.

According to its official website, Lemi National Cement PLC currently is a member of the joint venture formed between East African Holding and West International Holding (WIH).

This project incorporates three mega project developments namely: Lemi National Cement and Industrial Park, Melka Jebdu Cement Factory, and Red Fox International (Koka). The joint-venture partners; National Cement Share Company and West China Cement (West International Holding Co. Ltd) have agreed to work together on investment projects worth USD 2.2 billion. The first phase of the project valued USD 600 million entails six projects to be built on 270 hectares of land in Lemi Industrial Park located 130 km from Addis Ababa in northern Shewa Zone of Amhara region.

As to the website, those projects bring more blessings to the local economy and market. After completion, the projects can include 10,000 tons per day Clinker or 4.5 million tons of Cement (PPC) per year, 30 m<sup>2</sup> Gypsum board and 400,000 tons of Gypsum powder plants, Concrete pole, and prefabricated housing and Colbert pipe plant. Dire Dawa two lines each with capacity of 700,000 TPA Steel products also in progress, increasing the Dire Dawa Plant by 30%.

Recently, Lemi National Cement has announced the completion of installing the main equipment for cement production which is the capping of Pre-heater Frame and the Rotary Kiln machineries that are the core steps for cement production. The machineries will help the cement factory to



Lemi National Cement plant is expected to begin production soon

produce 10,000 Tons of clinker cement per day or 15,000 tons of cement per day which is equivalent to 150,000 quintals of cement per day.

Speaking at the event, Secretary of the Party Committee and Executive Director of Sinoma Suzhou, Lin Zhong, stated that the Ethiopian Lemi cement project is the first in Africa to produce 10,000 tons of clinker cement per day, a benchmark project known as "Star of Africa". The fact that the owner can entrust such an important milestone project to Sinoma for execution not only contains the profound friendship between West China Cement and Sinoma over 20 years of sincere cooperation, but also carries the absolute trust and love of National Cement Company to Sinoma.

"Since the construction of the project began in December 2022, the company has made every effort to allocate resources and carefully organize and plan the construction. By adhering to the enterprise spirit of hardworking and dedication, the project construction team has overcome plenty difficulties such as lack of territorial resources, delayed logistics and transportation, blocked customs clearance procedures, complex security situation, and low construction efficiency caused by rainy season, thus ensuring that the project has always maintained the optimal state in terms of construction organization and technology. It has also been affirmed and praised by our employers," the director mentioned.

The director further stated that, "From the installation of the first column of the kiln tail frame on April 10, 2022 to the installation of the rotary kiln on September 28, 2022 all the participants adhering to the team

spirit of "courage to innovation and unity to overcome difficulties", achieved the major stage results of the kiln tail preheater frame capping and rotary kiln closing in just half a year, opening a new page for the project construction."

In a similar vein, Chairman of East Africa Holding Group and National Cement Holding Company, Bizuayehu Tadele (PhD) on his part thanked the government and higher officials for their support in order to realize the project. The project has reached to this point due to the tireless support from the responsible bodies to make the process easy.

He also appreciated the Prime Minister's commitment to form a ministerial committee that provides the necessary support to the project. "Today's accomplishment is a showcase that the project will be completed and inaugurated on the set time frame, which is March 30, 2024" the chairman said.

Similarly, Lemi National Cement project Deputy Manager, Abebaw Bekele on his part, said that the project was started on December, 2022. "This time we have totally completed the civil construction within 11 months. The whole project will be finalized on March 30, 2024, just after 15 months of continuous hard work. Besides, 80% of the main equipment installation has been completed.

The general progress of the whole project, as to Abebaw, has reached to 70%. The first time frame to complete the projects was 18 months. After Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) visited the project, he put a direction to finish the project within 15 months. As a result, all the participants have been working aggressively to complete the project within

the time set.

"Finalizing projects within short period of time is a new trend in the country's construction experience. Comparing this project with other mega projects across the nation, this project is being operated in a higher speed and construction quality," Abebaw said.

The project, as to the deputy manager, will be expected to cover 50% of the nation's cement demand. Some 600 million USD is allocated for Lemi and Dire-Dawa National Cement projects.

Around 5 million and 3 million metric tons of cement will be produced and injected to the local market by Lemi and Dire-Dawa cement projects respectively. Lemi National Cement Project is one of the largest projects in the country that is expected to be transformed to Lemi Industrial Park. More projects like gypsum, aluminum, and glass will come in the future.

"More than 3000 Ethiopians and 1200 Chinese workers have been participating in the project construction. In the future, the project will create over 10,000 jobs for citizens," Abebaw noted.

The project has also been working on answering the queries of infrastructure like electricity and water supply. To this end, they have tried to get 200 kilowatt from Debre berhan and water supply from Siya Debir.

The project is a joint-venture project owned by China-based West International Holding and East African Holding companies. The project will be able to produce 130,000 to 150,000 quintals of cement per day when it start production with its full potential.

# Art & Culture

## *Pelting eyes for opportunities at hand*

(Short Story)

BY ALEM HAILU G/KRISTOS

"How are you our regular customer? You have been absent lately? Is it macchiato you take as usual?" said a waitress approaching me with a sunny face.

"I'm fine. Thank you. Yes, I was not around. The new flue got the better of me. But now I have recuperated."

"I like your best macchiato from this vicinity. Besides, the color and light arrangement of this café that fine-tunes the two to perfection wants me to stay long hours without feeling cooped. When light lemon color strips are seen painted against a white wall backdrop, the effect attracts people."

"Yes, the owners have outlaid their wealth on this house to render it clients' magnet. So clients here feel at ease. Sure, color arrangement matters. Yes, colors have psychological impact."

Heading towards the Barista "Extra special macchiato for a special guest," she said.

Minutes later she came back with a silver tray sporting the macchiato and tarried there as the café was sparsely populated that day. Her backs to the wall we began talking to our hearts' content.

"Where is that girl you often came with months before? Did she dump you or did you jilt her?" she laughed.

"Which one? The one with a chocolate skin, firm breast and curry hips?" I tried to differentiate them with some movements of my hands.

"The one with a voluminous bottom?" I touched my chair.

"Yes," she giggled.

"You mean Sara. She dumped me."

"Why?" she projected a curious face.

"A monkey jump is her characteristic feature."

"What does that mean?"

"You see I'm a government employee. Though I work hard and love my profession, my modest income does not allow me to indulge in a luxurious life. I may go for a luxurious life once or twice say on paydays but not always. Besides, I have to salt away money for rainy days. But Sara nonstop asked me to take her to famous night clubs and expensive restaurants."

"Holy cow! That is terrible. I noticed she used to order the most expensive dishes whenever you brought her here," she nodded her head indicating she observed something wired.

"If a woman truly loves you, she will be considerate to you."

"I tried to make her see to reason in vain. 'We have to save to chalk out our common future!' She took my stance as frugality and began to refer to me as the closefisted one. She bent my ear about buying a car," I

became disgusted.

"Does she work? Does she share costs?"

"No," I waved my pointing finger left and right and added,

"At the cost of her lovers enjoying life to the full is atop her agenda."

"She must be a fool."

"She disappeared into a thin air. She must have come across somebody who could elevate the scale of entertainment she wants," I sarcastically smiled.

"Unlike her, many genuine girls who want to walk down the aisle botchily wait the right man. I can't wrap my mind around this mystery," she supported her chin with her arm.

"Such is life," I said with you can't help it style.

"So, Sara jumped from one branch of a tree to a higher branch of another tree."

"Exactly!"

"Sorry you! How could she shamelessly do that?"

"Shame has no place in her vocabulary!" Once more I displayed a sarcastic smile.

"What about the former one?" she said.

"There were many as I do not have a litmus paper to outright tell the one with the right characteristic features. I have to adopt trial and error."

"I am referring to the tiny one who is easy to the eye," she put her arms midair to show the shortness of the girl.

"I dumped her!"

"Why?"

"But she was beautiful!"

"Though fit almost in all requirements of a would-be wife, she failed to meet one point that has a higher weight."

"What could that be?"

"She is a girl with a baggage."

"Meaning?" she portrayed curiosity.

"She cannot stop the relationship she started with a married man early in her life. She could not overgrow a bad habit that hangs over to date."

"When I asked her on more than one occasion 'could you disrupt the relation you have with that man?' she becomes hesitant or unwilling to answer. Her hesitancy provoked mistrust on me."

"He may be her first!"

"I understand what you mean," I said,

"Most girls are influenced by the eye-opener experience. But they must learn to put such a thing behind their back and start anew than continue to indulge in a malfunctioned relationship," she said.

"The wise ones do so but the rest lament over spilt milk."

"Jilting her is the right thing you did. Aside from facing a child born on the wrong side



of the blanket, you could be exposed to HIV/AIDS and hepatitis c that could also arise from promiscuity."

"More caution is necessary nowadays at a time condom is in short supply for some reasons. There is urinary tract infection too," I said.

"Oh woman. They are difficult to manage."

"Some of them are difficult. But there are many troublesome men out there. Why do not you tell me about boy friends?"

"Though handsome and hardworking, the recent one was fickle!"

"Was he a womanizer?"

"He sweet talked me into love to turn out elusive. When I raised serious issue like marriage, under a multitude of lame pretexts he deferred it to indefinite time," she brushed her eyebrows with forked fingers.

"That is not good for you, for you allow your prime time to lie waste."

"Forty five is the average figure for menopause. I think it depends on one's breed. There are some that stops giving birth at thirty five and on the contrary there are some who give birth at fifty five."

"Is that so? I must add pace to hunt for a genuine partner. Not only that waiting for this chap faithful, I had also lost the chance for a genuine life partner,"

"Don't you have a new acquaintance?"

"I showed him a red card. An indolent lothario, he was living on my meager salary. Drinking ale nonstop, smoking daylong and watching the grass grow sitting on a stone at a cross road in the village were among his routines. I had to seek the support of the Police to get him off my shoulder. I must add pace to hunt for a genuine partner."

"Presumably you spent a hard time with him?"

"Sure thing"

"We two are losers in the romance market. We are expected to show a sprinted finish."

"As you are a man, you still have a chance to go for a child and marriage. I mean the

biological clock."

"Victims of similar fate, why don't we try to troubleshoot our problems together?"

"How?"

"The two of us could try to be lovers," I zoomed in on her lips and eyes turn by turn.

"I'm afraid I'm not that attractive," she blushed.

"Who said so? You have a charm I'm attracted to."

"Such as?" she became inquisitive.

"Your bewitching eyes, dimples and elegance strike me. You cast a spell on me whenever you smile."

"I like your square shoulder and white teeth. You are not hard to talk too," she eyed me with some sort of appreciation.

"Physical appearance does not matter much. Besides there is a saying 'beauty is a magician cruel to the beautiful and kind to the less beautiful.'"

"Could you explain that?"

"When the man closely observes the beautiful one he gradually detects her shortfalls. On the other hand he sees more qualities of the one dubbed less attractive. The same holds true to the opposite sex."

"So, you do not want to put me under your microscope to see covert physical beauty of mine including the internal one,"

"You got my point?"

"In that case why don't you start today?" she once more blushed.

"I was thinking about that. when do you finish job to go home?"

"Right after 2 PM."

"We could have dinner together at a nearby restaurant," I coughed simultaneously getting up to go out.

"Why do not we make it for tomorrow? I will bring to you a thermo flask full of soup for your flue," she picked the cup I drank macchiato with.

"I would be grateful," I said happily and studded out.

# Global Affairs



## Can COP28 deliver for cities, climate migrants?

The impacts of climate change on human mobility have yet to be fully understood and addressed on a global scale, even though some 3.3 to 3.6 billion people are highly vulnerable to climate change.

Contrary to popular perceptions, most climate migrants move internally to cities within their own countries, attracted by the perceived employment, education, and healthcare opportunities that urban areas offer.

City governments will need to play a pivotal role in transforming urban migration into an effective climate change adaptation strategy that benefits both climate-vulnerable rural communities and the cities they settle in. By doing so, city governments can proactively manage the challenges posed by climate migrants while also harnessing their potential contributions to a city's economic growth and resilience.

As these numbers increase, urban areas across the Global South face mounting pressures to provide sufficient housing, jobs, and public services to serve their growing populations.

Those moving due to climate extremes and environmental degradation will most likely find themselves living in urban slums, exposed to unhygienic conditions and forced to live in sub-standard housing.

They could also face highly competitive job markets for which they may lack qualifications or experience, and limited access to healthcare and public services due to citizenship restrictions.

Urban authorities across the Global

South will be nervously anticipating an influx of new arrivals as the climate crisis intensifies, grappling with the challenge of integrating these newcomers without increasing pressure on already stretched urban infrastructure and services.

For inspiration they might look at other urban areas that have made significant progress in recent years to enhance their resilience and sustainability.

During the course of my research, I have also wondered whether urban authorities could view the climate migration challenge as an opportunity – to not only alleviate pressures but also to simultaneously pursue development objectives, stimulate economies, and ensure safe and secure living conditions for all residents.

### Enhancing urban development

A strategic policy response could help mitigate challenges while preparing cities for the future. City governments will need to play a pivotal role in transforming urban migration into an effective climate change adaptation strategy that benefits both climate-vulnerable rural communities and the cities they settle in.

By doing so, city governments can proactively manage the challenges posed by climate migrants while also harnessing their potential contributions to a city's economic growth and resilience.

Enhancing human mobility and removing restrictions on free movement not only bolsters adaptive capacity in the face of climate change and environmental crises; it also provides the necessary labor flexibility for cities and contributes to poverty reduction in rural areas.

Migrants, acting as agents of change, often support their home communities through remittances. Dynamic labor markets, enabling the geographic mobility of workers, are essential to supply labor precisely where and when it's needed.

Urban authorities will need to examine mobility patterns and trends, identifying and prioritizing urban areas and infrastructure that require support. Additional legal measures may also be required, including labor laws that strengthen the rights of migrant workers, ensure safe working environments, and provide protection from exploitation.

Migrants' social inclusion can be secured through education and training, which enhance their employment prospects, and access to healthcare and affordable and suitable housing.

The role of city governments, however, will depend on national governments granting urban authorities more influence in critical policy domains. Policy collaboration across different levels of governance is also key to supporting migrants and enhancing climate-compatible development in both places of origin and destination through circular mobility initiatives.

### Accelerating a climate-resilient urban renaissance

COPs have historically made progress in advancing policies, funding, and recommendations to support climate-related migrants and cities in their adaptation efforts. It is imperative that COP28 fulfill its promise to increase climate funding for developing countries,

including cities.

Urban areas are not only home to more than half of the world's population, but also serve as the primary engines of the global economy and job creation. Funds targeting cities can help accelerate the global green transition.

However, COP28 will need to address a critical shortage in available funding, laid bare by the UN Environment Programme's recent Adaptation Gap report which estimates that developing countries will need between \$215 and \$387 billion in public adaptation finance per year this decade.

The trend of decreasing adaptation funds – only \$21 billion was available in 2021, \$4 billion less than the previous year – needs to be urgently addressed.

COP28, just a few weeks away, is an opportunity to emphasize the need for long-term policy support aimed at tackling the challenges associated with climate-induced migration to urban areas.

The decision to dedicate a day at the summit to 'multilateral action, urbanization, and the built environment' underscores the central role that cities will play in our transition to more resilient and sustainable societies. Anticipating and responding strategically to climate migration will support an urban renaissance that is able to cope with climate change while delivering secure housing, improved services, and decent jobs for all.

Source:- Inter press service



# Law & Politics

## The National Dialogue Commission must be supported by all

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

The National Dialogue Commission has been formed to try and bring Ethiopians to a kind of consensus airing all their views on what sort of country they envisage for the future. If we want the country to free itself from the past shackles that are keeping it tied to relentless controversies about how it was formed and who took advantage and who got at the receiving end of injustices, we would never be able to move freely into the future and succeed in building a more just, a more equitable, a more rapidly growing economy and a more respectable and sovereign country that tries to be among the leading realities of the continent of Africa.

Ethiopia is currently a federal state trying to apply the tenets of federalism to the best of its capacity. It is now twenty nine years since the federal system has been adopted as a form of administering this enormous country with a plurality of nations and nationalities and arguably this has been found to be the only system that could guarantee the rights of all peoples in this complex society called Ethiopia. However, Ethiopians do not seem to agree on how the country has reached this point in its history and there are multiple narratives that have been presented by many political actors with various political views, and this has been a source of contention and given rise to interminable disputes and controversies that has resulted in not sitting together and discussing things to iron out differences but to try and solve the problem with the use of force.

In the years of the monarchy, multiple liberation movements tied to this and that nationality were seen surging and flexing their muscles against the existing system. With the ideology of the left that largely promoted the idea of the self determination of people, the movements that were conceived, born and grew up in those years have yet to declare that now that a federal system has been formed they can assert their rights within the framework of the constitutional order. The new federal constitution was promulgated in December 1994 and since then there has been the recognition of the equality of the nations and nationalities doing away with the old system that seemed to favour a few entities against the interests of the majority. Clearly the system was unjust for a number of reasons and if there were forces that tried to depose such a system it would not be a surprise. Today all the parameters of political power have changed because the idea that all individuals are born equal and have equal rights in society including political and economic rights is taken for granted.

The issue of human rights is one of the most debated ideas that has been developed in

recent decades and no wonder that people all over the world claim their rights as enshrined in all international conventions and protocols that have been incorporated in the constitutions of nations. Ethiopia as well is a signatory of these sacred documents that give full recognition to equality of humans irrespective of their origin, faith, gender and social status. Similarly, political convictions cannot be reason to discriminate one from others and the right to free expression of ideas and opinions, freedom of association as well as all other freedoms that are now taken for granted.

Many people say that Ethiopians' current major issue is how to agree on a common narrative regarding the formation and history of Ethiopia. There are extremists and divergent positions in this regard and the fact that there have not been all encompassing discussions on these subjects has complicated further the problem and successive governments on power had to tackle these subversive voices with force rather than bring them to the table and discuss the matter wholeheartedly and in great detail with good faith and constructively. Ethiopia cannot exist as a country if each and every nationality tries to form their own independent country in a current reality of the world where more and more unity is advised in order to make one's voices heard in the international arena.

We can see that Africa's weakness as a continent is characterized by the existence of more than fifty countries that are not united and hence find themselves at a disadvantage in trying to deal with the rest of the world. This reality of Africa has been unfortunately created by the colonial powers which divided it the way they preferred or found convenient for their economic and other strategic benefits and never considered the reality of the societies that found themselves divided finding themselves at times in different states while they were probably parts of an extended family. Today Africa has the big homework of trying to come to terms with its past determined by others and now that it has the opportunity to right those wrongs, there are some forces that try to prevent it from doing so because a strong and united Africa could have tremendous influence in the current world.

Ethiopia is more or less found in the same predicament owing to a past history that has become a source of contention. It is finding it increasingly difficult to come to terms with its past and settle once and for all with a solution that can bring all parties into consensus. When such discussions are tabled those who see themselves as the aggrieved party in the process of the formation of this country argue that they have been forced into a union and that they were never consulted about it. They argue this is a fundamental wrong with which they can never agree. The problem with such narrative seems to disregard

***E***thiopians must come to terms with their past and agree on a new blueprint based on equality, unity and sovereignty of the nation and not be made exposed to the joys of its adversaries and enemies that do not want its growth and prosperity

historical facts that have been developing along the years and turning back would be practically impossible unless there emerges interminable conflicts involving a plethora of people who have been intermingling across centuries. Those who still argue that peoples' identities can be maintained pure and pristine must be living in a utopia because there cannot be any reality that can accommodate such a philosophy because people continue to mingle and intermarry and trying to find a pure race or a pure identity would be unrealistic.

Ethiopia is a country of multiple nations and nationalities and trying to divide it along ethnic lines has been a source of violence and contention that can only result in disasters. Societies are not made on calculations and if every individual has their rights respected and their aspirations fulfilled why shouldn't they live in harmony with other humans regardless of their origin or identity? Today we see a continuous intermingling of peoples of various origins not only in Ethiopia but also across the world and the often cited easy reference is the USA or Canada where a variety of nationalities of various origins live together independently and freely compromising in their beliefs and customs but not being a source of hostilities. This is not to say that

these societies are perfect and do not have social and political problems. There are no societies free of problems but it is the way they settle their problems that makes them advanced and civilized nations.

They all have constitutions by which they are governed and they respect those laws equally. They know that they have issues on the way those countries have been formed but they continue to discuss them freely and openly and try to reach a consensus that can be of satisfaction to all.

They were societies that were based on inequalities and there have been identities that have been abused and neglected, not allowed to take part in the political discourse, and they have passed along many complicated paths that finally seem to reach a certain stage whereby inequalities cannot be tolerated anymore and every individual should be attributed with the same rights that others like him have and no one is deliberately and systematically left behind to suffer the bad effects of the political order, if any.

Ethiopia is a country that is still evolving under a new system. It has now been almost thirty years since the formation of the federal system. The constitution has been in vigor for the last three decades and it has largely been a work in progress in terms of its strict application. There are parties that are opposed to its very promulgation alleging that they were not consulted during its formation and that their interests have been ignored. However, there is also the understanding that the constitution being the work of humans no one claim that it is perfect and hence cannot be discussed.

The recently established National Dialogue Commission can have this issue discussed in a free and candid manner because it is the right place where individuals, groups and organizations can propose their ideas and have them debated and considered for eventual change. The Commission has welcome every group in the country to come forward with their ideas and make it a subject of discussion in a serious and positive manner so that things are made clear to all and the future of the country is not darkened by interminable contentions that continue to haunt it. Ethiopians must come to terms with their past and agree on a new blueprint based on equality, unity and sovereignty of the nation and not be made exposed to the joys of its adversaries and enemies that do not want its growth and prosperity. Ethiopians must rise up to the challenges that the modern world presents and the country has the potential to succeed if we settle our basic differences that continue to be bones of contention. A multiethnic, multicultural and multi-religious Ethiopia is possible to exist and thrive without having to disintegrate as some of its enemies would like to. Ethiopians have a glorious history of unity in times of crisis and this could be one of them.

