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Abdurahman Eid Tahir

## EIH grosses close to 250 bln Birr in 1st quarter

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA- The Ethiopian Investment Holdings (EIH)

See EIH grosses close .. Page 3

# Establishing landlocked countries' Think Tank house in spotlight

• Historian says house to make Ethiopia's concerns heard

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA –Establishing an international Think Tank group for landlocked countries would play a vital role in reverberating Ethiopians' voices to the international community, Historian suggested.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, Wollo University History and Heritage Management Lecturer Alemayehu Erkihun (PhD) stated that establishing a Think Tank group would contribute to address the impact of economic crisis, access to sea alternatives and Ethiopia's chronic problems to the international community, neighboring countries and partners.

According to the historian, forming such group would support Ethiopia's and other land locked countries' efforts to find alternatives to access seaports.

Securing the right to access to the sea should not be left to the government, he said, adding that individuals, institutions, think tank groups and others have their own role.

Nowadays, the government trying hard to manage the increasing cost of living, unemployment, in order to achieve economic growth. Therefore, Erkihun

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Adam Farah

## UNESCO inscribes 'Shuwalid Festival' as intangible cultural heritage

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## MoWSA working to deter GBV

• Finalizes policies to expedite gender equality

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – The Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA) said it has been exerting consolidated efforts to deter Gender Based Violence (GBV) and provide holistic support to rape survivors.

Speaking at the occasion, MoWSA State Minister Alemitu Omut stated that the ministry has been coordinating efforts in protecting the rights of women and enhancing their benefit and participation. It has also taken the prevention

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Alemitu Omut



Koffi Kouame

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A bonanza for the Red Sea region

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Photo -Gebabo Gebere

Shimeles Gezahagn (PhD)

## Hospital strives to become center of excellence in Africa

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA—ALERT** Comprehensive Specialized Hospital disclosed that it would inaugurate continental trauma, plastic and reconstructive surgery excellence centers within two years.

Hospital's General Manager, Shimels Gezahegn (PhD) told *The Ethiopian Herald* that efforts are underway to transform the hospital to become Africa's Center of Excellence for trauma, plastic and reconstructive operations.

As to him, the hospital has been working to excel in its medical services thereby bought two expensive medical devices with an estimated cost of 20 million Birr.

Shimels further stated that the construction of an eight storey trauma center designed to treat victims of war, conflict, and car accident has reached 40 % completion.

The hospital also signed agreement with the Ministry of Health (MoH) to construct an eight storey building for plastic and reconstructive surgery center, he said, adding the center aimed at expanding the medical service to narrow the gap between plastic, reconstructive and orthopedic surgeries demands and services.

"The hospital has been striving a lot to improve the necessary medical service via sharing knowledge, experience, technology, producing capable doctors, bridging skill gap, and making strong ties with concerned bodies," Shimeles noted.

## Gov't pledges bank's move to idea financing

• Dashed awards over 2 mln Birr for entrepreneurs

BY STAFF REPORTER

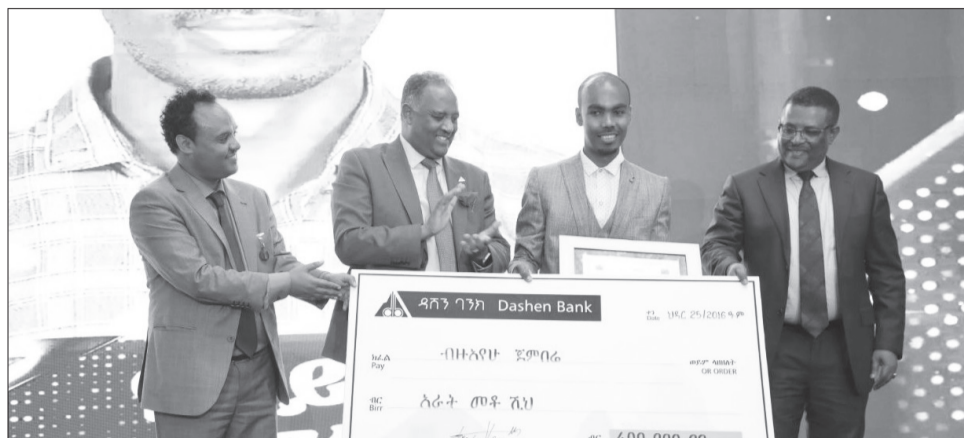
**ADDIS ABABA**-The Ministry of Labor and Skills (MoLS) expressed the government's desire to support banks' engagement in financing entrepreneurs' ideas that would contribute to addressing problems in the community.

MoLS State Minister Nigussu Tilahun made the above remark at the closing ceremony of the 2nd round Dashed Bank-financed entrepreneurial competition dubbed Kefeta on Wednesday. The competition conferred over two million Birr as prize money for winners.

Nigussu stated that the Dashed Bank's involvement in idea financing is a commendable measure and aligns with the government's priority to pave the way for young entrepreneurs to change the society's livelihoods through innovative works.

"The government is desirous of supporting the bank's engagement in recruiting young entrepreneurs from different parts of the country and helps them to translate ideas into reality through availing capacity building training and finance."

The state minister further highlighted that the ministry has carried out similar entrepreneurial competitions and has so far awarded 227 youth and offered training to another 3, 877 who have created a significant



number of jobs. A large sum of money was also disbursed to youth innovators to transform their ideas into reality.

"We will compete over 3,000 entrepreneurial ideas in the current fiscal year and to award those with noble contributions to the community and we will also facilitate a market linkage to the winning products."

Dashed Bank CEO Asfaw Alemu said on the occasion that the bank has been discharging its corporate social responsibility in involving at idea financing and promoting youth entrepreneurship and helping poverty eradication.

Accordingly, the bank registered over 6,000 innovators and provided training in six cities such as Addis Ababa, Adama, Dire Dawa, Hawassa, Bahir Dar and Dessie in the 2nd

round *Kefeta* competition. Dashed also facilitated conditions for competitors to visit various industries and held experience sharing sessions with renowned business persons.

Asfaw pointed out that the nobility of innovative ideas and their societal contribution as well import substitution capacity and the inclusion of jobless youth are the criterion that are taken into account in the competition.

Over two million Birr was awarded to the top-10 competitors of the 2nd round Dashed *Kefeta* entrepreneurial competition while the winning team was conferred 500,000 Birr, Asfaw remarked.

It was learned that the 3rd round Dashed *Kefeta* entrepreneurial competition would commence soon.

## STEM power pins hope on Ethiopia's creative youth

BY STAFF REPORTER

Suzana Kassahun, a 10th-grade student from Wolaita zone, has been undergoing hardship due to her father's diabetes-induced paralysis. While contemplating on how to solve the issue, she got a chance to attend a training at the Sodo STEM Center that enabled her to alleviate her father's agony. She designed and constructed a non-invasive blood glucose measuring device.

"My father developed paralysis from his diabetes, and I became driven to find a better treatment plan than what my father went through. My device offers a diabetes sufferer patient a comfortable way to monitor their glucose levels and their heart rate. How? I built an electronic circuit that uses near-infrared LEDs to look through the blood inside a finger, instead of painfully pricking the finger to collect a blood sample," she said.

Suzana's innovative device utilizes an electronic circuit with an NIR laser-based sensor, providing diabetes patients with a comfortable alternative to monitor their glucose levels and heart rate without the need for painful finger pricks.

The Wolaita Sodo STEM Center played a crucial role in supporting Suzana by providing her with essential tools and resources, including a 3D printer, to bring her invention to life. Suzana also expressed her appreciation to the center for helping her in making possible her dream to invent a device that empowers an individual to control their own health destiny.

Another student Samrawit Mulu, from Kallamino STEM Center, Tigray, developed a

smart cane and eyeglasses for visually impaired individuals, which can sense materials in front of the user. This groundbreaking invention provides real-time feedback and alerts users to potential obstacles, enabling them to navigate their surroundings with enhanced safety and confidence.

The aforementioned innovations were demonstrated at the 8th National Science and Engineering Fair 2023, recently held at Addis Ababa Science and Technology University (AASTU). A press release sent to *The Ethiopian Herald* indicated that some 178 students from 30 Ethiopian STEM centers competed for the top prizes presenting their problem solving innovations.

STEMpower is a non-governmental organization working in Ethiopia and other African countries in supporting youths like Suzana and Samrawit who need technical or technological assistance to achieve their dreams. It also provides education emphasizing on problem-solving, creativity, and skill-building.

According to STEM power, the 8th National Science and Engineering Fair 2023 which organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, AASTU, JICA and other stakeholders was a successful and captivating event that brought together talented students from across Ethiopia.

The innovations displayed during the Fair include Bluetooth controlled wheelchair, a smart cane and eyeglasses, flood-alert system, anti-sleep alert system for drivers, parking management system, various household appliances and drones among others. The

innovators have been awarded laptops by Simenew Keskes (PhD), Country Director of STEM power, recognizing their dedication and excellence in science and engineering.

Simenew believed that the organization is playing due role in supporting science students as Ethiopia has innovative and problem solving youth that can improve the lives of many if obtain the required technical, financial or technological support.

"We are immensely proud of the outstanding achievements showcased at the 8th National Science and Engineering Fair. The dedication and creativity displayed by these young students are truly inspiring. We believe that by fostering their passion for STEM education, we are paving the way for a brighter future for Ethiopia," he said.

In his speech on the occasion, Professor Teketel Yohannes, the Director of the Ethiopian Academy of Sciences and a Board Member of STEM power Ethiopia, emphasized on the significance of scientific innovation highlighting the incredible potential of young scientists in Ethiopia.

STEM power, a pan-African charity, has been promoting Science, Technology, and Engineering and Mathematics education across Africa for over a decade aimed at preparing students for advanced STEM studies and careers through providing secondary and pre-university students with hands-on STEM programs. The organization is expanding services to more than 10 new countries while strengthening its operations in Ethiopia and other African countries, it was learnt.

## UNESCO inscribes 'Shuwalid Festival' as intangible cultural heritage

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

**ADDIS ABABA**-United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has inscribed *Shuwalid* festival of Harar people of Ethiopia as intangible cultural heritage, so reported local media.

*Shuwalid* Festival is an annual three-day festival celebrated by the Harari people of Ethiopia.

The festival's inscription as a living intangible cultural heritage was approved during the eighteenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, being held in Botswana from December 4 to 9, 2023.

This makes Harar city the first city in Ethiopia to be home of two UNESCO heritages site: the historic Jugol and *Shuwalid* festi-



Adam Farah

val.

*Shuwalid* festival marks the end of six days of fasting to compensate omissions during Ramadan. The Harari people celebrate *Shu-*

*walid* at the shrines of Aw Shulum Ahmed and Aw Akebara, found at the main gates of the walled city of Harar.

The festival starts with supplications and spiritual songs, followed by the reading of scriptures, music and dance. The celebration is concluded with words of blessing. The occasion unites community members of all ages and genders and serves as a platform for community elders to share their knowledge and experiences as well as to give blessings to the next generations and helps the youth learn about cultural values, norms and traditions.

*Shuwalid* promotes social cohesion and a sense of identity and a platform for the transmission of performing arts, oral traditions, traditional dress and other cultural elements, as to the media.

Conveying a congratulatory message to all Ethiopians, Prosperity Party Vice President, Adam Farah stated that the government focuses on tangible and intangible cultural heritages to be more conserved and developed to create additional opportunity to nation and properly utilize the untapped heritages.

Inscription of *Shuwalid* Festival by UNESCO further helps boost tourism sector and make Ethiopia the first African nation that inscribed many cultural heritages, he said.

Tourism State Minister, Lensa Mekonen on her part said, "The inscription of our cultural heritage by UNESCO helps economy develop, more tourists come home and visit as well as build image of the nation thereby boosting tourism revenue by many folds. We will work to inscribe other tangible and intangible cultural heritages, too."

### EIH grosses close...

announced that it has earned some 249.9 billion Birr from various services in the first quarter of the current fiscal year.

EIH presented yesterday the first quarter performance report to the public Development Enterprises Affairs Steering Committee of the House of Peoples' Representatives.

Upon presenting the report, EIH CEO Abdurahman Eid Tahir, who said the holdings' ability to secure close to 250 billion Birr in revenue, indicated that they amassed 36.5 billion Birr in profit before tax in the reported period. While the EIH achieved 69 percent work performance, the amount surpassed that of the same period last year by seven percent.

As to him, Ethiopian Airlines Group, Ethiopian Fuel Supply Company and Commercial Bank of Ethiopia hold the highest revenue generating positions with 40.8 %, 22.68 %, and 12.7 % respectively. It means that the institute achieved 83 % of work performance and the performance exceeded by some 46 % compared with that of the previous year in a similar period. About net tax, the companies are shared some 87%, 53.5%, 25.6% and 7.5 % in respective orders.

The CEO further stated that the EIH is administrating some 26 companies classified in eight clusters. Of those, some of the companies such as Ethiopian Mining

Development Corporation and Ethiopian palm and paper S.C were exposed to loss.

The EIH created 90,000 permanent and 60,000 temporary jobs under various sectors including construction and banking and it is closely working with Ethio-telecom to realize digital Ethiopia in the coming years. Similarly, the institute strives to ensure women empowerment and related issues, Abdurahman remarked.

Ethio telecom CEO Frehiwot Tamiru on her part said that efforts are underway to ensure an inclusive digital system across the country. Even though the telecom penetration in Ethiopia is greatly expanded, there is still

a lot remaining to reach rural localities and districts.

Ethio telecom has 876 mobile stations, not including this year's construction. Of these stations, 4,199 (52%) were established in rural localities.

Ethio telecom planned to establish 9,998 new stations while some 147 (15%) of them are used for rural districts to address a number of people in the coming years, Frehiwot revealed.

Ethiopian Investment Holdings is the strategic Investment arm of the Government of Ethiopia. Its business is value creation across priority sectors.

### Establishing landlocked...

suggested that the government should address the international community and countries especially those established military bases in the Red Sea to revisit the aforementioned challenges in line with absence of seaport.

Access to the seaport is one of the most vital issues for economic growth by regulating the cost of living, improving employment, and facilitating export and import trade.

The historian believed that achieving access to seaport also helps the country to ensure political stability.

Ethiopia has historic base to reclaim access to seaports, Erkihun said recalling that the country had been influential to control the Horn Africa and the Red Sea since the formation of the states in the region.

During the period of Axum, Ethiopia leased the port for Europe, Asia, Latin America and other countries, he stated.

European involvement for the colonization of Africa challenged Ethiopia's historic right to access the sea, he mentioned, adding the

country was eventually interrupted from access to the sea for nearly half a century.

The Lecturer remembered that the Federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia in 1952 was allowed to access Massawa, Assab and other ports until this dynamic was changed following the collapse of the Derg regime in 1991 when Eritrea became an independent country.

"Losing an access to the sea is not only simply losing economic advantages, but also it is losing one's historic identity since Ethiopian civilization had been reflected on the Red Sea for the long century," he said.

Erkihun also urged all Ethiopians to accept the request of access to the sea positively since it overcomes the current economic and political tensions of the country as well as the Horn of Africa.

Everybody should support the government, the think tank groups, and should be a diplomat for the national interest of Ethiopia, he underlined.

### MoWSA working...

and response to violence against women as key strategic focus.

Citing the consequences of sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls, the state minister highlighted that the government has put in place relevant policy and legal frameworks to address the problem. "As the World Development Report reveals, GBV drains the nation's resources and limits women's potential to advance socially and economically."

In addition, the ministry has also been undertaking major advocacy and mobilization campaigns on the prevention and response of violence against women as well as providing comprehensive services violence survivors.

"The ministry has taken bold steps to develop an enabling policy and put in place the ten-year sectoral development plan where clear indicators were set to reduce the prevalence rate of violence."

She further noted that the ministry is finalizing the Gender Equality and Women Empowerment and GBV national policies that support the response and management strategy with the active collaboration of relevant actors.

Praising the valuable contributions of UNFPA and other actors towards the GBV response at all levels, especially conflict affected areas;

she called on the government, UN agencies, NGOs and civil society organizations to provide holistic support to vulnerable communities.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Country Representative Koffi Kouame for his part said that the 16 days of activism against GBV provides a vital window to reflect on the progress, challenge and strategic investments needed for a safer and equitable future.

Kouame further remarked that investing in prevention requires a holistic approach to address the main causes of violence and fostering an environment where equality, dignity and respect are well entertained.

"In Ethiopia, GBV is highly prevalent with the latest demographic and health survey indicating that 35 percent of ever married women aged 15-49 has experienced physical, emotional or sexual violence from their husband or partner."

According to him, the UNFPA's strong partnership with the ministry has brought about remarkable results in eliminating GBV in Ethiopia.

The representative reassured UNFPA's unwavering commitment to work and reinforce its partnership with stakeholders, sectoral ministers and CSOs to dismantle the structure that perpetuates violence.

# Opinion

## Essence of materializing capital market in Ethiopia's economy

BY GETACHEW MINAS

The Federal Government of Ethiopia has established the capital market in Ethiopia with Proclamation 1248/2021. The goal of establishing “capital market is to support the development of the national economy through mobilizing capital, promoting financial innovation, and sharing investment risks.” It has been found necessary to establish a legal framework for regulating and supervising capital market to guarantee fairness, integrity, and efficiency of the market and protect investors and businesses. It also ensures uniform requirements for those who wish to raise capital from investors.

The legal framework ensures monitoring and evaluation of the capital market to detect and prevent systemic risk to the financial system of the country. The capital market is a market in which securities such as shares, or equities, bonds, derivatives, or other related securities are bought and sold. Participation involves capital market service providers, issuers of securities, investors, security-exchanges, eligible counter parties, eligible contracts, and securities and clearing companies.

Ethiopia has been moving along the path of developing its long overdue capital market. In the process, there have been discussions and plans to establish a stock exchange. In the history of economic development of advanced countries, the progress of a capital market is often observed as a very strategic and critical component for economic growth. It provides investors with alternative options and means of raising funds from citizens in a legal manner. It offers them opportunities and prospects for diversification of businesses.

Diversification refers to expanding the operation of an enterprise into new areas or products, services, or industries. Its goal is often to reduce the overall risk of a business and to generate new sources of revenue. In other words, diversification is a technique of allocating resources or capital to a mix of different investments. Its ultimate goal is to reduce volatility in one asset with gains in another. A phrase commonly associated with diversification is: “Do not put all your eggs in one basket.” This is an aspect of capital market development and operation in several countries, including Ethiopia.

The key aspects related to the capital market in Ethiopia are: initiatives for capital market development; regulatory framework; infrastructure development; economic reform; government commitment; private sector participation; investor education; international collaboration; potential challenges; and

program and progress. These are briefly elaborated next.

Regarding initiatives for capital market development, Ethiopia has expressed, articulated and communicated its intention to develop a capital market. This is part of its broader economic reform agenda which has been clearly explained to the business and other related communities. This agenda included discussions and elaborations about establishing stock exchange. Next, a regulatory framework is very crucial for the smooth operation and functioning of a capital market. In this respect, Ethiopia has established and enhanced regulatory bodies to oversee the operation of the capital market.

For facilitating the operation of the capital market, it is critical to develop the necessary infrastructure in advance. This includes establishing trading platforms, clearing and settlement systems, and other supporting mechanisms for the capital market. The platforms allow investors and traders to place trades through financial intermediaries to track accounts.

Trading platform also comes with other services, such as quotes in real time, charting software, news, and premium analysis. The clearing is all of the steps involved in transferring fund ownership from one party to another except for the final step, which is settlement. Settlement involves the finalization of a payment, so that a new party takes possession of transferred funds. The treasurer should be aware of these processes in order to understand the timing of payment transfers. In these and other related activities, the capital market has to be supported by other relevant mechanisms in Ethiopia.

Ethiopia has been undertaking economic reforms to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and to develop the necessary capital market. This is an important step in promoting investment in the country. To attract foreign investors it is critical to develop a strong business model which Ethiopia is prepared for. The concerned agency needs to consider diverse foreign investors. In this process, it is useful to build an international network to promote investment in the country.

It is also wise to learn how other governments encourage foreign investment. In this endeavor, the commitment of the government to encourage investment should be clear to all investors. In particular, its commitment to execute economic reforms builds trust in future investors. Its role in supporting the development of the capital market is crucial. The support has to be continuous and undisturbed. Investors have other

competing attractions from neighboring countries in the Horn. This implies that Ethiopia has to be informed of the regional environment that is attractive and conducive to foreign direct investment.

Encouraging the private sector participation in the Ethiopian capital market is essential. This sector is known for its key contribution to economic development, gross domestic product, earning of foreign exchange and employment in the country. Thus, they have to be encouraged to participate in the stock exchange. This definitely contributes to the ownership of the capital market by the Ethiopians. It promotes the culture of investment among the public.

Once people do participate in the capital market, they develop the culture of reduced consumption and thereby promote the culture of saving and investment in the country. Financial institutions should play their role in encouraging the culture of savings on which real investment is based. The precondition for this is hard work and generation of income by citizens who meet their obligation of paying tax, duties, levies, excise, tariffs and other requirements.

It is necessary for the concerned government agency to promote investor education. Investors who may not be aware of alternative business operations related to export and foreign exchange may need training and awareness on these issues. They have to be exposed to information technologies that reveal capital market operations at the global level.

Similarly, employees of the government agency dealing with capital market have to be equipped with the modern art of global marketing. They should be encouraged to impart relevant advice to traders who intend to engage in the capital market. Here, relevant skill transmission is of the essence to reduce wastage in human endeavor in the area of capital market. This is important for ensuring that individuals and institutions are well-informed about the capital market, its opportunities, and associated risks. Earnings made by individual skilled Ethiopian traders and investors are great contributions to the foreign exchange stock of the country. In addition to local experts, Ethiopia needs the support of global financial institutions to develop its capital market.

Collaboration with international financial institutions is valuable for the development of capital market in Ethiopia. These institutions can build the capacity of the country in operating the market. They provide technical assistance including skill development for those involved in capital market operations.

They also assist regulatory bodies that are involved in capital market operations, follow-up and inspection with the goal of preventing malpractices.

Established stock exchanges can provide valuable expertise in creating and supporting capital market development in the country. Of course, the development of a capital market entails challenges such as establishing a robust regulatory environment. In so doing, it builds the confidence of investors. Moreover, by ensuring transparency in the market investors become more confident in the success of their undertakings.

Given the complexity of establishing a capital market, progress may take time. Investors may not see quick results due to unforeseen circumstances in economic operations. This entails close observation of business enterprises in the country. It is, therefore, crucial to monitor official reports, notifications and updates from relevant authorities to understand the time and achievement of major goals, objectives and targets. Based on these achievements investors may be in a position to figure out their future prospects. In this process, the establishment and growth of a capital market in Ethiopia can be determined. This helps investors to contribute to the country's economic development. It creates for them a platform for additional capital formation. This process fosters more investment, and enables the creation of more companies to access diverse sources of funding.

For the most recent and detailed information on the status of the capital market in Ethiopia, it is useful to consult official sources of information. The information should be timely, sequential and orderly. It has to include recent developments in capital market situations.

New, current and up-to-date developments have to be checked for correct actions by investors. They have to be informed of recent regulatory changes with respect to the launching of a stock exchange. In this regard, it is highly recommended to consult official sources such as the Ethiopian Securities Exchange Commission or relevant government agencies.

Additionally, financial news sources may provide insights into recent updates in the area. The slightest misleading information has to be immediately identified before it negatively affects the decision making process by all concerned parties in Ethiopia. In this respect, the responsible Commission should be fully strengthened to fulfill its legal obligations.

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

# Editorial

## Ascending in universal values worth visiting!

Ethiopia continues contributing its significant shares in the world of heritages. Recently, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) inscribed Shuwalid Festival, an annual three-day festival celebrated colorfully by the Harari people of Ethiopia, as an intangible cultural heritage. Interestingly, this contributes a great deal in advancing the progressively improving tourism sector. The Shuwalid has been registered as intangible world heritage from Ethiopia following Meskel, the Geda system and Fichee-chambalaalla and Timket. Likewise, Ethiopia has also become a leading nation in getting registered eleven tangible heritages in UNESCO.

The Shuwalid's inscription as a living intangible cultural heritage was approved during the eighteenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, being held in Botswana from December 4 to 9, 2023. Fortunately, this makes Harar city, one of the historical and ancient cities of Ethiopia, a home to two UNESCO heritages: the historic Jugol and Shuwalid festival. This festival marks the end of six days of fasting to compensate for omissions during Ramadan. The people of Harari celebrate Shuwalid at the shrines of Aw Shulum Ahmed and Aw Akebara, found at the main entrance gates of the walled city of Harar.

One of the stunning aspects of this celebration is, it's also held on the main squares of the city by youngsters who wear colorful traditional attire. It is a special event eagerly awaited by the young people who are expected to find their life partners.

Importantly, among the Harari people, Shuwalid festival serves as a platform for the transmission of performing arts, oral traditions, traditional dress and other cultural elements that promote social cohesion and a sense of identity. It also contributes to cultural exchanges and supports the local community and artisans. In essence, this festival surely promotes peace, solidarity, brotherhood and tourism development. On Shuwalid celebration, not only the Harari culture but also other spectacular cultural shows like Oromo, Afar, Adere, Argoba, Silte and Somale cultures are often demonstrated by youngsters wearing colorful traditional attire. This inclusive feature of the festival increases its uniqueness and significance.

Opportunely, this is the result of the national reform; the Harari people gave due attention to cultivate their cultures and values that have significant roles in promoting their harmonious relationship, following the introduction of national reform. Unlike in the previous system, the current government has encouraged all states to cultivate their cultures; hence, the Harari state, one of the states endowed with remarkable cultural heritages, has continued investing in both tangible and intangible heritages that boost its uniqueness and attractiveness.

Principally, UNESCO's decision of inscribing Shuwalid is a praiseworthy accomplishment. This plays very significant roles in reinforcing the development of the tourism sector not only at the national level but also at global level.

More importantly, in Harari city, there are still several cultural heritages that demand due attention. This city is one of the ancient and historical cities endowed with both tangible and intangible heritages. The hospitality of the Harari people is also very welcoming and impressive. Making use of the advantages the national reform brought, the Harari state has been cultivating and preserving its pre-existing cultural heritages. It is a historic city supremely blessed and worth visiting!



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# Opinion

## Duly recognizing the right thing is quite right

BY MENGESHA AMARE

So the saying goes, "Actions or practical deeds speak louder than words," Ethiopia's all rounded development undertakings with regard to social, economic, political and diplomatic ones have provided it with international recognition despite some sorts of irregularities that have obscured the great steps not to be vividly observed.

Surprisingly, the world is sometimes, even almost all the time, tilts down to those who have preferred arduously hammering propaganda to practically exercising and portraying things on the ground. Instead they have to focus on what is really done not uttered. Of course communication matters and the way we communicate our deeds pays off, but it should follow the reliable aspects and the right channel to be recognized.

Everyone is different; some are more different than others. While physical differences are more noticeable, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral differences can be more profound, not only in persons but also in countries—they make countries who they are. Society has gradually become more accepting of physical diversity. When it comes to a country level, it is going to be much more complicated as it fundamentally encircled with a range of social, economic and even bilateral and multilateral scenarios.

Country recognition has long been a cornerstone of effective administration and efficient running of activists at national level for the sake of the general public. The question is does Ethiopia lack such a rewarding move towards benefiting its citizens at all corners?

True, as competition for growth and development as well as reinvigorating steps towards prosperity requires the combined effort of all, Ethiopia has all the time embarked on a variety of sectors to make them competitive ones, and remarkable outcomes are recorded along this line.

Creating a recognition program is a good step to help countries work more for change. Yes, recognition refers to all the ways an individual, organization or country shows its appreciation for other people, companies or a nation at a larger scale. It can take many forms and may or may not involve pecuniary rewards, but carries the sense of nationally, regionally, continentally or globally be acknowledged.

The one that weighs has to be counted and comparatively measured. Since there is no one absolute in due course of running activities. For example, what Ethiopia has done so far regarding green legacy by itself would be sufficient for it to get reputed let alone with the presence of many other meaningful projects and appealing deeds. True, there is something invigorating about a change brought about by countries where

recognition is more than just an end-of-year event as it has incorporated a number of things and varied elements.

As recognition makes nations feel promotions are fair, spurs innovation and extra effort, they would reinvigorate all what have commenced by them. The effort of the countries has to be connected with the bigger picture.

Yes, Ethiopia has to given the right place it deserves for investment recovers and economic growth is well registered, indeed! Inflation in the country, which currently exceeds the single-digit authorities' target, has been dwindled following the relentless effort exerted by the country. The government has also taken remarkable steps to boost investment and green legacy initiatives thereby helping the country seizing the ladder of success in all aspects. Hence, these and others have to be well recognized.

It is known that despite positive developments, the large external imbalances and the public debt burden are constraining future growth and pose risks to the medium-term outlook. This trend has to be prettily reversed, of course, to help the nation hit the set targets regarding social, economic, cultural or even political developments.

Since its coming into power, the incumbent administration has created space for a more inclusive political dialogue and has taken steps to bring stability to Ethiopia in particular and to the entire region in general. Could all these remarkable steps be forgotten unless deliberately ignored!?

Even on the economic front, the new government has announced an ambitious reform program for the country aimed at opening the economy to private investment and competition to support sustainable growth.

The new legal framework for public-private partnerships can also play an important role in strengthening growth by promoting private sector development and the provision of public services via reducing government costs and promoting other lucrative moves.

The government also wants to develop the domestic financial system. An important first step will be to introduce a market for government securities with market-determined interest rates.

As a more supple system for the exchange rate is also needed to increase foreign exchange reserves, the country has been doing all its best to make the market stable. This would in turn support the Ethiopia's continued development. Therefore, taking all positive deeds Ethiopia has been carrying out in its development and prosperity journey into account, the international community has to provide it with the recognition it has to garner.

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

# Business & Economy

## Heightening exploitation of renewable energy sources

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Ethiopia is endowed with abundant renewable energy sources such as surface and underground water, wind, solar, geothermal and natural gas. However, due to lack of sufficient capital, technology and well trained manpower, exploitation of the resources is not full-fledged.

Due to the absence of supply of modern energy in the rural parts of the country, high number of population is forced to use biomass energy by clearing forests which again aggravates land degradation, soil erosion and destroying habitats.

The in-house pollution due to utilizing biomass energy in rural parts is responsible to posing health risks and contributes to high child mortality rate. Ethiopia began cultivating its energy sources since 1940s by constructing hydro-power dams for electric power generation and in the last three decades various hydropower dams have been constructed. Among others are Tekeze, Gilgel-gibe I-III (the fourth one is under construction), Tana Beles, Genale and the Abbay Dam which is eyeing its completion soon.

The other energy source under utilization is wind farm. Wind farms are constructed in Adama, Mekele and Asela and the generated power is poured to the national grid. The developing of power from solar is also expanded in various parts of the country.

Currently, many private local and foreign companies are engaged in distributing solar panels. In the rural parts, solar energy is used in schools, clinics and at household level for different purposes like light and charging mobile phones. Students also can study their lessons at night in their home.

Ethiopia has abundant geothermal energy potential in its rift valley region particularly in Afar but because of it is a big-ticket project; the resource could not be exploited significantly yet. However, as part of the development of renewable energy sources in the Aluto-Langano almost 25 kilometer away from Batu town in Oromia region the development of geothermal is undergoing for the last decade and a half. Foreign companies from the US and the Iceland have invested millions of Dollars for exploiting the resource.

Ethiopia should exploit its renewable energy sources not only for meeting its energy demand but also to attain the goal for developing green economy.

As it is understood, the nation's economic mainstay is agriculture which is climate sensitive. Currently, the sector has been critically affected from the brunt of climate change and global warming. Therefore, to withstand the impact of climate change, the government is implementing adaptation and mitigation mechanisms. Ethiopia is also signal to the convention of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). By 2022, the UNFCCC had 198 parties and is the part of the 2015 Paris Agreement. It stipulates the member states



Wind farm: a part of clean energy

to pursue clean energy development.

To implement adaptation program for the last 20 years, billions of seedlings have been planted annually. The water shade management and terracing farm lands located in slop areas to protect from soil erosion is carried out. The current green legacy initiative introduced by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) which is characterized by planting billions of seedlings annually is part of the mechanism. In line with tree planting, expanding agro forestry helps the nation's aspiration to ensure food security. Fruits such as avocado, papaya, and banana are planted and harvested and supplied to the market.

There are also other forms of adaptation mechanism and among others expanding irrigation farm is one of it. It uses surface and underground water and such practice reduces the agriculture dependency on rain which is vulnerable to global warming.

Supplying generator and providing extension service to farmers also can be mentioned as part of adaptation mechanism. Supporting of farmers who lost their crops due to drought or flood through weather index system supported by the World Bank is part of the mechanism. To obtain the financial support, farmers should be members of the credit associations in their local areas beforehand and save money.

When they face crop failure due to drought, it will be proved whether it is hit by drought or not via gathering information from satellite through scientific device and agronomists will visit the affected farm. Following the approval of the agronomists, the farmers can obtain the money which is subsidized by the World Bank.

Mitigation mechanism is a transition from utilizing carbon based energy sources to renewable energy sources which are mentioned above. The carbon based energy which is imported from abroad such as benzene, gasoline and others have hazardous effect on the environment and contribute to the global warming.

Currently, Ethiopia spends billions of Dollars annually to import the carbon based energy sources and for the poor country which suffers from the crunch of foreign

currency, it is unaffordable. Hence, on top of supporting the development of green economy, replacing carbon based energy by the renewable energy saves the meager resource which is allotted for the importation of carbon based energy.

Utilization of electrified rail transportation from Addis Ababa to Djibouti and the light rail way in the Capital City can be a showcase for the transition from carbon based energy in to renewable energy sources.

As mentioned above, majority of the population which reside in the rural part of the country use biomass energy by clearing forests which disrupt the very objective of green legacy initiative. According to environment scientists, cutting trees, in addition to posing soil erosion and land degradation, it emits carbon to the environment which in turn aggravates global warming. In fact, Ethiopia's and other developing countries' contribution for the global warming is negligible as compared to the economically advanced countries. However, not to repeat the rich countries' past mistake, they embarked on the journey for the development of green economy and all their economic activities should not compromise their aspiration for clean energy development.

Therefore, heightening supply of modern energy sources to the rural part of the country is essential. Indeed, the fragmented settlement of the people makes the stretching of electric line very expensive but to attain the goal, continuing electrification program in the rural towns where more than two thousand residents reside is an optimal option.

Side by side with these efforts, providing energy saving stoves to the rural community has been taken as a way out. Various private companies also engaged in distributing the stove. Using the stoves reduces the rate of farmers cutting trees and clearing vegetation cover. In addition, various projects working in distributing stoves could create job opportunities to thousands.

Developing renewable energy also can serve as boosting the nation's foreign currency earning and reserving capacity. So far, Ethiopia exports electric power to Sudan and

Djibouti and could earn handsome amount of hard currency. Stretching hydroelectric power wire to Kenya is also completed and sooner exporting power will be started.

The completion of the Abbay Dam is expected to enhance the nation's hard currency garnering capacity. Cognizant of the value of exploiting renewable Energy, Ethiopia's Ministry of Finance and the United Arab Emirates' AMEA Power agreed to build the Horn of Africa's largest 300 MW onshore wind power project, which represents a significant milestone in the country's renewable energy sector.

The Minister of Finance of Ethiopia, Ahmed Shide, announced the signing of a landmark agreement with AMEA Power for the construction of the Aysha Wind Power Project. The project is poised to become the largest wind energy project in the Horn of Africa after investing 600 million USD.

An expansive 18,000-hectare wind farm located in Ethiopia's Horn of Africa region, the Aysha Wind Power Project represents a significant milestone in the country's renewable energy sector. AMEA Power's extensive experience in developing large-scale renewable energy projects makes it a great partner for this venture.

The Ministry of Finance said in a joint press release that the agreement demonstrates the Ethiopian government's unwavering commitment to renewable energy and dedication to attracting private investment in the energy sector. Ethiopian Electric Power (EEP) and the Ministry of Finance are working together to harness the region's abundant wind resources and generate clean, sustainable electricity to meet Ethiopia's growing demand for energy.

The Aysha Wind Power Project is projected to produce approximately 1.22 Tera-Wh of electricity annually, significantly contributing to Ethiopia's power generation capacity. Furthermore, approximately 2,000 jobs are expected to be created during the construction and operations phases, benefiting the local economy.

Ethiopia's Minister of Finance, Ahmed Shide said, "The Aysha wind power project will be implemented with strong government-to-government support by AMEA Power, prominent private sector player."

Abebe Gebrehiwot, the Frame Work Management and Contract Support Directorate at the Ministry of Finance, stated for his part; "This project represents a major stride in our journey towards increasing clean energy, production, providing sustainable electricity to our people, and driving economic growth and job creation in the region."

The signing of this agreement with AMEA Power marks a significant milestone, the ministry said. It demonstrates the Ministry of Finance's determination to attract private investments in the energy sector and increase the share of renewable energy in Ethiopia's power mix.

## Art & Culture

# African philosophy: The transition from eurocentric bias to self-assertion

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

Philosophy in Africa in general and in Ethiopia in particular is an academic subject that started to be taught in colleges relatively lately, as the first department of philosophy at the Addis Ababa University was established sometime in the early 1980s. This does not however imply that African, and by implication, Ethiopian philosophy is only about 50 years old. It does only indicate that the relatively late introduction of philosophy in academic circles although African philosophy must be centuries old in existence without anyone being aware of it or without anyone paying attention to it.

Philosophy was first invented by the Greeks and then transferred to Europe and America in the course of centuries while African or Ethiopian philosophy remained uncovered or unknown although the people were practicing for a very until they gathered the dim awareness that they existed in a state of nature until the dawn of the last century. Africans in those distant times existed as human beings without being aware of how they looked at the world around them. It was later on that they were practicing their own brands of traditional beliefs or perceptions which later on became to be known as their spontaneous percepts. They had still to wait for a long time before their daily experiences found articulation and became collective conscious.

According to Oxford Languages Dictionary, philosophy in its universal and modern sense is defined as, "The study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence, especially when considered as an academic discipline" or "A theory or attitude that acts as a guiding principle for behavior."

What philosophy is good for, or what human objectives it serves has remained the perennial question that has pitted philosophers against each other and continues to do so around many academic institutions around the world. Apart from the interminable arguments it often provokes about something rather esoteric, philosophy continues to provoke debates around many controversial and highly abstract concepts.

In my freshman year at college, I had to take a course called phil.101 or Logic. It was a basic introduction to philosophy because logic is considered a formal science that investigates how conclusions follow from premises. Out of a term-long course, what I now remember more than anything else is the broad smile on Professor Claude Sumner's face and bits and pieces of his utterances like "Man is mortal. Aristotle is a man. Therefore Aristotle is mortal."

I could not see why he was smiling while philosophy was no joke. I think he was trying to smooth the rough edges of the subject with his smile. I guess now that teaching philosophy with a serious mien on one's face could have spoiled the show.

Another unforgettable expression was when he spoke about death and said, smiling of course: "A dead Einstein does not know

what one plus one is equal to." Personally, I was more interested in Sumner's ubiquitous and trade-mark smile than in logical thinking because I could not grasp what was the use of inference, deductions or conclusions from given premises and what practical relevance they had in real life.

The practical application of philosophy is still a hotly debated topic and more so during my student days when studying philosophy had no visible relevance in life and the number of students who enrolled in the department of philosophy could be counted on the fingers of one's hand. Obviously man cannot live in pure speculation of the nature of life, death and the other dimensions of existence. If you studied English language you could become a teacher of a foreign language, but if you study philosophy you cannot become a teacher because you are supposed to learn educational philosophy as well as methods of teaching and related courses.

When Marxism-Leninism was introduced to the college philosophy curriculum, it appeared that learning philosophy had finally found purpose or objective. Although a transient one. Logic was switched for Marxist philosophy. Marxism was stylish and we all became Marxists to join the chorus without knowing the consequences of our decision. Professor Sumner, may his soul rest in peace, who was head of the philosophy department at that time was branded an "idealist philosopher" good for nothing by the new "Marxists" because of his religious affiliation as a Jesuit, and therefore an opponent of Marxism whose basic foundation was dialectical materialism. Professor Sumner was subsequently downgraded to the status of lecturing in general philosophy or wait until he could be retired without dignity.

A few dozens of students who graduated from the philosophy department have become lecturers while others went abroad to do their PhDs. Still others found "jobs" in non-philosophical occupations that had nothing to do with philosophical speculation. They became editors or journalists or what we may call 'undefined professionals'. The few among the remaining degree holders were lucky enough to land jobs in some dark corners of well-paying NGOs where they languished for the rest of their lives.

African philosophy was not much known at that time. Ethiopian philosophy was even unthinkable. So, whenever some academics raised these topics, they considered both philosophies underdeveloped; looking at African philosophy through the distorted and biased prisms of Western philosophical paradigms.

It all boiled down to showing how African philosophy was undeveloped or useless something that amounted to the same a Western academic criticism of its "backwardness". This is what is called the Eurocentric view on African philosophy, which is based on the assumption that Africans can't have a philosophy of their own, a view that was further elaborated during European colonialism.

Tsenay Serequeberhan, an Eritrean academic who published a collection of philosophical essays on African philosophy quoted Jacques Derrida, a French philosopher of Algerian descent, who said that, "Metaphysics-the white mythology which resembles and reflects the culture of the West: the white man takes his own mythology, his own logos, that is, the mythos of idiom, for universal form of that he must still wish to call Reason."

As such, he search for African philosophy in the post-colonial period is a rebellion against this Eurocentric bias that colonialists used to justify their colonial conquests in the name of "civilization" or as a civilizing project. In his essay entitled, "Is there an African Philosophy?", Innocent Onyewuenyi says that, "The Africa that is portrayed in books by Western ethnologists and historians is the Africa of savage Africans who did nothing, developed nothing, or created nothing historical.

The man who brought out African and Ethiopian philosophy from darkness to light was Professor Sumner who used his time of academic isolation to articulate the basic premises of Ethiopian philosophy that centered on Zara Yacob and his disciple Wolde Hiwot.

In the 1960s and 1970s, there were many African academic philosophers who lectured or wrote about African philosophy, but none of them had developed a systematic study of this philosophy. Professor Sumner was the first to unearth what he called "the philosophy of man" from under the centuries old rubbles of African traditional thoughts and brought it to international attention; thereby turning it into a respectable field of philosophical inquiry.

It was largely after Claude Sumner's books were published and attracted so much attention that African philosophers took their philosophy African philosophy seriously and somehow disputed the Western bias that prevailed for so long concerning the non-existence of African or Ethiopian philosophy. According to one source, "The greatest contribution of Claude Sumner is as such found in proving the existence African philosophy through his studies of Ethiopian philosophy,

Such a study identified oral, written, adaptive elements in Ethiopian philosophy." This is to say that Professor Sumner did not directly study the philosophies of African people everywhere but he studied Ethiopian philosophy and through it he logically inferred the existence and substance of African philosophy at large."

What is Ethiopian philosophy according to Professor Sumner? According to Fasil Merawi's thesis entitled, "Claude Sumner and the Quest for an Ethiopian Philosophy" said that, "Contemporary discussions on Ethiopian philosophy are directly influenced by the works of Canadian philosopher Claude Sumner who developed most of his life in studying the different dimensions of Ethiopian philosophy and wisdom. He produced volumes of books and numerous

articles that demonstrated the existence of philosophy and its varying manifestations of Ethiopian philosophy.

Professor Sumner's inquiry of Ethiopian philosophy was directed towards, "written philosophy, traditional oral wisdom found in narratives and proverbs and finally foreign philosophical wisdom that is synthesized and creatively adapted to the Ethiopia context." Professor Sumner did that by questioning the Eurocentric bias that denied the existence of a non-Western philosophy, escaping the charge of ethno-philosophy and situating Ethiopian philosophy on different modalities of Ethiopian experience."

Eurocentric perspective in any academic discipline consists of, "focusing on European culture or history to the exclusion of a wider view of the world implicitly regarding European culture as pre-eminent." In philosophy, Eurocentric views are those that only European philosophy is authentic, preeminent and universal while the world views or beliefs of other peoples are regarded as irrelevant or non-existent or if they existed, they were in their infancies or unable of further development. The indirect implication of this Eurocentric amounted that only the philosophical traditions of Europeans should be allowed to exist and be imitated by others as the pinnacles of universal truth.

The Eurocentric view of philosophy in turn served as a justification of the political domination of Europe over Africa and the then unknown or undeveloped parts of the world. Thus is a typical example of philosophy serving the ideological and material supremacy of Europe over Africa for many centuries. However, Eurocentric views did not lose their supremacy without a fight.

It required centuries of struggles on the part of the oppressed people of the world to shake off the ideological and philosophical shackles imposed on Africa by colonialists and their intellectual defenders, whether they were artists, writers, diplomats and politicians. Unfortunately decolonization in the 1960s and 70s did not automatically lead to the weakening of Eurocentric philosophy and its negative impact on modern African philosophical traditions. The struggle is still underway, mostly silently and sometimes vocally whenever a breakthrough appears in the going debate in favor of African philosophy.

To make a long story short, philosophy in general, African and Ethiopian philosophy in particular continues to thrive as tons of new discoveries are being made that confirm and reconfirm their existence. Thousands of books and essays are written to this effect. However, the major issues of African philosophy that should provoke informed debates nowadays should be how to develop African philosophy in a way that would accelerated the spiritual and material renaissance of the African man and the building of a modern African civilization based on its ancient traditions, value systems, literature and anything that touches upon African thinking and African being in the broadest sense of the terms.

# Indepth

## Addis in transformation

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

As a resident of Addis Ababa I cannot deny that the city has been visibly changing in the past several years. The question is 'are all the changes that we experience positive? Or there are issues that could be the source of anxiety for all those who live here permanently. The first evident change of the city is in its population size. There has not been a census for years now but it is clear that we see a progressive population growth in the city by just looking at the streets at every hour of the day and in all quarters of the city, not only in the so called central squares or shopping areas at pick hours.

Addis Ababa is Ethiopia's symbol of the country's dynamism and growth in many senses. It is the economic capital as well with many of the industries located in and around Addis. It is hence in many ways a place that continues to attract people living in the regional states, particularly those in the more remote areas in search of better economic opportunities, better social services such as health facilities and educational prospects. Hence, it is obviously the first choice of Ethiopians for living. What is more, there are few Ethiopians who do not have some relative albeit distant in the capital and there are stories that those who come to Addis have a great opportunity of growth and building an economic empire if they manage to find some form of lucrative business activity and join it. The pull factor of Addis is enormous and irresistible.

People say anything is possible in Addis provided you are dedicated to working hard and many people hailing from the provinces have written successful stories of progress and achievements. These words travel fast to the countryside becoming a stimulus to move to Addis. This myth of Addis as a place where anything is possible has been coming down from past generations of people who have moved to Addis to start a new life living near some relative or friend. They then build up their own life.

Even foreigners have always been fascinated by the fact that Ethiopians have built churches right next to mosques and in perfect harmony these two groups of religious faithful are seen celebrating and enjoying the festivities of the others harmoniously. The example of the famous Addis Ababa's huge market zone called Mercato hosting both St. Ragueel Church and the Grand Anwar Mosque side by side has been cited in many cases as the symbol of peaceful co-habitation between Moslems and Christians in Ethiopia without any hint of hostility.

Besides, the fact that so many people have been moving to Addis choosing it as their new home has blown up the number of new residents and that can be witnessed when you go outside the streets in the city, congested with people some of whom are clearly new to the surrounding. One can

***Even foreigners have always been fascinated by the fact that Ethiopians have built churches right next to mosques and in perfect harmony these two groups of religious faithful are seen celebrating and enjoying the festivities of the others harmoniously***

easily find people asking for addresses such as certain government institutions, hospitals and schools etc. when you move

around in the city. We do not know if the city administrators are aware of all these phenomena that the population of Addis Ababa is growing by leaps and bounds without the necessary services growing side by side to match the needs. We talked above about issues of housing, transportation and various social services such as water provision, power and the like. With the number of unemployed people increasing by the day due to the influx of so many people, the city is seen being congested with make shift houses made of plastic sheets and in certain quarters the entire neighbourhood is seen overcrowded.

Inevitably the issue of security becomes alarming because there is room for criminality and at times the police have come across organized groups engaged in criminal activities such as robbing shops or mugging as well as ordinary thefts even if they can be considered very low by many huge cities such as Addis and considering the level of poverty that reigns in it.

Furthermore, we should not forget that as much as Addis has extremely rich residents who run the economy and live in luxurious quarters, there are also many poor and low income or unemployed people always engaged in trying to make ends meet.

In many ways Addis is the safest place in the country however because there is also tight security presence at all times including the federal police, the city police force as well as special uniformed groups who are dispatched in practically every neighborhood and supervise and control the movements of potential criminals or suspects and are engaged in prevention of illicit activities in time.

Besides, many Addis neighborhoods also have their own security units that are organized by the residents. Some neighborhoods even have fences that protect the houses that are located in there with huge gates that are controlled by the internal security forces. This has helped criminality remain very low and potential criminals are discouraged by the tight and ever present security forces.

Addis Ababa is a city of millions. The estimates by government offices lie at around four and a half million but many demographic experts estimate that the number of people living in Addis could very easily be more than double that number. The city has sprawled many kilometers outside the normal borders and there are several new quarters with huge population presence.

On the other hand, we have come to see the construction of various green areas and parks that have become a trade mark of the Abiy Ahmed administration. The premier has been commended for his emphasis on making Addis a green and clean city with projects such as the Unity Park, Friendship Park and Entoto Park to cite just a few and these places have become tourist attraction and will help Addis have a new image that

can attract visitors even locally. Many streets have been furnished with large sidewalks that are really comfortable to walk on for pedestrians and even sit when they feel like it in the various seats that have been planted on the sidewalks. This is new in Addis and has been appreciated by residents.

The next challenge for Addis is finishing the so called Riverside Project in which the canals in the city are destined to be cleaned so that people can enjoy not only their sight but also sit next to them without having to suffer any unpleasant odour. Addis needs an extensive cleanup campaign especially regarding its rivers because many inhabitants have the habit of throwing garbage in these canals and some even have linked their toilets to these waters rather than use the underground sewerage system the city has that takes all the waste to the hinterland around Akaki.

As the capital city of Africa, Addis Ababa is one of the busiest cities of the continent hosting regularly several international conferences and meetings. With the construction of so many first class hotels such as Sheraton and Skylight the city has become a hub of conference tourism. Benefiting from being the origin of the largest African air lines that is 'Ethiopian', millions of tourists or travelers do pass through Addis' Bole International Airport and this has presented the occasion to exploit this fact to attract these passengers to pass some time in Addis. They would be advised to visit some of the historic places of the city such as the museums, monuments and even the city parks such as Unity Park where you find wild animals such as lions and find Ethiopia in miniature with all the regions represented.

The government says it is trying to catch up with the changes in the society so that the services are adequately provided. Being the symbol of the country as well the government has a huge stake in the welfare and good image of the city so that it can be appreciated not only by the local population but also by foreigners particularly Africans who consider Addis as their second home. Ethiopia's reputation in Africa is high and must be maintained. Africans consider Ethiopians as their comrades in arms who have inspired them with their long history of independence and freedom and the country's glorious past history.

As the seat of the AU, Africans are always fond of coming to Addis for conferences and summits and they always say they feel at home in Addis. That is why we need to take care of the city with all the powers we have and manage it in the best manner possible. It should be a forward looking city with clear and achievable plans that can keep the city within the bounds of effective administration and keeping rates of criminal activities as low as possible. Moreover, the weather conditions of Addis are so pleasant that one is fascinated by its moderate temperatures throughout the year.



# Law & Politics

## A bonanza for the Red Sea region

BY EYUEL KIFLU

Ethiopia's quest for access to the sea has garnered significant attention both domestically and internationally. Media outlets worldwide have reported on the matter, and even foreign analysts such as Lawrence Freeman and Andrew Korybko (PhD) have offered their insights the country's burgeoning interest to have a sea outlet. This issue according to scholars would prompt the region to consider cooperation for mutual benefit.

Ethiopia's commitment to working on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) without causing harm to downstream countries is a clear indication of the country's genuine intentions for cooperation. The country's pursuit of access to the sea is no different. And, it is aimed at fostering unity and prosperity with neighboring countries, rather than causing trouble.

Experts have weighed on that the benefits of Ethiopia's quest for sea access extend beyond its own borders, potentially enhancing the lives of millions of people in the strategic region. With its large economy, abundant workforce, and vast market, the country has the potential to attract foreign direct investment that can stimulate economic activity in the region. Even the big thing is that neighboring countries can get grains and vegetables in in fair prices if the country's production surpasses domestic consumption. So it is important that the nation secures a sea outlet to easily get fertilizer and other agricultural products from abroad and provide them at affordable prices for the local market.

In the spirit of mutual benefit, Ethiopia is willing to share its valuable assets, such as Ethiopian Airlines, Ethio-telecom, and the GERD.

Also, the once-Red Sea coastal nation has seen sharp population growth, miraculous economic turnaround, and staggering import and export volumes that are all pushing the nation to zoom in on alternative port access.

Experts whom *The Ethiopian Herald* approached for an exclusive interview expressed conviction in the country's rationale.

Accordingly, Professor of Practice and International Consultant in Water Resource Engineering, Admasu Gebeyehu (PhD) stated that any issues rising in the Red Sea have significant implications for Ethiopia. The country's concerns in the Red Sea extend beyond mere port access, encompassing broader security issues. "Given Ethiopia's close geographical proximity to the Red Sea, its development and stability are closely linked to the area."

Given the region's busy maritime trade and security challenges like piracy and



terrorism, countries establish military bases to safeguard trade routes and combat these threats. "The expansion of military bases allows regional countries to train their own military forces, fostering peace and also attracting financial support," the scholar added.

It is to be recalled that Ethiopia has reorganized a naval force that was disbanded decades ago. The military wing came into being on the heels of the 2018 reform with troops trained in Russia and other countries.

Mulualem Hailemariam is a political science and international relations lecturer at Wachamo University. He believed that optimism about future sea access might be the driving force behind the re-establishment of the Ethiopian naval force.

"A naval force would enhance Ethiopia's defensive capabilities and enable better control over goods entering and leaving the country. Thus, the re-establishment of the Ethiopian naval force could potentially be a preparatory measure for future sea access."

As Ethiopia pushes for a call for regional cooperation to utilize the Red Sea, there have been fears of a possible war outbreak or regional rift, a claim dismissed by Mulualem. He refuted some individuals' attempt to relate Ethiopia's recent military parade on the 116th National Army Day as a warming-up exercise. "Such assertions are entirely false and that military parades are customary events in every country and serving different purposes and Ethiopia is not trying to flex its muscles."

In his parliamentary remark, Premier Abiy expressed Ethiopia's desire to utilize the Red Sea through cooperation and a give-and-take mechanism with concerned bodies. By doing this, he also addresses some groups' concerns on how Ethiopia can meet its port needs- it is through a rule-based approach and respecting the

sovereignty of coastal neighbors.

"By promoting a national agenda and highlighting key aspects, the PM aims to steer the conversation towards Ethiopia's priorities". Working collaboratively on Red Sea matters does not invade anyone's rights; rather, it presents a promising opportunity for all parties involved," Mulualem added.

Ethiopian diplomats stationed worldwide must actively engage in this issue beyond the federal government's efforts, he commented, adding that this is a matter of national interest that would unite all Ethiopians, regardless of political affiliations.

Besides cooperation, the academician sees legal means as a tool to secure access to the Red Sea pointing to international law as the first option. The 1983's United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea permits landlocked nations to work with neighboring nations for the purposes of navigation, research, and transit.

In this regard, he highlighted the soundness of PM Abiy's a give-and-take proposal in which the country could offer shares in strategic companies including Ethio-telecom and Ethiopian Airlines, in exchange for port access. Such an exchange aligns with international law and diplomatic mechanisms.

"The second option involves diplomatic negotiations, which are closely related to the first option. Addis Ababa reached an agreement with Somaliland in 2018 to have a 19% share in the Berbera Port, although the process is still on-going". This agreement demonstrates that the Red Sea issue is not a recent development but rather an on-going endeavour.

To achieve Ethiopia's interests in accessing the sea, the role of international law experts, who will contribute proactively and collectively towards the goal, is critical, the expert emphasized.

**The country's pursuit of access to the sea is no different. And, it is aimed at fostering unity and prosperity with neighboring countries, rather than causing trouble**

# Women in Focus

## Julie Meheretu: Unmatched Ethiopian-American abstract painter

COMPILED BY STAFF REPORTER

Julie Meheretu's work is abstract. Her sensual and emotional compositions are imbued with palimpsestic and inventive marks that emerge to the surface from a density of multilayered and complex ideas that originate from her longstanding engagement with the traditions and traces of history and photography. Her references are far-reaching: equally art historical and socio-political, geographical, contemporaneous, and personal. Yet her insistence on the language of abstraction has afforded her the unique emancipatory space for experimentation and expression

Julie, a prominent Ethiopian American contemporary artist has recently achieved a record-breaking sale with her painting "Walkers with the Dawn and Morning." This abstract artwork, featuring ink and acrylic on canvas, fetched an impressive sum of 10.7 million USD at a Sotheby's auction in New York. The painting takes its name from a Langston Hughes poem from the 1920s.

Julie, born in Ethiopia in 1970, moved to the United States with her family in 1977 during a time of political turmoil. She has since become one of the most renowned figures in the rapidly growing contemporary African art scene. "Walkers With the Dawn and Morning" was created as part of an exhibition responding to the impact of Hurricane Katrina on New Orleans in 2005.

During the auction, two bidders competed for the artwork, gradually driving up the price. The final sale price, including fees, reached the record-breaking sum of 10.7 million USD. It's worth noting that Julie previously held the record with a sale of 9.3 million USD just the month before.

Sotheby's described "Walkers With the Dawn and Morning" as a composition that incorporates Julie's distinct style, combining architectural drawing, vibrant vectors, and calligraphic sweeps. The sale of this artwork reflects the strong interest in contemporary African art, particularly abstract works, as the market continues to grow.

Hannah O'Leary, head of Sotheby's modern and contemporary African art department, noted that the market for African art is evolving beyond its initial phase and becoming more discerning. This indicates a deeper appreciation and understanding of the artistic contributions from the African continent.

In addition to her auction success, Julie was also selected to create BMW's next Art Car. Her artwork will be featured on a BMW car that will participate in the 24 Hours of Le Mans race next year, further solidifying her influence and recognition in the art world.



Ethiopian-American artist Julie Meheretu

Julie's multi-layered paintings, which explore the effects of urban sociopolitical changes, have captivated viewers and earned her prestigious honors such as the MacArthur Fellowship. Her artwork delves into themes of social behavior and the psychogeography of space. Julie's exhibitions have been showcased in renowned galleries and museums, including the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA).

Julie Meheretu's artistic achievements in the art market have been remarkable, with her works fetching high prices and setting auction records. For instance, one of her paintings was sold at Sotheby's Hong Kong for an impressive 9.32 million USD, establishing a new record for an African-born artist. This sale not only showcases the recognition and value of Julie's talent but also highlights her significant contributions to contemporary art.

Julie is renowned for her paintings that exhibit cartographic elements while simultaneously creating a disorienting experience for the viewer. Since the 1990s, she has skillfully combined rigorous geometric systems with symbols from her own imagination, often incorporating expressive gestures that convey specific spatial relationships between unknown reference points. The titles of her works, such as "Black City" and "Back to Gondwanaland," hint at the idea of mapping or exploration, but she also employs titles like "Mumbo Jumbo" that challenge any sense of certainty.

Her artworks possess extraordinary vitality, achieved through her adept abstraction techniques, which allow her to explore political themes such as globalism and migration. Julie skillfully navigates the tension between abstract tradition and political engagement, capturing the ambiguous ways in which geopolitics intersects with the intercontinental landscape.

One notable example of her technique is the mural she created for Goldman



Walkers With the Dawn and Morning

Sachs in 2009. Known as "Mural," it intends to represent a "spatial history of global capitalism." Julie accomplished this by layering abstractions of global trade routes, historical stock exchange architecture, and corporate logos. The result is a complex composition that defies easy interpretation, evoking the intricate nature of the marketplace. Julie's portrayal of capitalism as a self-perpetuating system with an inconceivable internal logic raises questions about reform and wealth distribution.

While some may view Julie's commission from Goldman Sachs as cynical opportunism, a way to profit from the "wages of sin," others see it as an optimistic gesture. Placing the mural in the lobby of one of the world's most influential investment banking firms, where financiers would encounter it daily, could potentially provoke a reevaluation of global wealth distribution. It serves as a thought-provoking catalyst that challenges individuals to reorient their perspectives on economic structures and power dynamics.

Early in her career, Julie Meheretu drew inspiration from the Situationist International, a group of revolutionary artists and intellectuals who aimed to transform various aspects of society in the 1950s and '60s. In 2001, some of her work directly referenced the visionary New Babylon concept of Constant Nieuwenhuys, an architect associated with the Situationists.

New Babylon envisioned a global utopia that would eliminate borders and liberate people from the constraints of property ownership. While Julie's artwork clearly drew aesthetic influence from this concept, her interpretation, as reflected in titles like "Babel Unleashed," presented a more unsettling and complex perspective.

However, the impact of Situationism on Julie extended beyond aesthetics. It had a profound philosophical influence on her artistic approach. Much of Julie's work can be interpreted through the lens of psychogeography, a concept defined by the Situationists as the study of how the geographical environment, whether intentionally designed or not, affects the emotions and behavior of individuals. The Situationists explored psychogeography through a practice called *dérive*, which involved aimlessly wandering through urban spaces without a predetermined destination. This approach to navigating the cityscape can be seen as a meaningful way to engage with Meheretu's intricate canvases.

By employing the *dérive* method, viewers can transit through Julie's paintings, not only as an artistic practice but also as a metaphor for navigating the world. It becomes a journey from enigmatic maps to indeterminate territories, urging the viewer to question and transcend established concepts such as capitalism, borders, and even the historical associations carried by continents like Africa and North America.

The title "Back to Gondwanaland" evokes the idea of "back to Africa," which refers to a proposed migratory path for escaping slavery and racism in the United States. Julie presents the movement of tectonic plates as a metaphor for continental migration and the ultimate process of reorientation. While geologists can provide insights into the deep past, it is the role of an artist like Julie to chart a path forward by reflecting on history. Through her art, Julie invites viewers to contemplate alternative narratives and reimagine the future by looking back at the complexities of the past.

(Source: BBC and Forbs)

# Society

## What are benefits of studying abroad

BY CLAYTON JOHNSTON

Why, you may ask, would any student seek to attend high school outside of Ethiopia? And if so, why Canada of all places? These questions are typical of the ones that I receive every day in my role as the Director of Admissions at Brentwood College School, Canada's largest boarding school. I spend up to three months of the year on the road recruiting students for our school (as I write this, I am currently in Addis Ababa). My answers will vary according to the country I'm in, but usually I begin with what is most important to families: safety and university placement.

It is interesting watching the trends of where students choose to attend boarding schools around the world as they seem to change according to world events. Ultimately parents want to know that the country their kids are going to is one that is peaceful, secure, and safe. Over the last few years, Canada has stood out in this regard, and we are seeing an influx from countries that would have typically chosen the United States or England in the past (for example, even students living in the USA are looking elsewhere. This year our school has 50 American students and safety is one of the main reasons why they are choosing Canada).

In terms of university placement, typically, 100% of our graduates are accepted to universities around the world. Most impressively, 80%+ receive offers from their 'first-choice' university. These numbers would be comparable in most quality boarding schools around the world. This is because a good boarding school education is unique in that it can offer a university preparatory experience and independence while students are still in high school. Without a doubt, this makes transitioning to the post-secondary world in many ways, seamless.

The next thing I would explain are the myriad opportunities both within and outside of the actual classrooms themselves. It is well known that there are three main academic systems in the world: the British system (IGCSE, 'O' and 'A' levels), The International Baccalaureate system (IB), and the American (Advanced Placement, or AP system). Our school (and the same could be said about most quality schools in North America) have chosen the Advanced Placement system to hang their hat on. Why? The strength of the AP system lies in the ability of their students to meaningfully engage in the abundance of extracurricular opportunities offered, even as they challenge themselves academically. And they can do this all the way through their high school experience (contrarily, due to the demands academically and their emphasis on exams, it is beyond difficult to fully commit to passions outside of the classroom once a student gets into the senior years of high school in both the IB and British systems). I always suggest

***It is evident to anyone analyzing of the current data, that students who have attended a renowned boarding school have an unequivocal competitive advantage when it comes to university placement***

that families who are wondering about the pros and cons of the various systems should simply look at the university placements resulting from each system. To what post-secondary institutions do their graduates typically get accepted? I would then explain that Brentwood College School and similar AP boarding school students get into the same top universities as students graduating from IB or British schools. However, the experience is so much more because of the opportunities beyond the classroom. In my mind, as an educator and based on the evidence, there is no comparison in terms of a wide-ranging quality education.

Okay, exactly so how is AP experience more, you may ask?

If I use my school as an example, students have access to over 40 art options (visual, technical, performing, and speech), as well as 26 sports options, and our unique

timetable allows them to choose more extra-curricular options than any other school in the world (imagine being able to choose up to four separate creative options, each for three hours a week, as well as being able to participate in a fully dedicated athletic program). Why do schools like ours commit to this? Because we believe in the importance that creativity and fitness play in the overall mental and physical well-being of young adults. Over and above this, providing world-class coaching and instruction on site so that students can excel in areas of passion simply cannot be found in most typical secondary school experiences or, indeed in many countries (as an example, we have had 26 graduates from Brentwood that have gone on to compete in the Olympics. What quality boarding schools can provide is unique and life-changing).

Okay, so there are lots of students in Ethiopia that get accepted to university. So, why should they go abroad?

Outside of the benefits mentioned above, from my perspective, the TOP 10 reasons that students from around the world seek to have a boarding school experience in Canada are to:

1. Attain a global experience and better understand the world (it goes without saying that travel and living abroad broadens one's perspective).
2. Attain a new understanding and appreciation about one's own country (crossing borders and spending time elsewhere allows us to see our own country in a new light).
3. Experience a western education with the hopes of attending a university anywhere in the world (or return to Ethiopia with a wealth of global experience).
4. Set yourself up for the best chance for a successful post-secondary experience.
5. Live and learn in a safe, clean, friendly, nurturing environment.
6. Experience nature in a completely new way (imagine scuba diving or kayaking in the afternoons, or skiing or snowboarding every weekend at the local mountain).
7. Discover new passions, and experience the many unique options offered by a boarding school.
8. Network with students from around the world and acquire life-long friendships.
9. Experience the joy of being surrounded by students from different cultures, races, and religions coming from all corners of the earth.
10. Gain independence and self-confidence before 'leaving the nest.'

Okay, so what about affordability? Such an experience is not cheap, right?

It is true that not everyone can afford a boarding school experience. However,

for those that can make it happen, many are choosing to invest in their child's high school education now, so they have a better opportunity to get into the University of their Choice later. Why? I often say, you can't build a sturdy house on a weak foundation, and many parents are acknowledging this reality. They are eager to set their children up for success and see all the advantages that a boarding education can bring them.

There is no doubt that a boarding school acts as a bridge toward independence. A quality boarding school education is a wonderful scaffold for young people, allowing students to receive a quality education well before setting out on their own (and having to navigate a world without the kinds of supports available at a boarding school).

The results speak for themselves. It is evident to anyone analyzing of the current data, that students who have attended a renowned boarding school have an unequivocal competitive advantage when it comes to university placement. Universities are savvy shoppers! They understand that there is much to be gained by offering admission to a student that is already an independent, global-citizen, with a proven track record at a recognized university-preparatory school.

It's a win-win situation, and universities do not like to gamble, hence every chance they are given, they will usually select a student with the kinds of attributes most graduates of quality boarding schools possess. These are students that have already lived away from mum and dad; have inherently been exposed to a diverse selection of courses, quality teaching, and myriad opportunities; regardless of where they have come from, they have experienced a competitive environment which in turn, has enhanced their ability to adapt to independent life; and they have, by default, been exposed to passionate teachers who typically are working at a boarding school because it is a calling rather than an obligation (observe any teacher at a boarding school who is doing Saturday night duty and you will see a different kind of passion. These are the kinds of adults that are influencing students at boarding schools).

It goes without saying that it must come down to what is best for each family, and most schools are wonderful at counselling families in this regard. I would implore anyone interested in the learning about the various educational options around the world to research widely as there are many wonderful resources available.

*Clayton Johnston is the Director of Admissions at Brentwood College School (www.brentwood.ca), one of the largest boarding schools in North America, and widely recognized as one of the world's great boarding schools. Clayton and his family have lived on campus for three decades. He can be reached at: clayton.johnston@brentwood.ca*