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Ethiopian diplomacy continues to better safeguard national interests: DPM

- Emphasizes digital, public diplomacy virtues



Photo: Samuel Tesfaye

BY MENGESHA AMARE

ADDIS ABABA- Meticulous diplomacy has guided Ethiopia for 116 years with little or no hiccups and its Foreign Policy, which is inextricably fastened with its national security, has brought tangible results to protect its interest, the Foreign Affairs Minister said.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) in connection with the Diplomacy Week, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister Demeke Mekonnen stated that the event is of paramount importance to draw lessons from past diplomacy to today's and tomorrow's engagement.

In its 116 years existence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been spearheading Ethiopia's national interest and the Diplomacy Week is instrumental to uphold results that have been gained and address the shortcomings.

Economic, multilateral and citizen-centered diplomacy

See Ethiopian diplomacy: ... Page 3



Hadush Abraha

Commission to provide humanitarian assistance to 6.6 mln citizens

- Calls int'l partners to improve contribution

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission announced that it will distribute 3.3 million quintal grain and food items to 6.6 million people who are in need of humanitarian aid because of drought, flood and man-made crisis.

In a press briefing yesterday, the commission commissioner Ambassador Shiferaw Tekle Mariam (PhD)

See Commission to ... Page 3

Diplomacy Week: Enhancing Ethiopia's diplomatic hub reputation

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) is going to launch 'Diplomacy Week' today in a bid to promote Ethiopia's long aged diplomatic history.

The week also enhances the country's reputation

as one of the world's largest diplomatic hubs.

MoFA Spokesperson Ambassador Meles Alem (PhD) told journalists yesterday that the diplomacy week will give the public and diplomatic community a better understanding of Ethiopia's past, present, and future diplomacy

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Photo: Gebabo Gebrie



Gondar's Epiphany preparation in full swing

BY FIKADU BELAY

ADDIS ABABA –preparations that go along with the much-cherished culture of hospitality from residents and hotels alike are being made to celebrate colorfully Epiphany, Gondar City

Administration said.

City Administration Government Communication Affairs Head Abebe Lakew told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that

See Gondar's Epiphany ... Page 3

Call for redoubling efforts address humanitarian situation in Ethiopia

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA - Despite severe resource constraints and operational difficulties, including active clashes in some pocket areas, the Ethiopian government and humanitarian donors are stepping up life-saving efforts in the most affected areas.

The above remark was made jointly by the Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission and the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator.

The Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission and the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator issued a joint statement on current humanitarian situation in Ethiopia yesterday.

The statement noted over three rounds of food distributions at least once between July and December 2023; between May and November, the Ethiopian government reached at least 7.3 million people.

Close to 4 million people in drought-affected states, including Afar, Amhara, Tigray, Oromia, Southern, and Southwest, require urgent food assistance, according to the Ethiopia Disaster Risk Management Commission and the Food Cluster.

Since mid-December, with the resumption of WFP and CRS/IEOP food assistance, partners have provided food aid to approximately 6.5 million people in the

Amhara, Tigray, Somali, and Afar states, it said.

It added that redoubling such efforts with the highest sense of urgency is necessary to address the current challenging humanitarian situation.

All efforts are underway to reach out to the prioritized beneficiaries in the month of January 2024, it said.

“Donors must frontload funding to scale up the response this January. Timely responding by enhancing financial support for humanitarian operations is critically imperative to make meaningful and lifesaving interventions in all affected

states,” it stressed.

According to the statement, the Ethiopian government and bilateral and multilateral development partners in close collaboration and coordination have been accelerating agricultural and food security, humanitarian programs in line with national development priorities and needs.

While these endeavors have brought tangible results in enhancing production and productivity; recurrent droughts would require sustained commitment and partnership from all actors to address major humanitarian situation due to cycles of multiple, often overlapping crises, which severely weakens communities’ ability to

cope, it said.

An integrated multi-sectoral humanitarian response is urgently needed in drought-affected states to avert compounding situations, it said.

Humanitarians and government operators are on the ground and have the necessary experience, expertise, and established structures and they are ready to deliver.

The overlap of acute food insecurity, high malnutrition rates, severe water scarcity coupled with a surge in disease outbreaks (malaria, measles, and cholera), and livestock impacts are worsening the situation in drought-affected states.



USAID launches PLRA to coordinate resilience activities in four states

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has launched Partnership for Lowlands Resilience Activities (PLRA) to improve resilience coordination.

The USAID in collaboration with the Ministry of Irrigation and Lowlands (MILLS) launched Partnership for Lowlands Resilience Activities (PLRA) to improve coordination, collaboration and communication among the government and its stakeholders in four states.

Speaking at the launching ceremony, the MILLS State Minister Endrias Geta (PhD) said that the government and its partners have been working on increasing the resilience of pastoral communities. Lack of strong coordination among development partners, government institutions, and community institutions engaged in resilience building initiatives at different levels was challenging the effort.

The Champion for Food Security (C4FS) activity of the Global Policy LINK program would be providing technical and facilitation assistance to build a sustainable support to

strengthen capacity of all stakeholders to work better together and ensure effective coordination of resilience investments. Furthermore, it mainly focuses on capacity building, skill development and evidence informed policy making process activities, he said.

The lowlands livelihoods resilience activity is one of the supports of the USAID to address the coordination role of the MILLS and stakeholders at various levels in Somali, Afar, Oromia and Southern Ethiopia states. It would focus on policy strengthening focusing on pastoral residence areas.

USAID Deputy Mission Director Timothy Stein for his part said that the PLRA project assists MILLS to improve coordination, collaboration and communication among stakeholders. The project would be implemented in four states such as Afar, Somali, Oromia (Pastoral areas) and South Ethiopia (South Omo Zone) states. It would contribute to enhance the livelihoods resilience at scale in lowland and pastoral areas.

At this stage, some three million USD allocated to the run the project in the stated four states, it was learnt.

Federation hails port deal's multifaceted significance for women

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA-The Ethiopian Women's Federation said the Memorandum of Understanding signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland to develop and use seaport will advance the economic and social benefits of women.

The Representative President of the Federation Askale Lema, who gave the press briefing yesterday, stated that the accord will help increase the social and economic benefits of women.

Ethiopia's direct access to port from Somaliland will immensely contribute to its economic growth and prosperity, the representative president said. She added that the pact would also greatly benefit women and the public at large by creating new business opportunities and bolstering trade and logistics capabilities.

“We vehemently support the government's strategic decision to own and use a port in Somaliland that would contribute to change the livelihoods of women and bring a new dynamism in Ethiopia's economy.”

Investment in port infrastructure not only creates jobs in the maritime industry but also in transport, logistics, and service sectors enables Ethiopian women to develop new skills and professional opportunities. Efficient port infrastructure boosts Ethiopian products' international competitiveness.

In addition, Ethiopia's sovereign access to sea in Somaliland would help it to transfer the



foreign currency it has incurred for port rent to social development and improve access to education and health service and this shift will greatly benefit women in both urban and rural areas. The port will also enhance international integration, diplomacy, and cultural exchange, promoting understanding and harmony between communities, Askale elaborated.

She further highlighted that the MoU is only aspiring for mutual benefit and it is not violating any party's national interest and sovereignty. “In this regard, the government should intensively employ diplomatic channels to address suspicions and defamation campaigns that have been circling the accord.”

This issue of diplomacy should not be left solely to the government and every citizen; including women are expected to make active engagement to promote Ethiopia's reality in available means. In this regard, the federation is ready and committed to make every effort to create a positive and accurate understanding of the port deal both in home and abroad, she remarked.

Ethiopia reiterates commitment towards regional economic integration

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopia has renewed commitment to tirelessly working towards regional economic integration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) said.

MoFA State Minister Ambassador Mesganu Arga told UN Special Envoy to the Horn of Africa, Hanna Tetteh yesterday stated that the Ethiopian Government is committed to regional economic integration and doing well with Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan, South Sudan, and other countries in different sectors.

According to him, the Ethiopian government considers economic integration a key enabler of regional peace and stability.

The discussion between the two sides also covered the current affairs of Sudan and regional peace and security issues, the information from MoFA indicated.

Moreover, both exchanged views ranging from the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), current affairs, bilateral and multilateral issues of common concern, as well as issues of regional peace and security.



Gondar's...

consolidated efforts are underway to make the place of the outdoor festivity clean and ready for priests and the laity.

The head also stated that eight subcommittees led by the city mayor and a city-level Epiphany committee have been established and they are working in concert to the peaceful conduct of the festivity.

As accommodation is one of the primary concerns for guests who will come to the city for the celebration, in-depth discussions have been held with hoteliers about professional service delivery. In the discussion, the hoteliers promised to deliver outstanding hospitality and their preparation is unparalleled from previous years' and they are ready to ensure guests will have an amazing and memorable time at an affordable price.

Abebe further noted that in collaboration with Amhara Culture and Tourism Bureau, a direct air service has been launched from Lalibela to Gondar to make travel easier for visitors. In addition, careful preparations have been made to provide adequate transport both within the city and from the airport to the hotels, devoting equal significance to comfort and security.

"We are optimistic about a significantly important impact of the Epiphany celebration for Gondar's tourism sector. One week before the celebration, an arena for cultural week will be set up, involving numerous people in the festivities."

A forum that aims to showcase Gondar's investment opportunities for potential stakeholders who will come to the festivity will be held on the next day of Epiphany.

Currently, Gondar and its environs are in resolute stability and the city is offering all services. As a result, visitors are encouraged to visit the local tourist attractions and they could enjoy the celebration without any security risk, he emphasized.

Diplomacy...

thereby enabling the public to contribute its fair share to the country's diplomatic endeavors.

He also reaffirmed that the government strives to provide necessary services and take commensurate practical measures in order to further enhance the country's reputation as one of the world's largest diplomatic hubs.

He also briefed journalists on major diplomatic developments and activities.

Quoting the Spokesperson, MoFA reported that the Government of Ethiopia pursues an inclusive and diversified diplomacy on both bilateral and multilateral platforms to advance the country's national interests.

The government of Ethiopia continues with its inclusive diplomacy policy, so it will enhance diplomatic ties with partners working in all sectors. Technology and Science are also major areas that the government of Ethiopia is working for, he noted.

Commission to provide...

said that his commission has identified about four million people need emergency relief because of the drought which happened in the East Africa region.

Amhara, Tigray and Afar have been identified as most drought affected states [of Ethiopia] so more aid distribution will be made across these state in January, February and March, he indicated.

Amb. Shferaw, moreover, noted that all rounds of aid distribution would be reached out to Internal Displaced Peoples (IDPs) in all corners of Ethiopia.

The federal government budgeted 500,000 quintal and international aid agents pledged 400,000 quintal for the first upcoming round of aid distribution. Though, the budgeted aid cannot cover the humanitarian demand fully, he said, adding that international partners should improve volume of their contribution as the drought affects large

population.

Two international humanitarian organizations have already resumed aid distribution. But, they have reduced the volume. "We need them to supply aid with their full capacity to help the climate crisis victim people," he stressed.

He also called upon all international and local humanitarian agents to mobilize finance and public support to fulfill the aid gap.

"The drought has posed a risk of hunger and outbreak of epidemic diseases. The people faced malnutrition, shortage of some other basic needs that could cause life-threatening conditions. However, the government sees no hunger so far, but food shortage," according to the Commissioner.

Eight zones of Amhara, Four zones of Tigray and three zones of Afar states have faced drought this year, *The Ethiopian Herald* learnt.

Ethiopian diplomacy continues...

are pillars of the current Ethiopia's Foreign Policy and the country has moved quickly to integrate the East African region with infrastructure and embrace its neighbors. Ethiopia's foreign relations preponderantly focus on ensuring national interest and sovereignty, the FM elaborated.

"Ethiopia's Foreign Policy was designed in the way to embrace its neighbors and it is the major factor behind the country's huge involvement in regional economic integration. The policy also attaches significance to forge strong relations with countries from all corners of the world

and the Diplomacy Week provides the opportunity to address our weaknesses and further cement strengths."

Demeke added, "Moving in such a well-defined avenue, of course, would help the country be known in the world, get its sovereignty and national interest respected as well as help its voice to be heard louder."

The Deputy Premier further emphasized the need to review past diplomatic engagements and draw the positive experiences that would help to formulate a viable approach in today's dynamic and mostly unpredictable and technology-

enabled diplomacy era.

The mere reliance of the traditional diplomatic approach which is based on the deployment of ambassadors and envoys are no longer sufficient in today's order and citizens' diplomacy that enshrines the active involvement of Ethiopian Diasporas has become equally important.

About challenges, Demeke indicated that Ethiopia had been faced unwarranted and coordinated attempts of meddling and pressures from some global powers during the Tigray War and in the three years of reform. Through employing a meticulous

diplomatic approach, the government has managed to change such hostile relations and opened a new chapter of re-engagement and normalization.

In this regard, Ethiopian Diasporas have made commendable jobs in the #NoMore movement whereby they carried out wide-ranging activities to denounce some interest groups' unwarranted pressure in the reform government and promote Ethiopia's reality in their respective areas of residence. By doing this, the Diasporas have greatly supported the government's efforts to repulse the danger posed in Ethiopia's existence, the DPM remarked.

Opinion

Ethiopia's Diplomatic Week to unveil strides, ambitions

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

Today, on January 11, 2024, the highly anticipated Ethiopian Diplomatic Week is finally commenced. This event is of significant importance to Ethiopia as it symbolizes a crucial milestone in the country's diplomatic journey. The exhibition, which will run until February 2, 2024, offers Ethiopia a great platform to demonstrate its position as a prominent African hub in the international arena.

The comprehensive range of topics covered in this diplomatic exhibition allows for a deep exploration of the victories and obstacles encountered throughout different historical periods. This event serves as a comprehensive showcase of Ethiopia's diplomatic experience, highlighting its achievements and discussing the challenges that have shaped the nation's diplomatic landscape.

The Ethiopian Diplomatic Week serves as a platform for valuable introspection, offering a critical examination of Ethiopia's diplomatic path in the present day. This aspect of the event sheds light on the ongoing efforts and strategic decision-making processes that guide the nation's diplomatic engagements.

In the same manner, through a thorough examination of the past, the Ethiopian Diplomatic Week seeks to enlighten its attendees about the remarkable achievements that Ethiopian diplomats have accomplished throughout history. By immersing participants in the triumphs of previous eras, this event offers a unique opportunity to gain deeper insights into Ethiopia's diplomatic prowess and the measures taken to establish robust relations with other nations.

In actual fact, the Ethiopian Diplomatic Week establishes itself as an exceptional arena for the comprehensive evaluation and contemplation of Ethiopia's diplomatic odyssey thus far. This gathering presents an invaluable occasion to delve into the historical tapestry of the nation's diplomatic triumphs and trials enabling attendees to extract valuable insights and wisdom from past experiences. By scrutinizing the successes and challenges encountered along Ethiopia's diplomatic journey, participants can develop a nuanced understanding of the country's diplomatic evolution.

It is clear that by examining the contemporary priorities and objectives embraced by Ethiopia in its diplomatic pursuits, participants gain a deeper comprehension of the nation's current diplomatic initiatives and the rationale behind them. This panoramic elucidation of Ethiopia's approach to diplomacy within the global realm generates a comprehensive perspective bolstering participants' grasp of the nation's multifaceted engagement with the international community.

Other than that, this momentous event not only delves into the rich historical tapestry of Ethiopia's diplomatic accomplishments and obstacles but also directs keen attention towards the nation's current diplomatic trajectory. Besides, it offers an invaluable platform for participants to peer into the future, providing compelling insights into the forthcoming diplomatic endeavors that Ethiopia has planned.

Beyond a shadow of a doubt, by extensively examining the past, comprehending the present, and forecasting the future, Ethiopia's diplomatic week meticulously allows for a



comprehensive review and profound reflection of the nation's diplomatic voyage. It serves as a testament to Ethiopia's diplomatic journey showcasing its growth, resilience, and tenacity on the global arena.

The Ethiopian diplomatic week fosters a deeper appreciation for Ethiopia's diplomatic successes and challenges while simultaneously bolstering participants' foresight and insights into the nation's diplomatic prospects. By embracing a holistic approach that encompasses historical context, this event solidifies Ethiopia's standing as a prominent player in the realm of global diplomacy.

The theme selected for the Ethiopian Diplomatic Week, "From an African Hub to the World," serves as a poignant reflection of Ethiopia's diplomatic standing throughout its history. Ethiopia's status as an ancient state has long been characterized by its unwavering dedication to preserving its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Remarkably, its influence extends beyond the bounds of Africa symbolizing a beacon of hope and freedom for oppressed peoples worldwide.

In fact, the chosen theme for the Ethiopian Diplomatic Week captures Ethiopia's longstanding diplomatic prestige and influence, both in the past and the present. From its unwavering defense of sovereignty to its pivotal role in international organizations, the country's significant contributions to African unity reflect its diplomatic achievements. By hosting foreign missions and international institutions, Ethiopia continues to foster diplomatic connections and actively contribute to global affairs.

In ancient times, Ethiopia's relations were greatly influenced by various factors, such as trade, culture, religion, and security concerns. These dynamics played a significant role in shaping the nation's diplomatic engagements during that era. However, as the modern era dawned, Ethiopia's foreign relations expanded in scale and adapted to incorporate the technological advancements of the time.

In the present climate, Ethiopia has a vision to create a prosperous nation and diligently works to safeguard its national interests on the global stage. One crucial aspect of Ethiopia's diplomatic undertaking is the commitment to providing citizen-centered diplomatic services through its missions abroad. This emphasizes the importance of prioritizing the needs and well-being of Ethiopian citizens in all diplomatic endeavors.

The events organized as part of the Ethiopian

Diplomatic Week serve as an extraordinary chronicle of the country's diplomatic journey over the span of 116 years since the establishment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, the exhibition not only portrays the more recent diplomatic engagements but also sheds light on the ancient diplomatic interactions of the country.

By exploring this exhibition, participants can gain a comprehensive understanding of Ethiopia's past and current diplomatic endeavors. These insights can then be leveraged as a springboard to shape the future diplomatic course of the nation. Through a combination of historical retrospection, contemporary assessments, and future-oriented planning, Ethiopia's diplomatic aspirations are firmly anchored in ensuring the welfare of its citizens and promoting its national interests on the international stage.

The country's diplomatic core values revolve around nurturing collaboration between nations and amplifying the significance of their respective national interests. The country actively participates in international forums, actively striving to discover collective solutions to the world's most pressing issues.

The nation greatly emphasizes the establishment of bilateral partnerships, placing considerable importance on the principles of transparency and accountability. It staunchly advocates for peace and stability not only within its own region but also on a global scale. In its diplomatic endeavors, Ethiopia places immense value on multilateral cooperation firmly believing that effective solutions to global challenges can only be attained through collaborative endeavors in which all nations work harmoniously towards shared objectives.

The country actively engages in global forums and diplomatic initiatives, consistently demonstrating its dedication to discovering collective responses that promote the interests and well-being of all nations involved. The country's diplomatic approach encompasses the virtues of patience, respect, and a firm commitment to fostering open and constructive dialogue, as well as promoting consensus-building.

Ethiopia understands that achieving mutual understanding and resolving conflicts relies on the willingness to engage in transparent and meaningful conversations. By embodying these principles, Ethiopia ensures that its diplomatic efforts are not only effective but also sustainable in the long term.

Similarly, Ethiopia understands that open and

honest communication is vital to nurturing strong diplomatic relations and offers a foundation for cooperation that can withstand the challenges of time. By upholding the principles of transparency and accountability, Ethiopia solidifies its reputation as a trustworthy and reliable diplomatic partner. If truth be told, the country's commitment to diplomatic values goes beyond its regional sphere of influence.

The nation firmly advocates for peace and stability not only within its immediate vicinity but also on a global scale. Ethiopia recognizes that lasting peace and stability can only be achieved through collective efforts and collaboration among nations. With a strong belief in multilateral cooperation, Ethiopia actively engages in global partnerships, recognizing that effective solutions to global challenges can only be achieved through joint efforts where all countries work towards a shared goal.

Transparency and accountability serve as essential principles guiding Ethiopia's diplomatic practices, enabling the nation to cultivate trustworthy and sustainable bilateral partnerships. Moreover, Ethiopia's dedication to peace and stability on a global scale highlights its belief in multilateral cooperation and the power of collective action to address common challenges.

Ethiopia is driven by the vision of contributing to a stable and prosperous world, where nations can thrive without the constant fear of violence or unrest. Its diplomatic principles are firmly rooted in the belief that collaboration and cooperation are paramount in addressing the complex challenges that transcend national boundaries. The country actively engages in global forums and platforms, leveraging its position to advocate for collective solutions that positively impact all participating nations.

At the core of Ethiopia's diplomatic approach is the strategic prioritization of its national interests. This ensures that its diplomatic endeavors are aligned with the country's long-term goals and aspirations. Ethiopia recognizes that by safeguarding its own interests, it can effectively contribute to the broader well-being of the international community. This strategic focus allows the country to proactively shape diplomatic initiatives that benefit not only its own citizens but also promote collective prosperity and stability.

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

Editorial

Urgent response for drought affected people

Drought vulnerable people in parts of Ethiopia need urgent assistance to recover from the impacts of the recurrent climate change induced drought as well as the destructive consequences of conflicts in the country.

The Disaster Risk Management Commission has called on donors to redouble support so as to streamline the financial and relief capacity of the commission to address the looming humanitarian situation in parts of Ethiopia.

In a Statement jointly issued with the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, the commission indicated that since July, the commission has delivered relief aid for over 7.3 million people in drought affected areas of Afar, Tigray, Amhara, Oromia, Southern and South West Regions in three rounds. Currently close to 4 million people in these drought-affected regions require urgent food assistance. Despite the severity of the issue the government is doing its best to deliver the humanitarian aid, medical supplies etc.

These efforts of government need due collaboration so as to save the lives of people in danger. For quite more than five years Ethiopia has passed through various natural and manmade challenges that affect the production of agricultural produces, the smooth functioning of people too. One of such challenges was the climate change induced drought that affected large areas like Borana of Oromia, Somali State as well as in some places in Amhara and Afar States.

The drought has weakened the farmer's productivity which is likely to keep them vulnerable and having only relief aid at their disposal until they get rehabilitated. Indeed, it is a normal course of time to work hard for consecutive years to recover. The government and humanitarian organizations also recognize such problems and have the experience and preparedness to address the problems.

This time the problem has been complicated due to the coincidence of sporadic and some incessant conflict in parts of the country. AS well known throughout the world one of the ugly features of war or conflict is that it hurdles the ongoing efforts of life like farming, trade and other institutional services. Especially when it comes to agricultural activities conflicts and unrest do a lot of harm as people miss their farming season which they cannot replace in any way. On top of that government and humanitarian organizations also would face difficulties to reach out to them and help make up the lost farming season.

In addition to these major factors acute food insecurity, high malnutrition rates, severe water scarcity and outbreaks of communicable diseases, among others are also worsening the situations in the vulnerable areas, according to the commission's statement.

Therefore, these actually have contributed to pile up the problems that many of the people in these double affected areas. The commission indicated that the government and humanitarian organizations that collaborate with it have braved the dire situation like resource constraint, operational difficulties, including conflicts to delving lifesaving supports to the most affected areas.

Therefore as the commission indicated this is the right time to act to save the lives of millions in need. Timely responding by enhancing financial support for humanitarian operation is critically imperative to make meaningful and lifesaving interventions in all affected areas.

Concerning the measures that should be taken in the drought affected regions is a multispectral humanitarian response that is commensurate to the dire situation. Concerned governmental, non-governmental and humanitarian organizations have to heed to the call and take action on time to avoid the humanitarian crisis.



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The Ethiopian Herald

Opinion

Sea gate is a burning, public agenda

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Since Ethiopia lost the sea port that it has been using for centuries, the issue of the sea gate has become burning issue. The country has tried many times to overcome the lack of a sea gate by renting a port.

For the past thirty years, it was in this way that Ethiopia transported import and export trade. Data indicate that the country spends more than one point six billion birr every year for this port rent. This expenditure is a new for the country. The country has been withholding this wealth, which it should have used for various developmental and humanitarian issues.

Data indicate that port accounts for 25 % of a country's gross domestic product. This is considered as to going bankruptcy if one believes deeply. These two are good examples of how much the lack of a port has affected this country.

The country's development direction requires that its port demand is constantly increasing. It is expected that the extensive developments in the agriculture, industry, and mining sectors will greatly increase the demand for the port. So port is vital to import machinery and resources to produce goods for the international.

A sea port is essential for importation. As the country grows, its population increases, so does the business income and expenditure. It is necessary to handle the goods and products that come and go in this activity in a streamlined manner. The flow doesn't just have to be smooth and must be safe.

The sea gate is the main tool to provide resources needed for development in other sectors such as expanding telecom, education, health, etc., to speed up the construction sector, to expand the transport infrastructure, the sea gate is unquestionable.

The small to large developments that Ethiopia is carrying out in its development cannot travel long distances without a port. Their profitability, citizen benefit is also unquestionable. For a far-sighted government and people who have seen the challenges of the past, the issue of the sea gate is one of the highest priorities.

The country has done a good job of getting port services on rent. It has been developing by making good use of the port of Djibouti. Ethiopia also tried hard to find alternative ports. Somalia calls a lot to use the ports of Berbera, Port Sudan, Assab and Massawa.

Only the port of Djibouti has been serving

the country. The government, which has been very concerned about the issue of the sea gate, has recently put the issue on the agenda. It is known that recently, citing that the issue is urgent; citizens have been called to discuss the ways to access the sea gate in a peaceful way.

The government recently signed a memorandum of understanding with Somaliland to lease the sea gate.

The agreement allows for the lease of the land needed for the sea gate. The agreement, in turn, allows Somaliland to become a shareholder of one of Ethiopia's development companies. It can already be said that this decision, which will allow the country to have a permanent owner of the sea gate, will bring a lot of investment for Ethiopia's journey of prosperity. It brings a lot of luck. It will make the country's growth sustainable. It will save the country from port rent, create a comfortable environment for the country to move on the sea and be a guarantee for safety. It can also be an indication that it is possible to develop together with the countries in the region.

The agreement to lease the country's sea gate is also applicable internationally. Different countries are working on leasing the sea gates. Ethiopia has done the same. It is a right step taken at a critical time for the government to bring this international experience and come to a decision to find a sustainable port service suitable for the country. As Ethiopian population is growing at alarming rate, depending only on one port will inevitably result in serious difficulties for the nation.

It will be a challenge to realize the results of the developments in the agricultural, industrial and mining sectors, and to make the development sustainable in the absence of a sea gate to import the resources needed for the journey of prosperity.

The absence of a sea gate will undoubtedly discourage foreign direct investment. This will push foreign direct investment, which will cause the world to burn. Investors want a sea gate, security of their goods and cheap shipping services. It prevents them from using sea transport which is the cheapest mode of transport.

Having a sea gate solves all these problems. It is necessary to have a permanent sea gate to deliver the social and economic developments and services that will be created following the growth of the economy and the increasing population. For this reason, the government's agreement with Somaliland is very beneficial and a guarantee for sustainable development!

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

Business & Economy

Favorable investment environment to accelerate structural economic transformation

BY BACHA ZEWDIE

The development of industrial parks is one of the activities that the government has focused on that will contribute to the realization of the structural economic transformation. Industrial parks have three main basic missions. Their missions are to attract foreign direct investment, expand job creation and carry out technology transfer. The parks will make a great contribution to the national economic development by creating job opportunities for the community living in the areas where they will be built and creating a working environment that is suitable for the environment.

Among the things that make industrial parks preferable are the fact that they bring together and provide many services in one place; build appropriate infrastructure and connect them with other manufacturers. From this point of view, efforts have been made for large international companies to open their factories in Ethiopia by establishing many industrial parks in the country as well as by providing relatively low cost supply of manpower and electricity, tax-free importation of machinery, credit provision, one-center service and infrastructure constructions.

Currently, including the Dire Dawa Free Trade Zone, there are 13 industrial parks across the country; they are making a significant contribution to the development of the national economy through job creation, foreign direct investment attraction and technology transfer. In general, the development of industrial parks, where it is hoped that Ethiopia will play an important role in facilitating the efforts to become the African manufacturing hub, has seen many promising results.

The Industrial Parks' Development Corporation, which manages the industrial parks in various areas of Ethiopia, has been implementing various operational reforms since the last year in order to expand the results achieved so far and improve the relationship with the investors. These reform activities are believed to be key resources for the Corporation's efforts to accelerate the country's industrialization process.

In the past nine years, the corporation has helped the country earn more than 1.2 billion Dollars from foreign trade and save 750 million Dollars by making imported products produced in the country via implementing import substitution scheme. Through these activities, it has contributed to alleviating the country's foreign exchange shortage. Apart from this, it has created job opportunities for more than 80,000 citizens. It has made the workers possess the knowledge and skills of new technologies in their fields of work.

Aklilu Tadesse, CEO at Industrial Parks Development Corporation (IPDC), pointed out that among the efforts made to increase the development of the industrial sector, the



Industrial parks are stimulating investment and creating massive job opportunities

construction of industrial parks in various parts of the country is mentioned. Based on this effort, Industrial Parks Development Corporation is fulfilling its role to speed up the industrialization process. According to him, the reform agendas, which are part of the efforts to make the corporation suitable for the times and convenient for investors, will make Ethiopia a preferred investment destination.

Clear investor recruitment criteria, direct international investment promotion methods and preparation of local investor incentive frameworks; new structural research and implementation; the creation of coordinated cooperation of stakeholders and the activities of the digital operating system are mentioned among the reform activities that the corporation is implementing.

"The government is making multifaceted efforts to create a favorable investment environment for local and foreign investors. In order to utilize Ethiopia's economic potential, the government publicized important macro-economic reform agendas in the fields of industry, agriculture, tourism, mining and information technology. The reform agenda of the Industrial Parks Development Corporation also aims to effectively implement these national economic reforms," he said.

Aklilu further explained that a number of promising results of the corporation have been registered. The "Golden Reception" system implemented by the corporation is an operational system that allows investors to be welcomed by the corporation's senior officials when they come in. This practice has solved the operational problem that forced the investors to come and stay for several days and extend their stay.

A clear recruitment criterion has been prepared to evaluate the investment proposals of investors. The corporation started the "Zero Waiting Time" operating system; it is a quick service delivery method that allows investors to be immediately directed to the park; view the park and hand over the site so that the investment proposal is evaluated and finalized on the day of submission.

Market search and investment promotion activities are also part of the reform. "Investment should not come in search of us, but we have to seek and bring it. We have set up a special team to monitor this for the markets of Europe, Asia and some African countries. Therefore, the investor need not come to us and wait for long time seeking our accommodation; rather, it is we who bring the investment by introducing and asking for it," he explained.

Previously, the products produced in the industrial parks were intended for the "AGOA" market. This created problems for producers when Ethiopia was canceled from "AGOA". This practice has been changed through the reform works of the corporation. In the past, the type of production was mostly focused on textiles and garment with "AGOA" in mind. But now, the products of the parks are more diversified and focused on agricultural processing, machinery and automobile, pharmaceutical and textile production.

According to Aklilu, many companies were affected and were leaving Ethiopia in 2021 and 2022 due to pressures related to its cancellation from "AGOA". But in 2023 and this year, not a single company left the parks. This is due to the diversification of products and the search for European and Asian markets. Previously, the corporation was not responsible for searching market linkage. Through the reform, taking this responsibility as gap filler, the corporation is fulfilling its responsibility to find a market. In 2022, there were no more than 10 investors who entered the industrial parks and applied for investment. In 2023, however, 53 new investors entered the industrial parks.

Among the 177 sheds in the industrial parks, only 20 are waiting for new investments; 157 sheds are occupied by investors. Many parks were previously empty; now five parks (Adama, Bole Lemi, Addis, Semera and Dire Dawa (manufacturing section)) are full and cannot accommodate new investors.

"Nine months ago, there was only one company in Adama Industry Park. Seven months ago, Semera Industrial Park had no any company. But Now, many companies have signed contracts, paid fees and some

of them have started working in these parks (for example, all the companies in Adama Industrial Park have started working); Others are entering and installing machines. The work we have done in the reform; the Pretoria Peace Agreement and the macroeconomic reform activities implemented by the government have greatly helped to stimulate the investment sector at a high level," he said.

The activities carried out by the development of the Integrated Agricultural Processing Industrial Parks have made possible to benefit the farmers by improving the relationship with them. For example, "Akshay Jay Oil" company, which produces avocado oil in Jimma Industrial Park, made an agreement with the local farmers and receives their products. "Soufflé Malt Ethiopia" factory, which produces beer malt in Bole Lemi Industrial Park, created linkage and is working with more than 70,000 Arsi and Bale area farmers. "BOORTMALT" company, which entered Debre Berhan Industrial Park, has created a market connection with more than 50,000 local farmers.

Mentioning that one of the problems in the past was lack of space for local investors, Aklilu explained that in 2023, activities were carried out to fill the financial and other gaps in which local investors were stimulated. Therefore, more than half of the registered investors in 2023 and this year are local investors," he said.

He also announced that it is not appropriate to continue to depend on foreign investment, which wraps its luggage up and leaves the country when some problems arise; so that the work started with the belief that it is important to involve a competitive local investor is bringing results. He pointed out that the center of the reform is to make foreign investors stay where they are by solving their problems and strengthen investment promotion activities to attract new investments.

In general, Aklilu pointed out that efforts will be made to enable Ethiopia to become a preferred industrial hub that gets its due share from the international industrial value chain by effectively implementing the reform agenda.

Art & Culture

Lingua Franca, how Africa Can benefit from the languages of the West

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

The English language has become one of the most important languages in the world through a long process of development and the cultural transformations that took place both within England and outside of it. Nowadays, English is considered the international language of business, science, and communication, among other things. It is spoken by over 1.5 billion people in the world. It is also considered the most widely spoken language after Chinese, which is spoken by more than 1.3 billion people. English has also become the most widely spoken language in international relations, diplomacy and commerce.

Those are the reasons why so many people across the world are eager to learn English, starting from their early school years all through high school and college. English is taught in most schools and colleges because it has become the vehicle with which cultural and scientific knowledge is transferred from one part of the world to the other. Modern economic and technological development is unthinkable without the use of English which serves as the language of origin through which knowledge is transferred through translations into second languages.

In many African countries, speaking English is regarded as a sign of being educated, enlightened or modernized. There is some truth in this assertion, although this does not necessarily imply that all those who speak English or French are wiser than those who speak traditional or local languages. Wisdom is not about language but something that is derived from life experience and the talent for looking at things deeper than superficially or casually.

On the other hand, members of the young generation in Africa who have a mastery of the English language or any other Western language tend to look at the uneducated and ordinary folks as "backward." This has created an intellectual or mental division between the educated elites and the uneducated masses, who are the inheritors of rich cultural traditions that are confined within their communities instead of spreading towards the external world simply because their languages have remained long neglected.

The dictionary meaning of the term lingua franca, which means "Frankish language" in its original Italian definition, "is a language used as a means of communication between populations speaking vernacular that are not mutually intelligible." Accordingly, each region of the world has its own lingua franca. Thus, English is sometimes described as the first global lingua franca because "it is being used as a working language by individuals of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds in a variety of fields and international organizations to communicate with one another."

There are many advantages to having a lingua franca at the regional or global level in Africa or in any other country or region. Lingua franca promotes cultural and economic rapprochement among the peoples living in areas where a single language is spoken

In Africa, Swahili is considered the language used by most people, particularly in East Africa. Swahili is the second official language in Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. It is spoken by 50 to 150 million people. In most cases, Swahili is used as a second language in those countries.

According to one definition, "a global language acts as a "lingua franca," a common language that enables people from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities to communicate on a more or less equitable basis. Historically, the essential factor for the establishment of a global language is that it is spoken by those who wield power." The last part of this quotation is interesting because power is an essential factor behind the assumption of the status of lingua franca by any language. This is true when we see the evolution of the English language itself, which developed first in Great Britain and then became an international language with the spread of British colonial rule in the world.

Some studies outline six reasons why English has, through time become an international lingua franca. The first factor is the expansion of the British Empire, which extended from America to Asia and Africa, engulfing in its wake hundreds of millions of people with diverse cultures speaking the same English language. The second factor is the fact that the United States, which was once a British colony, rose to global supremacy after the Second World War

and led to its dominance in global culture, which is expressed in English. During the same period, English had the opportunity to spread throughout the world as the language of global entertainment, culture and literature. Literature in the English language was initially developed in Great Britain, that has produced the best writers in the language, while the US followed suit in the above-educated period by dominating the global entertainment business in the form of music, drama, publishing and cinema.

With the development of post-war capitalism and the rise of powerful economic entities, English became the language of international finance, trade and technology. The City in London, Wall Street in the US, and major financial and banking conglomerates in Europe and Asia used English as their language of transaction, further extending the reach and importance of the language.

The major news media, television, newspapers and magazines started to be presented in English and national writers assumed global importance by using English as their medium of expression to this very day. Last but not least, English is considered a fashionable language and a medium of cosmopolitan expression of new ideas and language easier to speak by the diverse populations of the world.

The combined economic, political and cultural power of Great Britain and the US has confirmed that power is at the core of English becoming a global lingua franca. However, raw power or military supremacy cannot be a factor in linguistic influence. As far as military might is considered at different points in world history, Russian should be the lingua franca of European countries in the 18th and 19th centuries, when Russian power was on the rise. By the same token, Chinese should become a global lingua franca now, at least in Asia, given the sheer size of its economic and military power nowadays.

There are many advantages to having a lingua franca at the regional or global level in Africa or in any other country or region. Lingua franca promotes cultural and economic rapprochement among the peoples living in areas where a single language is spoken. The use of English in many African countries has promoted a certain degree of integration among them. That is why we have what are called Francophone and Anglophone African countries that are doing business horizontally among themselves and vertically with foreign countries, mainly in Europe.

"Lingua franca is important to human culture because it allow groups that otherwise could not communicate with each other the ability to interact quite often for mutual benefit. The benefit can be economic, cultural, political or a combination." If we take

English once again as a tool of linguistic understanding among people speaking different languages, it is obvious that communication at grassroots levels is the most important benefit. Thus, "people can overcome language barriers by speaking English. This means they can travel, work, and interact with other cultures."

In many developing countries, there is a tendency to look at English as the ultimate language of civilization and modernity. The educated elites in these countries are expected to speak English as the British or the Americans, as most of them were educated in the West. In Africa, English-speaking educated elites are considered privileged and highly esteemed by society because of their learning in many fields of knowledge. Together with this, there is a tendency to look at local languages as inferior to English or French for that matter, because the masses, who are largely uneducated in modern schools and colleges, do not speak the Western languages the way the elites do.

The development of modern art and literature in these countries is highly influenced by Western languages and literature because most writers and artists in Africa get their education in the famous centers of Western education such as Harvard, Yale, the London School of Economics or the Sorbonne in France. This trend was prevalent both in colonial as well as post-colonial periods, when the languages of the colonized peoples of Africa were shunned as "backward" or "underdeveloped." However, as far as language is perceived as a tool of communication, there is no "inferior" or "superior" language as such as long as it is effectively used by the people who use it anywhere in the world. In this sense, all languages are equal.

It is however, undeniable that Africans who speak and write English or French have the added advantage of getting certain privileges like scholarships in Western colleges and universities, research centers and institutions where the latest knowledge is accumulated, although modern technology is making it easier to transfer knowledge from one language to another through translations or adaptations. As a case in point, we can look at the impressive economic development of China starting in the 1970s, when official government policy encouraged the transfer of scientific and technological knowledge from the West to China through massive translation works that were carried out by Chinese institutions. This is something African countries and their governments need to learn from the Chinese because there is hardly any chance of acquiring new knowledge without its transfer from advanced to less developed countries. Fortunately, modern technology has rendered Africa's development challenge in this area less challenging and faster to achieve.

Indepth

Technology transfer critical to revolutionizing Africa's pharma industry

An agreement signed between the Rwandan government and the Africa Pharmaceutical Technology Foundation (APTF) gives impetus to Africa's domestic industry with the hope of helping the continent tackle vaccine inequity and fill the critical gap in vaccine manufacturing.

The agreement to operationalize the foundation was signed in Kigali, Rwanda, in late 2023.

What is important, according to stakeholders, is to focus efforts on building a resilient and self-reliant pharmaceutical industry for the continent. This became apparent during COVID-19, when, for example, COVAX, a multilateral mechanism for equitable global access to COVID-19 vaccines, helped lower-income economies achieve two-dose coverage of 57 percent, compared to the global average of 67 percent.

Both officials and scientists take delight in pointing out that the benefit of having such an initiative is to close the vaccine equity gap between African countries and the world's developed nations.

During the implementation phase, the African Development Bank (ADB) has committed to investing up to USD 3 billion over the next decade in the development of pharmaceutical products.

The foundation, which is ready to hit the ground running in January 2024, will dedicate its core mandate to addressing some of the common challenges facing African indigenous pharmaceutical companies, including weak human and institutional capacities and low technical capacity for using and applying new technologies.

"The Foundation was a pledge that Africa will have what it needs to build its own health defense system, which must include a thriving African pharmaceutical industry and a quality healthcare infrastructure, ADB President Dr. Akinwumi Adesina said.

These solutions, according to experts, aim to close technical capacity gaps in their use and lack the ability to focus on the production of basic active pharmaceutical ingredients for drugs or antigens for vaccines.

Professor Padmashree Gehl Sampath, Chief Executive Officer of the APTF, told IPS that access to know-how, technologies, and processes for manufacturing pharmaceutical products is clearly needed on the continent to ensure the sustainability of financial investments.

She, however, points out that, with the current move to ensure the sustainability and reliability of the domestic pharmaceutical industry in Africa, it is not enough just to have financial, infrastructural, strategic, and regulatory support.

"There is a need for a clear and coherent focus on technology transfer and knowledge sharing for capacity building and



BioNTainers, facilities equipped to manufacture a range of mRNA-based vaccines have been inaugurated in Rwanda in December 2023

diversification within the pharmaceutical value chain," she said in an exclusive interview.

While technology is described as the main transformative tool that will enable the development of a competitive pharmaceutical industry in Africa, Sampath stresses the need to build policy capacity to facilitate the sector.

According to her, this can be done by implementing the flexibilities contained in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property and then also enabling local companies to access domestic markets.

In a move to overcome these challenges, the foundation's work received a major boost with a memorandum of understanding signed in December 2023 in Kigali, Rwanda, to partner with the European Investment Bank.

The European Investment Bank will be a partner in the foundation's "regional biosimilars program for the production and innovation of relevant biosimilars in Africa and to facilitate the creation of common active pharmaceutical ingredients parks in any chosen specific sub-region of Africa," the organization said in a press release.

According to Sampath, there is a need to remove barriers to domestic innovation in Africa.

"We need to work with our universities and public research institutions to transform them into centers of excellence," she said.

During the implementation phase, the first modular elements of the German company's factory, BioNTech, based on shipping containers, were delivered to the Kigali construction site in March and were then assembled to form the so-called BioNTainers that were inaugurated in

December 2023.

The company, which developed the most widely used COVID-19 vaccine in the Western world with its U.S. partner Pfizer, developed a plan in 2022 to allow African countries to produce its Comirnaty-branded vaccine under the supervision of BioNTech.

BioNTech said the initial vaccine factory could, over the next few years, be part of a wider supply network spanning several African countries, including Senegal and South Africa.

At the time BioNTech announced plans to expand into Africa, the shipment of coronavirus vaccine doses manufactured in the West to the continent had been delayed, which had been the subject of much criticism.

"The African Union has come together to make a firm commitment not to find ourselves in this situation again," Rwandan President Paul Kagame said at the inauguration ceremony of the plant site located in Masoro, a suburb of Kigali.

The company, which developed the most widely used COVID-19 vaccine in the Western world with its U.S. partner Pfizer, developed a plan in 2022 to allow African countries to produce its Comirnaty-branded vaccine under the supervision of BioNTech.

"What BioNTech's partnership with Africa demonstrates is that vaccine technology can be democratized, but we could not have reached this point without a wider set of partnerships," Kagame said.

Gelsomina Vigliotti, Vice President at the European Investment Bank, said that the bank is committed to working with its partners to strengthen public health and

health innovation across Africa.

"Strengthening access to finance is essential to scaling up pharmaceutical investment and innovation across Africa," Vigliotti said.

An important manifestation of Africa's scientific and technological innovation capability, according to experts, is the application of innovations to its pharmaceutical industry development.

The newly-established plant, located in the suburb of Rwanda's capital city, Kigali, is expected to start by producing 50 million vaccines, but production will increase depending on the demand for mRNA-based vaccine candidates to address malaria and tuberculosis.

But researchers and policymakers argue that trust and cooperation are critical for the successful implementation of this innovation.

The latest estimates by the World Health Organization (WHO) show that industrial development should be combined with national policy for universal health coverage so that local vaccine production can address local health needs.

Before the inauguration of the BioNTech factory in Rwanda, there were fewer than 10 African manufacturers with vaccine production, which are based in five countries: Egypt, Morocco, Senegal, South Africa, and Tunisia.

The capability to produce vaccines in Africa, according to the UN agency, requires a fully integrated approach, pulling together some key elements including finance, skills development, regulatory facilities, and technology know-how.

SOURCE: INTER PRESS SERVICE

Law & Politics



Opting for a middle ground in multipolar world

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

Gone are old days when the world was dictated by a single or two superpowers presenting nations with few alternatives to alliances.

The era of the unipolar international system is over as the world rapidly moves to a more diverse system, with new actors forming alliances and joining blocs. The proliferation of small bilateral and multilateral coalitions has over the years challenged the status quo. The trend presents both opportunities and challenges to the world; it falls mainly up to the nations to use it to their own advantages though.

New powers have been emerging from various corners of the globe, vying to assert their hegemonies.

Nations and blocs that once were the sole powers of the world have got some contenders in the current reality. Marred by a bevy of common woes, the world being increasingly globalized is behooving nations to put all their hands on the deck.

Apparently, leaders of the world, at this moment, have come to realize that standing alone cannot bring any change or redress shared challenges. The economic boom, big appetite for hegemony and ever-growing socioeconomic and political demands have been driving nations to form partnerships and join coalitions, ultimately creating a diverse world order.

The last few decades have seen an uptick in the number of international actors and alliances with some positioning themselves as indispensable actor in the socioeconomic and political matters of the world. More are also in the making.

In fact, there are tangible and plausible blocs across the globe that are meant to enhance economic partnership and development among the member states. Those unions have been established based on various reasons. The most dominant reason is regional and geographic proximity among the member states. The European Union and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) are formed based on regional proximity and the highest chance of working together. In this regard, those member states play their role in the organization to bring the sought-after objectives.

It is the fact that the world has got another bloc that has the power to become the other giant institution in the world's economic

The BRICS+ *is the new giant bloc that has been working by incorporating nations across all the continents that wish to cooperate for mutual economic development*

and political perspectives. The BRICS+ is the new giant bloc that has been working by incorporating nations across all the continents that wish to cooperate for mutual economic development. The bloc was formed basically by the four economically developed nations: Brazil, Russia, India, and China. They first held their first summit in Yekaterinburg in 2009. South Africa joined them a year later. Statistically, these nations operate the world's largest portion of the economy.

Last year, the former clubs of five has further stretched its alliance with other nations that wish to work within the bloc. The bloc has green lighted decision to incorporate five more nations into the group. Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates joined and become operational as of 1st of January 2024.

According to documents, "Joining BRICS would allow Ethiopia to deepen its economic cooperation with emerging markets. By tapping into the immense potential of BRICS countries, Ethiopia can benefit from increased trade opportunities, foreign direct investment, and access to technology. This partnership would amplify Ethiopia's economic growth, diversify its export markets, and provide broader opportunities for its emerging industries, particularly in

agriculture, manufacturing, and the service sector."

In addition, Ethiopia and other new members can be benefiting from other economic aspects. Cash-strapped economies can widen financial sources and get expertise in relation to infrastructure development projects.

BRICS nations have a history of investing heavily in infrastructure, and Ethiopia could benefit from such knowledge transfer and financial support. Improved infrastructure, including transportation and energy networks, would attract more investments and stimulate industrial growth, facilitating Ethiopia's progression towards becoming a middle-income country.

On top of that, becoming a member of BRICS, Ethiopia will be blessed with fostering its political and regional influences. Ethiopia will have to opportunity to align itself with multipolar global affairs. Such a chance of becoming a member in such giant bloc, Ethiopia will exercise the energy to increase its role in influencing regional policies and fuel the collective representation of emerging economies. This increased influence within BRICS forums would provide Ethiopia with a platform to raise its concerns, advocate for Africa's interests, and accelerate the realization of the African Union's development goals, the document indicated.

On the other side, such inclusion may bring unnecessary pressure from the west or any other organizations apart from the BRICS. In this case, there might be the consequences from the move that the bloc members took to join it. As to the document, there might create interest conflicts with western powers. The inclusion might lift some tension with the western powers as the west may perceive the move as "a diminishing influence on the African continent". It stated, "Ethiopia must take proactive steps to assure Western nations that its BRICS membership is not intended to replace existing partnerships but to complement them, ultimately fostering mutually beneficial cooperation in a multipolar global system." Such membership also creates clash of values. Ethiopia's alignment with such bloc could create a challenge on its domestic and Western-backed democratic and human right standards.

Again, having stayed with a local media, a senior researcher at the Institute of Foreign Affairs, Tesfaye Boyesa highlighted Ethiopia's benefits from joining the bloc.

The diplomatic efforts made by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed have enabled Ethiopia to join the BRICS which is instrumental to help strengthen its reputation and acceptance in the global world.

"BRICS will provide opportunity to Ethiopia to have and discuss with the other newly included countries such as Egypt, UAE and Saudi Arabia, about its interest in the red sea region as these countries are members of the Red Sea Forum. Hence, BRICS is important bloc for Ethiopia to secure vital supports from members of the red sea forum and the BRICS itself."

On other hand, Tesfaye stated that Ethiopia's accession to BRICS will help the country to play key role in the world political and economic system with a view to ensuring the interests of Africa besides protecting its national interests.

"The bloc will help Ethiopia to represent Africa and safeguard its interest in the international arena. There are key agendas that Ethiopia has been promoting in the international area such as the climate financing and green legacy initiative. These agendas will become agendas of the BRICS too.

Hence, Ethiopia's accession to the bloc will strengthen these national agendas to the global arena and we have to prepare in advance with a view to attaining these goals." Ethiopia and other BRICS member countries have a huge development potential, so the strengthening of the cooperation is very important to Ethiopia.

Thus, the researcher said Ethiopia's joining BRICS is vital for the development of multilateral diplomatic relations and ensure mutual benefit. BRICS membership will also be instrumental to ease the shortages of foreign currency in Ethiopia as it strengthens trade and investment relations among the countries in the bloc, he said.

All and all, Ethiopia will be benefiting much from the membership of BRICS+ as it officially joined January first 2024. However, its new alliances should not come at the expense of its relation with other blocs like the Western-oriented ones. The country needs to be very careful to find a balance in the multipolar world. The country must be benefited by all means from all the partnerships it signed. Ethiopia should continue maintaining a neutral stance according equal attention to old and new alliances.

Women in Focus

Makida Arshi:

A woman working to make a better world for children

BY STAFF REPORTER

Born and raised in Abomsa, a small village located in the Halaba Zone in the Central Ethiopia State, Makida Arshi is a full-time nurse, an author and a mother of three daughters.

Currently, she is residing in Virginia, USA, where she is working as a nurse. Recently she authored and inaugurated a children's book titled "The World Needs a Uniquely Happy You." which was also translated into Amharic under the title "Ye-Alem Mebratoch" to mean "Lights of the World."

The book, which promotes diversity, encourages everyone to respect their own culture and identity and to celebrate each other's differences, has won the National "Mom's Choice Awards" in the United States and it is on sell on Amazon.

As her bio is stated at Amazon webpage, her main values of selflessness and kindness are ones she holds close to her heart. She is keen and has a deep interest to help people and make them happy ever since she was a child. That is why she knew that nursing was the profession for her. She has now been a nurse for over two decades, and it still brings her immense joy.

Not only that, Makida also takes great pride in being a mother and takes the responsibility very seriously, using her life experiences in her storytelling to help children grow to be well-rounded, self-aware, confident adults. She takes a great deal of her inspiration from women from all different walks of life.

She has always struggled with the societal expectations of women. At certain points, she has had to make the choice between working, staying at home to look after her children or both! In making those choices, she has often found that whichever one she made, there would always be some part of society that would have a problem with it.

Makida hopes to be instrumental in dismantling such expectations of women across the world. This is why she saw the need to write a book to encourage young readers, girls in particular, that it is OK to be what they choose to be as long as they are happy doing it, to embrace who they are and live their truth.

Makida also underscored this in her short stay with EPA, where she shared her life experience, regarding the book she authored, and the way children should be raised with readers.

According to her, the meaningful way to generate responsible citizens and instill a sense of patriotism within the young generation is working on children at an early age. In this regard, inculcating the culture of reading within children is vital.

Makida's passion for writing has been manifested ever since she was young and while she was a student, she was writing various articles in English language at her school. Owing to her knowledge and skills for writings, she has had good rapport with her language teachers; and her father, who saw

her inclination for literature, had predicted her future to be a literary person.

Makida, after completing her high school education at Halaba, came to Addis Ababa and pursued her preparatory education. Then she joined Gondar University College of Medicine and Health Science and attended her education in Nursing. "As my father pointed out, even though I have had greater inclination for literature and language, at that moment, I did want to study nursing," she remarked.

When she is talking about the reason why she preferred nursing (midwifery) to writing, Makida said: "While we were in Assela, our house and Assela Hospital have been situated in close distance. And watching health practitioners adorned with their white gowns, and the elegance of their clothes made me wish to become a nurse." And she did it. When her brothers and sisters followed their parents' footprint and became teachers, Makida realized her childhood dream and she joined the health sector.

In fact, she never quit writing; instead, she was producing various pieces even while she was at the university.

Once she graduated, she moved back to Assela Town and started serving at Sagure Health station, in Sagure town. She also served in the Middle East, Dubai. Currently, she is residing in Virginia State, USA, and working as a nurse.

As to her, next to motherhood, the profession of nursing is something that she cannot express it at all. Words are inadequate for her to utter about the two. "Nursing is a profession where people come to you seeking your help when they are tired and unable to manage their condition. So, that is a big responsibility."

Even though Makida and her family have started living abroad, her mother is not a woman who supports it. Instead, she has a firm stance that everyone has the opportunity to work and prosper at homeland.

According to Makida, the work culture and the living conditions of the country she is living now is not conducive to spending enough time with children. As a result, she has witnessed several working moms sitting on the fence whether to stay at home to raise their children, or to leave their children at home to work.

Makida, as a mother of three, knows the challenge plainly. "I have firsthand experience of the extent of difficulties working moms face," she said, mentioning the greatest challenging time that she faced while preparing the book she authored- "The World Needs a Uniquely Happy You!" She had to nurse her baby, take care of her, and let her fall asleep, concurrent to carrying out office assignments that were left incomplete due to maternal leave.



"When I see the world through my children's eyes; I decided to create a world that is favorable for them and discharge my responsibilities," she remarked.

As to her, though we thought that those children come from us and are the same; and attempt to raise them in the same method of child rearing, they have entirely different personalities and identities, different hopes and dreams. For this reason, without magnifying the differences we see in them, we have to go all-out and support them to grow and become good citizens.

The fictional characters designated in the book are people from different backgrounds and regions and represent different cultures. Translating the book in local language helps children to learn about the history, culture, lifestyle and technology of the other world,

Most importantly, instead of blaming others for the limited number of children's books at home, she prefers to be part of the solution. She also underscored the importance of preparing children's books in a more attractive and inspiring way.

Makida believes that for those individuals

who read, the doors are open. Even the first commandment of the Prophet Muhammad in Islam is to read. The adage "Reading makes a full man" is not just a saying, but it is a reality because it fills one's mind with knowledge and skills. However the culture of reading in her home country, compared with the place she is residing now, there is a huge difference. Here in Ethiopia, it seems that the culture of reading is pushed aside. "To curb this challenge, and make reading a culture among children, parents should read books along with their offspring because, by nature, children do what we do, not what we say," she remarked.

She also urged authors who are writing children's books to make the books inviting and captivating.

Aside from Mom's choice award of the "Gold Seal Award", Makida also managed to win the Royal DragonFly Book Award in the Story Monsters category. She also received the best readable book award.

Makida, in addition to the Amharic language, is also working to have the book translated into other local languages.

Society

Lessening challenges of deaf, hearing-impaired persons

BY EYUEL KIFLU

Deaf and hearing-impaired persons around the world face a number of challenges and difficulties in their day to day activities. Ranging from accessing education and healthcare services as well as employment opportunities, the needs of this segment of the society are left unmet or overlooked in most cases.

The case is not different in Ethiopia. Despite international and regional conventions and national laws that are devised with the aim of protecting the rights of people with disabilities, including the deaf and hearing-impaired persons, many barriers still exist that prevent them from fully participating in society.

One of the major obstacles facing deaf individuals and hearing-impaired persons in Ethiopia is the lack of access to education.

According to a report by Human Rights Watch, only a small percentage of deaf children have access to quality education, with many being excluded from mainstream schools due to a lack of resources and trained teachers who can communicate at the desired level using sign language. This leaves many children with the said problem without the opportunity to learn and develop essential skills that are critical in the current and their desired future lives.

In addition to limited educational opportunities, deaf individuals also struggle to find employment due to discrimination and misconceptions about their abilities. Many employers are hesitant to hire deaf and hearing-impaired individuals, believing that they will not be able to perform their duties effectively. This, in turn, perpetuates a cycle of poverty and exclusion for many members of the deaf community.

Furthermore, there is a lack of support services for deaf individuals in the country. Access to healthcare, social services, and legal assistance is often limited or non-existent for those who are deaf. This leaves them more vulnerable to actively and fully participate in society.

Despite these challenges, there are organizations and individuals who are working tirelessly to improve the lives of the deaf and hearing-impaired persons in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian National Association of the Deaf (ENAD) is one such organization that is dedicated to promoting the rights and well-being of the deaf community. The organization provides advocacy, support services, and works towards creating more inclusive



Ethiopian Sign Language

policies that benefit all members of society.

It is crucial for the government and other stakeholders in Ethiopia to prioritize the needs of the deaf and hearing-impaired persons by investing in education, creating employment opportunities, and arranging support services. By doing so, it is possible to break down barriers, change the attitude of the community and create a more inclusive society where all individuals with some kind of disabilities have equal access to opportunities.

As we continue to strive for equality and inclusion for all members of society, it is important that we recognize and support the unique needs of the deaf community in Ethiopia. Only through collective efforts can we create a more just and equitable society for all.

Recently, a forum that discusses issues that deaf and hearing-impaired persons face and find solutions was conducted.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald* President of the Addis Ababa Disabilities Association Geletaw Mulu, highlighted the numerous challenges faced by the deaf and hearing-impaired persons in Addis Ababa, including social, economic, and political issues. The objective of the discussion was to identify and differentiate these problems, gather input, and find solutions.

The Association has established close relationships with various government sectors to collaborate on disability-related issues. They have entered into different

agreements and actively engage in panel discussions to advocate for inclusiveness of people with disabilities. In cases of discrimination, policy gaps, or systemic issues, the association addresses the problems by engaging with the relevant parties for resolution.

Geletaw emphasized that the responsibility for unimplemented policies and laws that are related to people with disabilities lies on the government. Amending, introducing and effectively implementing new policies, is the responsibility of both federal and regional government bodies, as well as the judicial process.

One of the major challenges faced by the deaf community is communication barriers with hearing individuals, as most people are unfamiliar with sign language, the visual gestural language that serves as the primary means of communication for deaf people. This hindrance affects deaf people's access to various services including healthcare, employment opportunities, and particularly access to education.

Geletaw also stressed the difficulty in teaching deaf individuals in sign language, especially in rural and countryside areas. As to him, arresting the problems faced by the deaf community requires collaboration from the government, pertinent bodies and all stakeholders. In similar manner, service rendering organizations should give due emphasis to the problem and must ensure inclusivity in their services for all types of disabilities.

Yemeserach Gebre, a deaf individual, shared her personal experience of facing communication difficulties, especially when interacting with hearing individuals. She recounted the unfortunate court case where a lack of availability of sign language interpreter hindered her ability to effectively communicate and present her case.

As a result, she lost the case, which resulted in a negative impact on her psychological well-being.

Yemeserach emphasized that deafness does not equate to inability, and deaf individuals possess the knowledge and skills that are necessary to participate in various sectors. The only request they have is the availability of sign language interpreters in all service sectors.

According to studies, in Ethiopia there are more than five million deaf and hearing-impaired people. Thus, bridging the communication gap and lessening the burden of these segments of the society through devising workable mechanisms is imperative.

It is crucial for the government and other stakeholders in Ethiopia to prioritize the needs of the deaf and hearing-impaired persons by investing in education, creating employment opportunities, and arranging support services



Published Weekly in Collaboration with Haramaya University



Prof. Mengistu Urge, Haramaya University Vice President for Academic Affairs celebrating Christmas with students



Haramaya University officials with students on holiday

Haramaya University's Christmas wishes

Haramaya University wishes all Christians a happy 2016 E.C Jesus Christ birthday. May the holiday be a day of peace, love and mercy to all of you! HAPPY HOLIDAY!

Yunivarsiitiin Haramaayaa Hordofootaa Amantaa Kiristaanaa Hundaan Baga Ayyaana Dhaloota Gooftaa Iyyesuus Kiristoos (Qillee) Bara 2016 Nagayaan Ittiin Isin Gahe! Ayyanichi Kan Nagayaa, Jaalalaa fi Dhiifamaa isiniif haa ta'u! Ayyaana Gaarii!

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