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Setting tone for Ethiopia's pursuit of sea access

• Youths vow to unleash digital potential to back cause

BY DESTA GEBREHIWOT

ADDIS ABABA- Youths have pledged to set and spread the tone for Ethiopia in its quest for direct access to the sea, vowing to debunk wrong narratives surrounding the issue using digital platforms.

As Ethiopia pushes aggressively on its aspiration and makes it a major

See Setting tone ... Page 3

Ethio-Somaliland MoU keystone to HoA peace, integration

• Groups opposing accord want to keep signatories poor, unstable

BY BILAL DERSO

ADDIS ABABA-Apart from fostering bilateral benefits, the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by Ethiopia and Somaliland would be a cornerstone in bringing peace to the volatile Horn of Africa (HoA) and expedite economic integration, Somaliland's Embassy to Ethiopia said.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, the Deputy Head Mission Barkhad Mohamoud Kaariye (PhD) stated that Ethiopia's establishment of a naval base in Somaliland would greatly contribute to pacifying Bab-el-Mandeb, one of the busiest trade routes globally, and prevent rampant piracy.

Having availed a 20-km coastline to Ethiopia, the MoU serves the twin objectives of addressing the former's long-held quest for seaports and contributing for maritime peace in the HoA.

See Ethio-Somaliland ... Page 3



Photo: Hadush Abreha

Ethiopia warmly welcomes second-generation homecoming arrivals

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- Second Generation Ethiopians and people of Ethiopian descent have begun returning home in pursuance to the invitation made by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD).

Last Friday, Tourism Minister Amb. Nasise Chali welcomed the first arrivals of Second Generation Ethiopian Diasporas who came home responding to the premier's call dubbed "Back to Your Origins."

Ethiopian descendants born abroad are invited to visit their motherland to know their origins, thus, several tasks have been undertaken to ease the homecoming process so that they can easily access visa, duty and customs services, said Amb. Nasise.

She also stated that the Ethiopian Airlines, hotels, tour guides and tourism destinations



Photo: Gebabo Gebere

are offering discounts.

Anchor events aimed at entertaining entrants will be held in all rounds of the

homecoming program. Among these events is found Ethiopia's Week themed "Connect

See Ethiopia warmly ... Page 3

Addis residents laud port deal's multifaceted benefits

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA- Residents of Addis Ababa said the recently-sealed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Somaliland is a timely measure that would bring immense benefit to both signatory countries and the Horn of Africa at large.

Residents who talk to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) stated that the accord plays a pivotal role to satisfy the country's long-held aspiration to sea access and expedite the economic progress.

See Addis residents ... Page 3

Historical injustice shall not continue in 21st century!

Page 7

The Ethiopian and Sudanese people share similar values that bind them inseparably to each other

Page 8

Strengthening solidarity, unity, peace through holydays

Page 10

News

State harvests over 10 mln quintals of coffee

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA - Oromia State Agriculture Bureau announced that some 10.7 million quintals coffee has been harvested this fiscal year.

Bureau's Deputy and Coffee and Fruit Sector Head, Mohammed Sani told The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the state has harvested 10.7 million quintals of coffee product.

According to him, 70% of the coffee product will be exported while the rest would serve for local consumption.

He mentioned that the bureau has undertaken harvesting coffee works except for the highland areas.

On the other hand, it has also prepared 780,000 kilograms of coffee seeds from planned 826,000 kilograms of seeds. Besides, the Bureau is working to provide coffee producers with 2.5 million coffee plants for the next production period, he added.

Pruning old-coffee plants to boost productivity will begin very soon and over 150 million metric cubes compost has been prepared, he said, adding the Bureau is creating market linkages for coffee producers who have over 2,000,000 hectares to meet with exporters.

"However, a lot remain to be done regarding



of keeping such situation to ensure farmers adequate benefit," he stressed.

Mohammed also stated that some 18 zones in the Oromia state have been producing coffee.

According to him, Jimma, West and Qelem Wolega, Gujji, and other adjacent areas encompass 75% of coffee production in the state.

ECAA develops capacity to protect airspace sovereignty

• Controls 600 Flights per day

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDISABABA - Ethiopian Civil Aviation Authority (ECAA) expressed that it has developed capacity to protect country's airspace as it is controlling over 600 flights per day.

ECAA Air Traffic Management Director, Yohannes Abera told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the authority has utilized various security devices to control activities of Bole International Airport by installing satellite-based technologies at eight stations.

"It has the ability to control border areas beyond the country. To facilitate its operation, it uses four types of intelligence tools to control its air traffic. The Authority has used technologies called "automatic dependent surveillance-broadcast" and "multilateral observational machine" to intercept flights in Ethiopian airspace without the authority's permission," he added.

Technologies allow ECAA officer to quickly contact the Ethiopian Air Force by identifying unauthorized flights and preventing danger within country's airspace, he stressed.

The International Civil Aviation Organization which conducts safety audit assessment granted Ethiopia 89% success rate, he said, adding Ethiopia's safety audit result is high since the average of world aviation safety audits is 60%.

Yohannes noted that various information tips including flight list, flight direction and altitude should be made clear when seeking flight permission. Accordingly, the flights outside of this pattern wouldn't grant entry into Ethiopian airspace.

"Airplane that flies without permission, interception procedures will be carried out to force the aircraft to land or leave the airspace as necessary," he said.

Due attention has been given on regulatory operations to protect air sovereignty and address cross-border security issues and to reduce problems related with customs issues, he noted.

ECAA is jointly working with the Ethiopian Air Force and the Information Network Security Administration to protect country's airspace, according to the Director.

Authority urges religious leaders to mitigate noise pollution

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA—Addis Ababa City Environment Protection Authority has requested religious leaders and institutions to play their part by understanding the health damage that noise pollution can cause.

The Environmental Protection Authority of Addis Ababa City Administration, in collaboration with the Addis Ababa Religious Institutions Conference, held discussion with religious leaders on the issue of excessive noise from religious institutions and street preaching and begging services on behalf of religious institutions.

Addis Ababa Environmental Protection Authority General Manager, Dida Driba, said that the voices coming out of the religious institutions in the city are above the level, and we must work together to find a solution, understanding that it has been harming all of us.

According to some studies, noise pollution in addition to the negative impact of psychological and mental it causes frustration, fear, instability, emotionality, lack of empathy, anxiety and, as seen in some countries, can even lead to suicide. It has a significant negative impact on the economy in terms of lost resources,



reduced productivity and health problems.

Therefore, it is necessary to work together for the solution, by understanding that when the voices coming out from the religious institutions of the city are excessive, it will cause damage, Dida noted.

Addis Ababa Religious Institutions Conference General Secretary, Pastor Tamrat Abegaz, at the forum said that religious leaders should resolve problems that could erode our unity and brotherhood through dialogue.

"All religious institutions are known for their community preaching towards peace. Besides, they are serving as a source and

foundation of peace. They are still serving as a positive resource for peace. It is also known that they contribute to a peaceful society and the development of the country," Pastor Tamrat said.

He stated that when any religious ceremony is celebrated in the city, it shouldn't affect the rights and freedom of movement of others, the right of movement of their religion, the doctrine and symbols of their beliefs. These ceremonies have to continue to be means of strengthening brotherhood and unity by preventing noise pollutions from the religious institutions and street preaching and begging services on behalf of religious institutions.

News

Addis residents...

Desie Adimtew, a resident of Addis Ababa said that the deal enables Ethiopia to be self-sufficient in port use and protect its interest in the strategic Horn of Africa region. "We suffered a lot due to the absence of direct access to sea ports and it brings a good chance without harming others' sovereignty and provides a positive impact to Ethiopia and the entire region."

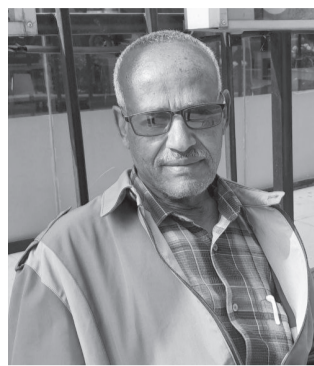
"The accord respects mutual benefit of the signatories without violating other parties' interest in the region. Ethiopia is doing the business by pursuing good diplomacy with Somaliland and the deal is a game changer that allows the former to sea access in exchange for diplomatic recognition."

The accord also helps to advance mutual interests through cooperation on the basis of reciprocity as well as pave the way for Ethiopia to realize its aspiration to secure a sovereign access to the sea and diversify its sea ports, Desie remarked.

Saron Mesfin, another resident, said that the MoU led the country's economy in the right



Desie Adimtew



Teshome Gurara



Saron Mesfin

path as deprivation to port access created a bottleneck, hindrance and distort the nation's trade balance. "It helps to address the trade and economic crisis that Ethiopia pays hefty foreign currency to import goods in other country's sea routes."

For Teshome Gurara, another resident the MoU is great news for the country that has remained land locked for the last 30 and plus years and faced immense economic hurdles. "The port deal avails big opportunity to Ethiopia and ensures its long term benefit"

The recent MoU is not a new phenomenon and it is the continuation of Ethiopia's rightful diplomacy which prioritizes forging mutual benefits in relations with neighboring countries. The country is also always vigilant to ensure the pact it has concluded with any party does not harm others' interest."

It is to be recalled that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) and Somaliland President Muse Bihi Abdi signed on last Monday the MoU for Partnership and Cooperation.

Ethio-Somaliland...

Moreover, the pact is considered a bold step taken to create strong economic ties between the two HoA countries that should be replicated by others, Barkhad emphasized.

"While the MoU aims to benefit over 130 million people living in the two countries, it is also the solution for their economic and political setbacks propelled by lack of sea access and recognition."

According to him, the MoU is part of the big plan that aims to transform the two sides' historical relations into new heights and cement the legalization and enhancement of people-to-people and commercial relations. "The people of Somaliland expressed overwhelming support and delight over the pact that is expected to facilitate the long-awaited international recognition."

The deal is also said to ensure the free movement of border communities and support the flourishing of cross-border commerce and interconnectedness.

Mentioning the contribution of Ethiopia's use of the Berbera corridor in the two sides' development cooperation, Barkhad expressed optimism that the MoU paves a great opportunity for Somaliland's young population. "In this regard, the accord is instrumental to deter the youth's involvement in piracy and other illegal activities that is intensified by lack of sovereignty and financial constraints."

The Deputy Ambassador further highlighted that those interest groups who oppose the MoU want to keep Ethiopia landlocked and unstable and Somaliland unrecognized and

underdeveloped. "Why it becomes strange for Ethiopia to establish a military base in Somaliland while different countries that are far away from the HoA already have a strong military presence in the region?"

The diplomat called on the regional community to value efforts that the people of Somaliland have waged to build a peaceful and democratic nation and their longstanding quest for sovereignty.

It is to be recalled that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) and Somaliland President Muse Bihi Abdi signed on last Monday the MoU for Partnership and Cooperation. Among other things, the MoU said to pave the way to realize Ethiopia's aspiration to secure access to the sea for both military and commercial purposes and to diversify its seaport alternatives.

Setting tone for...

foreign policy priority, entering a deal with Somaliland earlier this week, the issue of access to the sea already reignited public discussion and become prime time media agenda.

Right after Addis Ababa and Hargiesa announced the sealing of the Memorandum of Understanding on partnership and cooperation, some have taken to the street and some have gone to social media platforms to cheer the deal.

The issue of sea outlets is now trending in social media, surfacing in cities, and towns. On the day of the Ethio-Somaliland accord and afterward, the deal has become the talk of Hawassa town. And, some residents whom *The Ethiopian Herald* approached have praised the agreement.

Albeit put on the back burner for a long, access to the sea has begun to resurface in the country after Prime Minister Abiy pressed the people including lawmakers and scholars to accord currency and weight to the matter. In the last months, scholarly debate and discussions have been underway under the auspicious of various universities.

Earlier this week, Hawassa University staged a seminar on the Horn of Africa and Ethiopia's alternatives for sea outlets where

scholars presented papers on related matters and discussed them with the university community.

The scholars have urged the nation to boost its digital diplomacy to fit the information age and advance its genuine interest in the international community.

Students who participated in the seminar have vowed to help spread the country's tone in its sea access aspiration. Tolera Mulugeta is a fourth-year student of Governance and Development Studies at the University; he told *The Ethiopian Herald* that diplomacy is a decisive weapon in international relations and diplomacy. The country should double its diplomatic works to win the digital warfare. "Ethiopia must take the upper hand in its diplomacy so long as its intentions are genuine and reciprocal. Sole government's effort is far from enough. We the youth bear the utmost responsibility to help the country boost its diplomatic clouts and cultivate correct international awareness."

The issue of sea access is not, shall not be a one-time campaign; it is a longtime aspiration and a matter of national interest. To communicate the national ambition rightfully and timely and create clarity on the international stage, the youth

should be involved in digital diplomacy activities. Diplomacy should not be left to the government only. It needs continuous engagement and coordination among all, according to Tolera.

"Ethiopians in unison were able to be victors in the battle of Adwa and also build the Abbay dam; it is the generation of this time to help the nation materialize its sea outlet aspiration. Social media is both a means of construction and destruction. We the youth should spread the genuine interests of the country to the outside world using digital platforms."

Particularly, university students need to set and spread the agenda to the outside world. The issue is not politics; it is a national matter that everybody should back.

For Yasmin Mohamed who is also a fourth-year law student at Hawassa University, as the saying goes the pen is mightier than the sword. Ethiopia can realize its aspiration to use diplomacy rather than the military. We need to prioritize using platforms that fit the information age.

"We have social media platforms, and we need to spread Ethiopia's real narratives with these tools. The number of social media users in the country is staggering, and everyone should be giving the agenda

Ethiopia warmly...

with Your Cultural Roots" that will be held soon, she indicated.

"We invite the second generation Ethiopians to see and research their socio-cultural backgrounds. We expect large number of inflow as large number of Ethiopian descent people is still in abroad," she remarked.

According to the Minister, the government has been calling Ethiopian Diasporas to join homecoming initiatives and thousands of Ethiopians have also responded to the call over the past years.

By the same token, she noted, thousands of second generation Ethiopians are expected to come home in three rounds.

Some second generation Ethiopians also told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that they are expecting better hospitality.

Daniel Degu, an Ethiopian Diaspora from Netherlands, told EPA that the young generation needs to know its origin, so, the invitation by the government would receive more inflow.

"We Ethiopians are hospitable. I believe, we are the first refugee receivers with hospitality. The welcoming culture is still alive. Ethiopians and Ethiopian decent Diasporas should enjoy this event," he said.

publicity. Digital diplomacy can be carried out at the individual level. We have seen other countries even spreading false narratives successfully unleashing the power of media and communication. Digital platforms are imperative to spread our valid goals and debunk false accusations."

Mariamawit Betsate, another student, who is attending Journalism and Communication at the university, seconded the above ideas. The student, who is in her third year at the same university, said that to familiarize the country's genuine intentions for socioeconomic and political developments for the rest of the world, every citizen should make use of available means.

Crafting uniform national narratives and imparting them to neighboring nations is the responsibility of all in this regard. Twitter, LinkedIn, and Tick Talk are increasingly becoming leading platforms of information, and they remain a key player in clarifying confusion and addressing oblivious people regarding Ethiopia's sea access aspiration, she added.

"Scholars and politicians should help the youth get acquainted with the issue of sea and port for the latter to promote this noble cause," she added.

Editorial

GERD: The project making nation's dream come true

Less than half of Ethiopians have access to electricity, a lower percentage than most other African countries and a much lower percentage than most other countries in the world. To change this, the Ethiopian government began constructing a dam on the Abbay River in 2011 that will rank as Africa's largest hydroelectric dam.

Commendably, The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) has entered its final phase through the united efforts and perseverance of Ethiopians, according to the Executive Committee of the Dam Coordinating National Council.

Upon commencement of the project, GERD was estimated to cost close to 5 billion US dollars, about 7% of the 2016 Ethiopian Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Due to lack of international finance for the project, Ethiopia is forced to finance it with crowd funding through internal fund raising in the form of selling bond and persuading employees to contribute a portion of their incomes.

Denial of international finance for projects on the Blue Nile River has for long been because of Egypt's persistent campaign to maintain presumed hegemony on the Nile water share. This long ingrained, stubborn stance initiated Ethiopians across the nation regardless of various differences to stand together to finalize the project.

What the government recently announced testifies this reality. The general public has contributed over 18.7 billion Birr for the construction of the Dam up to November 2023.

During the regular meeting held in Addis Ababa recently, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen who is also Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Dam Coordinating National Council said that Ethiopians have moved the Dam to its final phase by allocating their money, knowledge and expertise in the past 12 years.

Stating that the construction of the dam has currently reached 94.6%, he said the Ethiopian people have also demonstrated that everything is possible spirit to the whole world by providing the support tirelessly and carrying out basin conservation activities.

Among the grand driving reasons for the construction of this mega project are access to light for more than 60% of Ethiopian's living in the darkness in the 21st century who are mostly residing in the rural areas of the country; dire need for power towards industries that have suffered of continuous power breakdown; and necessity of renewable energy worldwide to mitigate climate change resulted from high carbon emission among others.

Developmental issue could also not be put aside as the country is struggling to feed its more than 120 million people thereby securing food security. In this regard, the Dam gives good opportunity to carry out multidimensional developmental activities that include sea tourism, lake shore development such as lodges and resorts, fishery for local consumption and foreign market and small irrigated farms.

The successful completion of GERD without explicit support from western financial institutions will have a significant impact on the perception and awareness of Nile water development. The parallels between the planning, construction and financing of High Aswan dam and GERD are stark reminders of critical role of international community to promote co-operation and avoid unintended and lasting ripples on the socio-economic and political landscape of the region.

Regardless of financial denial of the international community to GERD construction, Ethiopians are getting nearer to see the fruit of their efforts. And its completion has big impact for them since they all, from all walks of life, have stretched their hands for the iconic project. Its impact surpasses national pride. By completing the project successfully, the country will take high position in the geopolitical landscape of the region and the globe as well.

The major fact should not be forgotten in the due course is that Ethiopia is constructing the Dam not to harm the interest of any party especially those in the lower basin. The project benefits the region in many ways. Thus, countries in the downstream should stand alongside Ethiopia for the sake of their own benefit instead of going against it.

Opinion

A catalyst for change: The public's active engagement in national dialogue

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

The extraordinary level of public support and participation witnessed during the NDC's preliminary activities serves as a tangible manifestation of the people's desire to be heard and their deep-seated motivation to actively contribute to the country's betterment. The commission understands and acknowledges the immense value and importance of the public's input firmly believing that collective efforts have the power to ignite positive change and pave the way for a brighter future for Ethiopia.

The overwhelming response and participation from individuals of diverse backgrounds have been crucial in shaping the national dialogue laying the foundation for an inclusive and representative process. When citizens of diverse backgrounds actively participate and engage in the national dialogue, it demonstrates a shared responsibility and a collective belief in the transformative power of dialogue.

By attracting individuals from various walks of life, the NDC has been able to create a platform where voices from different sectors can converge. This inclusive approach promotes a holistic and comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the nation ensuring that the dialogue outcomes are truly representative of the people's aspirations.

Throughout its preliminary activities, the NDC has discovered a unifying and resolute commitment among Ethiopians to contribute to the advancement of the nation. What has particularly encouraged the commission is the wholehearted participation of individuals from diverse societal spheres. This broad-based involvement has played a vital role in ensuring that the national dialogue is comprehensive encompassing a wide range of perspectives and interests.

Their active involvement serves as a clear indication of their desire for meaningful change and their firm commitment to advancing the nation. Every person who has embraced and actively participated in the national dialogue process has played a vital role in fueling the motivation and conviction of the commission to drive the conversations forward.

Their unwavering determination to engage in constructive conversations aimed at improving the nation is both admirable and encouraging. It showcases a shared understanding of the importance of fostering dialogue and finding common ground for the betterment of society as a whole. This conviction stems from the understanding that a comprehensive and inclusive discussion is essential to address the varied needs and aspirations of the entire nation. It is particularly inspiring to witness the remarkable diversity present among the individuals engaging in the national dialogue process.

This overwhelming response clearly indicates that the people of Ethiopia have a strong desire to have their voices heard and to actively contribute to the improvement of their country. It demonstrates their deep-rooted motivation to make a positive impact and work towards a better future for themselves and their fellow citizens. By actively involving citizens from different backgrounds and sectors, the commission has successfully created an inclusive platform for meaningful discussions.

By fostering an inclusive platform for discussions, the NDC ensures that all voices are heard and considered enriching the dialogue process with a wide array of perspectives and experiences. The commission has been greatly heartened by the overwhelming response and active involvement of individuals from all walks of life.

This collective commitment further reaffirms the NDC's belief in the transformative power of dialogue and the potential it holds to address the country's most pressing challenges. By ensuring that all voices are heard and considered, the overwhelming response and participation from individuals of diverse backgrounds have been instrumental in creating an inclusive platform for enriching discussions.

The enthusiastic response from individuals hailing from diverse backgrounds and sectors has provided immense encouragement and motivation to continue with the national dialogue process. The commission recognizes the importance of inclusive participation and appreciates the commitment shown by those who have actively contributed to shaping the dialogue's outcomes. With the continued involvement of the public, the commission aims to foster productive conversations that lead to meaningful and sustainable progress for the nation as a whole.

The NDC is committed to ensuring that all voices are heard and considered, and in this regard, the overwhelming response and participation from individuals of diverse backgrounds have played a pivotal role in creating an inclusive platform for meaningful discussions. Witnessing such a high level of enthusiasm and passion has had a profound impact on the commission inspiring and motivating them to persist in their endeavors.

The commission acknowledges that this valuable input from the public is not only beneficial for resolving existing challenges but also plays a crucial role in establishing the groundwork for a more optimistic and prosperous future for the entire nation. This recognition not only highlights the worth and significance of the opinions and contributions made by the public, but it also showcases the commission's firm dedication to inclusivity and ensuring that every individual has a vested interest in shaping the path forward for the country.



The Ethiopian Herald

Established in 1943

Published daily except Mondays
By The Ethiopian Press Agency

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The Ethiopian Herald

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

Opinion

Ethiopia's contribution to continental bond

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Following its spellbinding history, galactic population coupled with myriads of cultural, ethnic as well as styles diversity, strategic geo-political localization, military strength and recent promising economic performance, Ethiopia has been contributing to and influencing within the Intergovernmental Authority for Development and the African Union is witnessed prestigious. Its all-rounded effort towards keeping its continental forerunner is deemed to continue growing. It is also crystal clear that Ethiopia is one of the astronomical contributors to United Nations and AU peacekeeping missions around the world, notably in Sudan and South Sudan border, Abiye, Darfur, among others.

Apart from its potent diplomatic, peace and security contributions to the continent of Africa and beyond, the country has been a role model in making a difference in all aspects, and paving ways to be followed by other African countries repeating the ever-remembered deed it did against colonialism.

Interestingly, Ethiopia has been becoming an engine of regional integration in Africa via providing integrative opportunities through its fast construction of transportation and energy infrastructure, like rail, electricity, you name it. Perhaps Ethiopia's newest and finest contribution to Africa is its inspirational developmental state ideology and its fast-economic growth principally based on boosting homegrown economy. It looks promising and highly likely that Ethiopia's development has sown hopes in Africa and inspired Africans to consider the real expectation of African-led fast economic development merely what is available at hand.

What degree of influence Ethiopia enjoys within the regional and global governance institutions can definitely be determined by its Pan-African effort, personal ambition and trust its leaders enjoy ranging from the Horn of Africa within the entire continent and the international community.

Furthermore, as Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, has been the seat of a number of regional, continental and even international organizations, embassies and unions and councils, it has effectively discharging all the special responsibilities of being the host nation of the AU Headquarters, Pan African community. Ethiopia's ad hoc approach to the AU needs to be changed in order to increase its influence in the AU apart from its excessively inward-looking policy. Ethiopia needs to formulate and implement a strategic stand-alone policy and institutional mechanism governing its relations with the AU.

Frankly speaking, Ethiopia, as a founding and active member of the AU and Pan African community, has been making momentous contributions to Africa and the AU, and whatever additional contributions it might make in the future.

The country is obviously advancing towards growth and prosperity and endeavoring to have strong institutions with a well-defined

framework and policy. It has also worked all the time to establish a win-win approach with its neighboring nations, countries of the continent and beyond to promote its interests and that of others equally.

Definitely such an impartial approach would further cement the bilateral and multilateral ties Ethiopia has been establishing with sisterly countries since long back.

The very crucial aspect on which Ethiopia has embarked with regard to pulling Africa and itself out of the grip of poverty, underdevelopment, corruption and maladministration is consolidating unity and regional integration. In so doing, it has been proved possible to make a difference. Here, the role Civil Society Organizations, private sector, development partners, and the international community play is expected to move in unison to help Africa declare economic, political and ideological independence.

Yes, Ethiopia as well as Africa would rise if they are capable of assessing their moves under the auspicious of the Pan African kernel. Unequivocally, Ethiopia has been known for setting an exemplary trend for the rest of Africa for instance in upholding the core values of the AU.

Countries of the continent have also to systematically utilize what is grated for them from international aides regarding package for food, trade and investment. Besides, their target has to be emancipating themselves from dependency syndrome. Ethiopia and other African nations as well as the international parents need to declare a strategic partnership. Furthermore, Africa needs to focus on the quest of having a permanent UNSC seat so as to get its voice heard loud as such a promising move would be of significantly useful in backing Ethiopia's as well as Africa's effort to declare self-fulfillment in all aspects.

The joining of some countries of the continent to the BRICS would also be of significantly useful in coming up with a number of lucrative means to fuel change and growth in Africa. The African continent has to come out of the trap of the vicious circle of conflict and whatsoever source of chaos and turmoil if it wants to be the continent of its vision. Africa has to be no longer a continent of war and crisis. Truly speaking, the roots of the current as well as recurrent trend of unjustly run disabilities have to get dried to help the continent breathe a sigh of relief and be well-to-do one proportional to what it holds in terms of natural resource, productive human power and all sorts of underground precious assets. Ethiopia has to come to the forefront along this the indeed, as it has long been a pioneer to all means of freedom and independence.

The new African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the world's largest free trade zone seems to gain momentum, should also be well consolidated and nations of this strategic continent are expected to work hard to enlist themselves under the category of developed nations of the world. If one scrupulously sees the conditions of the continent taking its being endowed with

All countries of the continent have to put forward the outlook on peace and development in the Horn of Africa, across the continent and beyond so as promote long-term peace and development

a range of resource, they will confidently deduce that Africa will be the land of hope and practical good fortune.

The positive trends and best experiences of some countries of the continent of Africa and other continents have to be well internalized aiming at reinvigorating peace and security in Ethiopia in particular and in Africa in general to help them have ample opportunity to change as peace matters the most and the safely breathing air for societal well being. Here, recognizing individuals, groups, and governments immense contribution does have its own prestigious place. The contribution, which has been made by other countries of the world especially of the African or Ethiopian allies, has to be well weighed.

Bearing in mind the cardinal interests of Ethiopia and the well-being of its people, the government resolved a range of differences and reached reconciliation through political dialogue. The remaining ones are also taken into serious consideration.

The peace process, as obviously known, has brought many benefits to development and growth in Ethiopia and in the Horn of Africa, too. Cognizant of the fact that Ethiopia's peace is a victory for African autonomy and economic and political independence; all nations of the continent are expected to work on the matter. It is also well proved that Ethiopians have the capability and wisdom to independently solve their internal differences and achieve domestic peace.

Such an appealing approach should be well expanded and rife in all African nations and even beyond so as to create a peaceful planet. This in turn helps further energize the principle of 'African solution to African problems,' and make it quite feasible and

should become an important guidance for the international community's constructive participation in Africa's peace and safety concerns.

Ethiopia, Africa's second most populous nation, has to maintain and keep on being an influential state of the continent. The efforts and achievements of Ethiopia in terms of peace and security, economic growth centering homegrown fashion, the relentless endeavor to garner the benefit out of the tourism and other lucrative sectors has to be well triplicated as the growth and prosperity of Ethiopia would lay, as learned from past experiences, an unwavering foundation for the growth and change of the entire Africa.

It is really appropriate as well as legitimate to heartily acknowledge Ethiopia's contribution to the AU and the pan-Africanism move as the country has been playing an incomparable role in beefing up its fruition.

Obviously, Ethiopia always believes that peace and stability underpin at its and continent's development and prosperity.

What matters with regard to bringing about change in Africa and in its elements is the issue of securing peace and serenity. The concern of peace and security and fashion of entertaining close talks, dialogue and negotiations are two sides of a coin and right ways to solve differences and disputes maintaining fundamental interests of countries themselves and their respective people.

All countries of the continent have to put forward the outlook on peace and development in the Horn of Africa, across the continent and beyond so as promote long-term peace and development. It is indeed high time for Africa as a whole to facilitate and solicit relevant parties' efforts to reach important consensus on realizing regional development through unity and cooperation. In so doing, the mission the continent has long aspired would be accomplished within the shortest time possible.

To this end, too, establishing fraternity, entertaining unity in diversity, nurturing a culture of cooperation has to be strengthened to help Africa be hub of cooperation instead of being center of rivalry and confrontation.

It is also recurrently heralded that Ethiopia all the time stands ready to work with the rest of the international community to centering win-win approach, cementing peace and taking the sovereignty and national interests of both sides into account.

The country has also been aware that practically exercising these means are potential weapons to boost economic growth, fuel inclusive change and foster spirit of growing together. That is why it said that Ethiopia has made immense contribution to the efforts geared towards continental bond and meaningful cooperation.

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

Law & Politics

Historical injustice shall not continue in 21st century!

BY DANIEL ALEMAYHEU

The Nile River, a transboundary, is the longest river in the world that passes through dozens of countries. Utilizing and controlling the river, the lower riparian nations have tried their best to perpetuate hegemony, rather a historical injustice. Accordingly, the lower riparian signed a treaty with their colonizer power. Since then, Sudan and Egypt have been the sole beneficiaries of the shared resource for many decades. In order to defend their monopoly, the two nations agreed and struck a deal half a century ago. As a result, the upstream nations were and still are bystanders watching the downstream nation exploiting the resource solely.

Speaking of the Nile and the agreements over the river, the two major agreements have become the best weapons the lower riparian nations use. The 1929, was a colonial treaty between Egypt and the United Kingdom, and the 1959 agreement signed between Sudan and Egypt aimed at monopolizing and controlling the common resource. In good truth, both the agreements deliberately ignore the involvement of the upper riparian states to give more advantage to the lower ones.

Research documents stated that the 1929 colonial agreement was based on the outcome of political negotiations between Egypt and Great Britain in the 1920s, and in particular on the report of the 1925 Nile Waters Commission. The basic objective of the accord was to guarantee and facilitate increased water volume reaching Egypt.

The colonial accord also provided two main benefits to Egypt. It stated that “no irrigation or power works or measures are to be constructed or taken on the River Nile or its branches.” Again it permits Egypt, if the Egyptian Government wanted to construct in Sudan, they would agree beforehand with the local authorities to safeguard local interests.

Similarly, the 1959 Nile Accord was signed between the United Arab Republic, Egypt, and the Republic of Sudan also known as the Nile Control Projects which was intended to control the benefits beget from the water. Besides, the two republics alone agreed to achieve two major objectives: maximizing the two republics’ acquired rights to the water and constructing two different dams in both nations. The agreement blessed Egypt with the right to acquire 48 milliards of cubic meters per year as measured at Aswan. On the other hand, Sudan agreed to acquire 4 milliards of cubic meters per year as measured at Aswan.

In addition, the two republics agreed to construct two different dams in both nations. As to the accord, “In order to regulate the River waters and control their flow into the sea, the two Republics agree that Egypt constructs the Sudd el Aali at Aswan as the first link of a series of projects on the Nile for over-year storage. Again, the two Republics agree that the Republic of Sudan shall construct the Roseires Dam on the Blue Nile and any other works which the Republic of Sudan considers essential for



the utilization of its share.”

Likewise, in the past many decades, the upper riparian countries had done nothing to use the water resource for their own due to multiple reasons and tiding colonial agreements. On the other side, the lower riparian countries have made use of the water for their economic and geopolitical power. They have also been advantageous because of their gigantic dams on the Nile. They still want things to go as usual without any difference. Making them the sole beneficiaries is their ultimate goal, and the rest of the nation in the upper part of the river gets nothing from the common natural resource that flows on their territory.

From the onset of the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) or the Abbay Dam, Ethiopia has shown its stance towards the equal sharing of the resource. To this end, the country and the rest of the Nile nations have tried to discuss the issue in different periods. During this period, Ethiopia has also shown its unwavering stand to live with its neighboring nations in harmony. Unfortunately, the lower riparian nations have shown their disapproval towards the dam by shuttling in and fro to multiple places to pressure Ethiopia to accept the aforementioned accords.

Particularly, Egypt has left no stone unturned to defend and maintain what they call ‘Egypt’s historical right’ on the Nile in order to halt the construction of the Abbay Dam. The nation has also done everything to use the river in hegemony and never let any other upper riparian nations reap the benefit. That was the reason Egypt brought the issue to the United States of America and the Arab leagues by giving it back to the African Union. Egypt has also tried to impose colonial legacy on Ethiopia and basin countries.

According to multiple documents, in the colonial periods, the colonizer could pass

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any decision and sign any agreements on behalf of the colonized nations. These African countries, like some upper riparian countries, have been obliged to accept all the agreements and decisions of their former colonizers. However, it would be absurd to force a sovereign and un-colonized state, Ethiopia, to accept the accords of colonizers. That is why the lower riparian’s are perhaps asking Ethiopia to obey the rule of colonizers.

Having stayed with the Ethiopian Press Agency, Assistant Professor Adem Kemal said that Ethiopia has no obligation to obey any colonial agreements. At that time, we, Ethiopians, were not part of the agreement and contributed nothing. Even, history and international laws cannot force us to accept such agreements. “If anyone accepts the

agreement, then it is with the Egyptians.” We do not accept any of such accords as citizens and as a government. Even though Ethiopia owns 85 percent of the water, the nation was not asked about its thoughts or permission on the accord. We are not a colonized state and we will not colonize in the future. We stay free and sovereign.

In many instances, Ethiopia showed its willingness to discuss the matter for mutual benefit and took the issue to the African Union as the nation believes in solving African problems with African solutions.

It is proven that the nation is one of the disadvantaged nations. This is because almost all the waters are transboundary and wash off all the soil to the neighboring nations. Not only that, the nation has benefited very little from its water resources. To this end, Ethiopia must stand for its own advantages and gain the possible benefits. That was the sole reason why the people and government of Ethiopia paid their blood and bones to the construction of Abbay Dam. Ethiopia, like its history teaches, should stand for its rights and do whatever is beneficiary to the people of Ethiopia.

Like what the lower riparian states argue, the Nile is what the Ethiopia needs the most. Like the lower riparian states, the Nile is a life for Ethiopians, too. Ethiopians need the river as badly as Egyptians or Sudanese. Ethiopia still shows respect for all the ideas entertained regarding the Nile. The nation also presents its desire to live peacefully with its neighboring nations. However, the nation is only accountable for the agreements and conventions it signed and involved not any colonial treaties. Ethiopia refuses any partial advantages regarding the common river. It also defends anyone that come in any national interest. Ethiopia is a free state, and it is hard to force a sovereign and never-colonized state to accept colonial accords.

The Ethiopian and Sudanese people share similar values that bind them inseparably to each other

- Khaled Karam

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Ethio–Sudanese relations, refer to the bilateral relationship between the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and the Republic of Sudan (RoS), have had a very long history dated back to, the ancient times of Axum and Meroe.

The history of Ethiopia and Sudanese relations exhibits an age-old political, economic, social and cultural bond. Apart from their relations as neighbors, Ethiopia and Sudan have many common features. Some ethnic group like Berta and Gumuz live in both Ethiopia and Sudan along the border areas. Tributary rivers like Atbara, Blue Nile (Abay) flow to Sudan from the highlands of Ethiopia.

However, despite the long history, the commonalties that beget age-old bond had never yielded progress and fraternal relations to the people of the two nations. In the modern history, in particular, the last king of the Solomonic Dynasty, Emperor Haile Selassie and the military Dergue regime's foreign policy and strategies, which took Ethiopia's neighbors as historic enemies, failed to nurture the historic relation between the two nations.

Worse still, the siege-mentality that sprang from the view that considers our neighbors as opponents, forced the two countries into a destructive policy of harboring and supporting the other's rebels until the downfall of the Derg regime in 1991..

Conversely, after the downfall of the Dergue regime, Ethiopia saw a paradigm shift in its foreign policy approach. Militarism and siege-mentality driven foreign relation was replaced by a forward-looking policy that upholds a win-win approach and mutual benefit. As a result, since 1991, Ethiopia has given due attention and prime focus to engagement with its neighbor countries, Africa as a continent, and South-South cooperation in general.

As stated in the current Ethiopian foreign and national security document, Ethiopia places utmost consideration to working closely with its neighboring nations to promote trade, investment, development, and infrastructure with a view to hasten economic integration.

Due to this policy shift, Ethiopia and Sudan's bilateral relation has seen dramatic change. Over the past years in particular, the two sisterly nations were working together to elevate their relation in bilateral, regional, continental and international levels.

In recent years, the cooperation has taken the form of increased volume of trade and flow of foreign direct investment.

The deep-rooted, cultural, and historical people-to-people relations between Ethiopia and Sudan and emphasized the need to strengthen with further engagements. It was recalled that Ethiopia and Sudanese Public Diplomacy delegation visited the two countries in different times and expressed their readiness to strengthen bilateral ties between the two countries.

The peoples of Ethiopia and Sudan are one with deep-rooted historical and cultural ties. The Sudanese Public Diplomacy Delegations' visit to Ethiopia in November 2019 was successful. Due to COVID and war ignited in Sudan, the strong people to people ties backed to former stage. However, as the two people should not be isolated in war and peace times, undertaking activities that further enhances the people-to-people relations between the two countries is quite imperative. Both sides stressed the importance of cooperation in organizing various events that further enhance relations between the people of Ethiopia and Sudan.

Recently, the Sudanese Embassy together with Sudanese Community in Ethiopia celebrated the 68th anniversary of Sudan's Independence Day at the Sudanese community headquarters in Addis Ababa.

In connection with the 68th anniversary of Sudan's Independence Day, The Ethiopian Herald spent a short time with Khaled Karam who is president of Sudanese community in Ethiopia to know more about people to people ties and other political economic and cultural issues. Have a nice read!

Would you please explain about the exhibition organized to mark the Sudanese Independence Day?

The exhibition was inaugurated by the Sudanese Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ambassador Jamal Al-Sheikh, who praised the celebration and the exhibition. I considered it as a link for Sudanese residing in Ethiopia.

Although the celebration comes at a time when our country Sudan is in complex and painful situation, organizing various events are necessary to create communication between the Ethiopian

and Sudanese peoples.

Ambassador Jamal Al-Sheikh praised the progressive relations between Ethiopia and Sudan, and expressed gratitude to the people and government of Ethiopia for the peace process and support to host the Sudanese Independence Day on its territory.

This year's celebration is completely different from previous one as Sudan is going through very thorny circumstances due to the ongoing war between two warring parties.

Many Sudanese people have left their



Allow me to praise Ethiopians who are welcoming and hosting the Sudanese people who were displaced from Sudan due to the enduring war. The displaced people of Sudan here feel like they are residing in their home country

home towns and taken refuge to other places in the east Africa region including neighboring Ethiopia. Presently, Ethiopia became a shelter for more than twelve thousand Sudanese displaced people including women and children. This years' Independence Day was marked with their presence.

In a three day-long celebration, Sudanese agricultural and manufacturing sectors were displayed. A free medical treatment laboratory and other services had been provided to the people displaced from Sudan as a result of prolonged war. The exhibition reflects traditional costumes, cultural foods and drinks.

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The Sudanese communities who are legally registered to reside in Ethiopia are also now helping the displaced Sudanese. Accordingly, the displaced

Continued to Page 9



The Ethiopian and Sudanese ...

Continued from Page 8

people have obtained various treatments including food, shelter, and flight tickets for those who wish to return to Sudan.

A committee drawn from the Sudanese community is now addressing problems that the displaced Sudanese have encountered. The Ethiopian government as usual has stood by the Sudanese community to resolve the challenges the displaced people are facing.

As neighboring countries that share long borders, Ethiopia and Sudan have immense investment opportunities. Would you tell us Sudanese investors' engagement in Ethiopia?

Ethiopia has very attractive investment potentials. That is the pushing factor for many Sudanese to invest in Ethiopia. Following the prolonged war in Sudan, commercial and investment activities in Sudan have congested. As a result, many Sudanese investors are rushing to Ethiopia to engage in various industries. This has opened new doors for them to invest in Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian Investment Commission welcomes every foreign investor and provides all facilities. The community met Ethiopian Investment Commission Commissioner in order to solve the challenges that these Sudanese investors are facing.

Sudanese investors are now engaged in various sectors. Service sector is one of the areas that many of them are involved in. Construction, hospitals, universities, tourism, and well developing are some of the service sector most Sudanese investors engaged in. Agriculture, pharmaceutical industry, and mineral extraction in Benishangul, the southern Ethiopia and Tigray are other areas of interest for Sudanese investors.

The construction of Abbay Dam (GERD) is one of the imperative issues that connect the two countries? How can the dam serve the interest of the two peoples?

Essentially, the two countries are closely linked by the Nile River, and this has given them a historical importance and unity that reinforces their praiseworthy roles in the Horn of Africa. Because of this, they worked together on issues that involved mutual benefits.

Since they have been discussing possible ways in which they can benefit from the Nile River, and have also addressed boundary issues and disputes through dialogue and negotiations, they should deal with the current irregularities through discussion without involving outside parties.

Building the Renaissance Dam will bring great benefit for both of us as it will provide electricity in large quantities.



Ethiopia can use the port of Bashayer on the Red Sea in order to import its goods, and that Sudan can provide a sea port for Ethiopia on the Red Sea as it will make both countries beneficial. Ethiopia can export its products from Gondar, Bahir Dar, Matema and Humera via the Red Sea through Port Sudan.

How do you see Ethiopia's peace brokering role to normalize the situation in neighboring Sudan?

Ethiopia can play a major role in promoting peace in Sudan as it took part in the past. A committee, that was formed by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) and led by Ambassador Mahmoud Dirir, was the main reason for the coalition and unity of the Sudanese rival forces.

As it has great acceptance among the Sudanese people, Ethiopia can again play major role to resolve the problem that presently exists in Sudan.

Ethiopia is a peace-loving country and the Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who won the Nobel Peace Prize, can once again play a role in bringing peace to Sudan and reconcile the warring parties

in Sudan.

What would you like to say about any possible cooperation between East African countries to ensure peace, security and development in the region?

Realizing the importance of peace and stability for the Sudanese people, Ethiopia took initiative and played noteworthy roles towards bringing peace to Sudan. This is because Ethiopians are well aware that without peace and stability in Sudan there is no peace and stability in Ethiopia.

Most importantly, Ethiopia's roles in mediating between the warring parties during the transitional period cannot be forgotten among the Sudanese people. These contacts between the two countries not only renewed the long-standing harmony and inseparable ties between the two countries, but also strengthened bilateral relations.

The people-to-people ties have enabled the creation of cultural and social interconnectedness and the establishment of friendly bilateral relations. Being two

countries in the turbulent Horn of Africa region, they have played important roles in ensuring sustainable peace and stability across the region.

Countries in the East Africa region have the opportunity and capability to build strong economy. For that purpose, countries should enhance bilateral cooperation, economic integration in the political, economic and cultural spheres. Above all, horn countries must cooperate in areas such as agriculture, medicine, mineral exploration among others.

If the African countries, especially horn countries collaborating one another, they will not require the assistance of others to come out of the vicious cycle of poverty. The east Africa region is known for its abundant natural resources. Having the fertile land, cross Boundary Rivers, a great number of human powers, it is shameful for countries in the east Africa region to recurrently hit by the drought.

We are not developing the resource in our hand. If you take the Ethiopian Grand Renaissance Dam will provide electricity for neighboring countries so as to promote investment in the region.

Recently leaders of the two Sudanese warring sides have held talks with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. What do you expect from that?

As I repeatedly said, Ethiopia has been playing a major role in receiving the two warring parties so as to reconcile the problem. In order to broker peace between the two warring parties, hearing the opinion of each party is quite imperative to reconcile the dispute.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's meeting with the Chairman of the Transitional Sovereignty Council, Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, and the Commander of the Rapid Support Forces, Lieutenant General Muhammad Hamdan Dagalo, is considered an initiative to listen both parties in order to find a solution to the dispute and ensure peace to Sudan.

Ethiopia and Sudan not only share a relatively long border, but also inseparably intertwined cultural, social and economic values.

Their mutual respect and deep friendship had a positive impact on neighboring countries. Whenever necessary, they addressed national and regional issues wisely.

In short, both the Ethiopian and Sudanese people share similar social, economic and cultural values that bind them inseparably to each other and no third party can disturb the close relations between them.

Thanks you for your time.

It is my pleasure.

Society

Strengthening solidarity, unity, peace through holydays

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

The diverse cultural heritages of Ethiopia serve as a foundation for promoting understanding, acceptance, and peaceful coexistence among different communities. As witnessed from its daily experiences, the various cultural values practiced by Ethiopians, the festivals play a crucial role in fostering peace, ensuring stability and unity between and among the societies.

Furthermore, cultural values provide a sense of identity and belongingness. They help individuals and communities understand their history, culture and heritage and foster a deep sense of pride and unity, contributing to greater social cohesion and reducing the likelihood of conflicts based on ethnic or cultural differences.

Cultural events, festivals, and celebrations also play a significant role in building peace. These occasions create opportunities for different communities to come together, share their traditions, and learn from one another. By promoting dialogue, understanding, and appreciation for diverse cultural practices, such events help to prevent disagreements and create spaces for tolerance, peaceful interactions and coexistence.

Educating and promoting cultural values within schools and communities is an essential mechanism in building a peaceful society. By incorporating cultural education into curricula, young Ethiopians can learn about different ethnic groups, their histories, and traditions. This knowledge, in turn, helps foster empathy, respect, and a sense of shared identity, by reducing prejudice and misunderstandings.

Ethiopia, as a home to various ethnic groups, each with its unique traditions, languages, customs and cultural values, promote respect and tolerance for diversity. By embracing and valuing these value systems, Ethiopians are seen enjoying harmonious relationships with each other.

Recently, a panel discussion that discusses the role of festivals for sustaining peace and nation building was organized by the Ministry of Culture and Sports in collaboration with Fana Broadcasting Corporation (FBC).

The panel delved into the economic benefits associated with cultural values, including their potential to boost the country's economy, attract tourists, and invigorate the creative and fashion industries. It was underscored that celebrations and festivals should be aligned with the creative sector, serving as a platform to express unity and cohesion within the community.

Speaking on the occasion, State Minister for Culture and Language Development with the Ministry of Culture and Sports, Worknesh Biru said that Ethiopia is a highly diverse country with several nations, nationalities and peoples who have their own unique cultural values. Among these cultural values that reflect the true identity of the communities, Fichee Chamballala, Gena, (the Birth of Jesus), Shewal Eid Holiday, Harari people festival and Timket



(Epiphany) are few.

Preserving these unique cultural values and passing them on to the next generation is not only a legacy bestowed upon us by forefathers, but it is also a vital part of our national identity and a valuable resource on a global scale, she emphasized.

Mentioning that the cultural values that exist in the country are serving as world heritages apart from building the image of the country, the State Minister stated the importance of aligning these cultural values with holidays and showing their social, psychological and economic values and further strengthening social cohesion.

During the discussion, the pivotal role of cultural values in advancing the nation's economy, attracting tourists, bolstering the creative industry, and modernizing the fashion sector was recognized. It was also emphasized the need to celebrate the festivals passing to the next generation keeping their originality, registering them, celebrate in a way that keeps their originality, aligns with the creative industry, reflecting the unity and harmony of the society.

At the event, representatives from religious institutions, scholars and stakeholders from various universities participated.

In related news, the Ministry of Culture and Sports, in collaboration with the National Committee and religious leaders marked "Solidarity Week." At the event conducted from 30 December to 4 January 2024 was attended by various individuals, including ministers from the Ministry of Culture and Sports, religious leaders, members of the National Committee, senior management, and staff of the institution.

Speaking at the program organized to showcase solidarity by promoting and developing cultural values, Culture and Sports Minister Kajela Merdasa, emphasized the importance of unity for Ethiopia.

According to him, harmonious relationships and unity are the manifestations of Ethiopia and Ethiopians' unity. "We, Ethiopians, were together yesterday; we are together today and we will be together tomorrow. Living harmoniously is not an option. It is our responsibility." He also said that while marking solidarity, we also need to further cultivate an age of Ethiopian cultural practices such as coffee ceremony, dining together and work culture.

As part of showing solidarity, ministers of the Ministry and senior officials visited various hospitals and interacted with patients, shared meals to vulnerable and held a meal sharing program with employees within the institution to commemorate togetherness.

Indeed, togetherness and preserving cultural values play a vital role in fostering unity in Ethiopia, a country with diverse ethnic groups, languages, and religions. In this respect, building bridges and promoting understanding among different communities is essential to maintain peace, stability and advance development.

One way solidarity can foster unity is by promoting empathy and compassion. When individuals understand and appreciate the experiences, values, norms and aspirations of others, it creates a sense of connection and common purpose. Solidarity encourages people to support one another, especially during times of crises or conflict, and bridge social divides.

As confirmed by literatures, solidarity also facilitates the sharing of resources and opportunities. In Ethiopia, where there is significant economic disparity, promoting solidarity can help address inequalities. By providing support, investment, and aid to marginalized communities, solidarity initiatives contribute to the creation of an equitable society and bridge the socio-economic gap between different groups.

Furthermore, solidarity initiatives can help address historical grievances and promote reconciliation. Ethiopia's history is characterized by conflicts and divisions, and fostering unity requires acknowledging past injustices and working towards reconciliation. Solidarity initiatives can promote dialogue, forgiveness, and understanding, providing a platform for different groups to come together and heal past wounds.

In addition, solidarity can contribute to the preservation of cultural diversity. Ethiopia is a diverse country, with more than 80 ethnic groups, each with their own unique customs, traditions, and languages. Solidarity initiatives that celebrate and promote cultural diversity can foster a sense of pride and belongingness among different communities, while also preserving and protecting Ethiopia's rich heritages.

In conclusion, both solidarity and cultural values are integral to building peace in Ethiopia. Embracing diversity, promoting understanding, and celebrating cultural heritage are key elements in creating a society where peace and unity thrive. By preserving and promoting cultural values, Ethiopia can continue to be a beacon of harmony and peaceful coexistence.

Art & Culture

'Hyphenated'

Ethiopians, Assimilated Ones and the Holiday Season

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

A friend of mine who went to the United States a long time ago was here on a visit recently. Back in years he told me that the day he was sworn in as a US citizen was, in his words, one of the days of his personal humiliation and anger. Although I have never been to the US myself, I have encountered many people who said that most Africans including Ethiopians are usually happy to travel to the "land of opportunities" on a temporary basis or move there as permanent residents. I heard that there are even people who eagerly waited a long time to grab the famous Green Card as a ticket for success in America without which life might even be more difficult than here in Africa.

I asked my friend why he was sorry or angry about becoming an American citizen. He said that he felt humiliated by taking American citizenship because he felt like he betrayed his own country for not providing him with the opportunities America could give him, and that he felt like shifting his allegiances from the country that raised him to one he never knew before. For him it was like changing his mother with a stepmother.

The Diversity Visa Program (DV) is perceived by many as a kind of "voluntary slavery" while others consider it as a lifetime opportunity and a passport for success. The true fact is that in both cases, success is conditional on how hard you work and not by the very nature of the DV program. There are plenty of stories of people who did not make it in the US after they landed there with a DV passport in their pockets. There are also stories of people who made it in America by taking the hazardous journeys through third countries and even by jumping over border fences or by similar other means. In brief the DV does not entitle you to automatic success and there is no free lunch in the US as they usually say to emphasize the virtue of working or paying for anything you want to get.

I recently met my friend in this story after many years and his first feeling has completely evaporated and his is now proud of being an American citizen because he has now a Ph.D. in linguistics and has become a professor at a college himself. This is true success indeed because not only did he finish his studies but also landed a prestigious employment as an African intellectual who joined the American educated elite. This is no mean achievement.

There are of course two kinds of immigrants to America as he told me. There are the economic immigrants, that is to say those who go there to run away from poverty

and those who go there with dreams of professional achievements. Most of the immigrants are said to belong to the first category and the minority belong to the second one. In both cases however people's choice is justified because poverty is a terrible ordeal that one is right to escape by any means available except criminal ones.

They often tell you that you can have a menial job in America and if you work hard you are entitled to financial success even educated peers may not sometimes achieve. That is, in my opinion, the magic of American economic and or social system where success is largely based on hard work as the single most important factor for upward mobility. America is of course a good example of the merit system at its best.

As I often hear from people who lived in America for many years, the system not only give you economic and educational opportunities no other system in the world can provide you with, but also transforms your personality from who you were when you left Africa or Ethiopia into what you have become after years of living there. There is an Ethiopian saying that goes like, "A man looks like the life he leads". This is true. But the transformations that most people undergo after they live in America for a considerable time is not only physical or economic but also psychological, ethical, linguistic and even religious.

Psychologically speaking, most immigrant Africans of previous generations were said to encounter what they call "culture shock" which is defined as, "the feelings of confusion and uncertainty that are experienced when you come into contact with a culture that is vastly different from your own." According to studies, "culture shock is typically divided into four stages, which are honeymoon, frustration, adaptation and acceptance stages."

Generally speaking, culture shock may also be a challenge of adaptation or integration into a new environment or a new society. Depending on the personalities of the immigrants, some of them might experience a relatively short period of maladjustment before they fully integrate into their new environment. Others might take longer times to adjust and live a normal life. There may also be extreme cases when immigrants might adapt faster than expected or lag behind in the adaptation process.

They tell you that some lucky immigrants learn the English language in record time, adopt the cultures of the various American states where they are based with astonishing speed and assimilate in the community as if they lived there for the last two decades. A minority of them are said to be caught between being or behaving like Americans without

completely shedding their Ethiopian mentality. They live between two worlds, hanging between a past mentality that is deeply engrained in them and a present that they face with hilarity and try to imitate the manners and practices of the full-fledged American. Ethiopian journalists of the 1960s and 1970s were calling these people, "hyphenated Ethiopians".

The hyphenated Ethiopian is therefore someone who is not fully Ethiopian or fully American in their behaviors mannerisms and aspirations. They are caught between their old and their new personality traits and vacillate between their two personalities like the pendulum of a clock. To borrow a term from Franz Fanon, the hyphenated African or the hyphenated Ethiopian is a person who cannot shed their blackness and instead assume an imaginary whiteness and if successful, adds a second personality on his original one. This is apparently a remote echo of Fanon's 'black skin white mask' syndrome.

The hyphenated Ethiopian tries to speak English with American accents and the result is utter ridicule. They think that speaking English with Ethiopian accent is backward or rural. Therefore, they speak English "with their nose" as they say, without forgetting that there are among them newly minted Americans who speak English with their rural Ethiopian or regional accents. The hyphenated African is placed in between these sheds of linguistic imitations.

There is however nothing with speaking English with American or Ethiopian accent because, "In linguistics, an accent is a manner of pronunciation peculiar to a particular individual, location or nation." The struggles waged by the so-called hyphenated Ethiopians to speak English with an accent does not have any impact, positive or negative, on their being Americans because they have already acquired their citizen status by law.

The following observations are based on personal accounts of Diaspora Ethiopians and I beg your pardon if what I put down on paper does not correspond to their oral accounts. The hyphenated Ethiopia rather looks ridiculous when they try to adopt American culture in full or in part because there are so many things that do not necessarily click when you try to put two different things together. Let us take one example by looking into the ways holidays like Christmas or the Western New Year are celebrated by Ethiopians in America.

I heard that these people are torn between the two cultures and want either to drop one or adopt both at the same time and the result might be something you call "misto" in Italian or "mixed". The old hyphenated Ethiopians wore Wrangler jeans trousers and sat on horseback carrying their gabbi,

(or their heavy cotton garments) on their backs, as if they lived in two eras, feudalism and modernism, at the same time.

The newly hyphenated Ethiopians are almost indistinguishable from the ordinary Americans in their dressing codes and manners. They look non-Americans only during holidays when they go back to their dress culture and look like residents of one of the Ethiopian regions. Their food cultures are said to be more visible during those holidays because of the feeling of nostalgia that comes with them.

Recently, Westerners have been celebrating the Christmas and New Year holidays and Diaspora Ethiopians are said to have joined the shows by creating their own Ethiopian brand of American Christmas with Ethiopian and American drinks and foods. No doubt about it, the fully integrated Ethiopians must have celebrated these holidays the American way. The hyphenated Ethiopians must have staged a mixed kind of holiday with mixed rituals or half Ethiopian and half American. Rest assured that the unhyphenated and unassimilated Ethiopians must have celebrated the holidays in the Ethiopian way, with Ethiopian foods and drinks. This is one aspect of the diversities available in the Land of Opportunities, where individual freedoms or the rights to do whatever you like within the confines of the law are seriously adhered to.

Ethiopians here at home who cling to their good old motherland and its unyielding traditions often speak of "their holiday" and "our holiday" when speaking about the way their compatriots in the Diaspora observe those holidays. Western Christmas is called "Yeferenj Genna" or "their" Christmas and "Yehabesha Genna" or "our" Christmas. Many Ethiopians in the Diaspora are said to be celebrating "their" Christmas and "our Christmas" with equal fervor and passion because they find opportunities in both.

That is certainly a good thing to do as long as you have the means to entertain both. This can also be considered the bounties offered by the Land of Opportunities because it has virtually become near impossible to observe Ethiopian holidays without hitting the jackpots so to say. Otherwise you are left with shedding some tears of nostalgia "in remembrance of things past" to borrow from Proust. Unfortunately, it is not possible to get the holiday feelings by sitting alone in an empty house and remembering how you used to welcome those holidays during your youth or a few decades back.

Anyway, happy holidays to both the 'hyphenated Ethiopians', the traditional Ethiopians in the Diaspora, and the fully assimilated ones, in short to all Ethiopians near and far.

Verbatim and Caption



Ethiopia, Somaliland MoU accelerates regional cooperation: Veteran diplomat

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland would accelerate the realization of regional integration. The agreement made between Ethiopia and Somaliland is part of Africa's forefathers' plan of regional integration when they formed organizations.

The agreement will in fact hasten integration of the region as well because the economic cooperation, military cooperation, socio-economic cooperation, cultural cooperation among the neighboring countries would fasten and enhance the integration of the region as well. So, the recent agreement signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland would contribute to this very big objective.

Ambassador Dina Mufti, a veteran diplomat and member of Foreign Affairs Standing Committee at the House of People's Representatives



ESL praises Ethio-Somaliland agreement

The agreement reached between Ethiopia and Somaliland to facilitate access to seaport would address economic bottlenecks of Ethiopia.

The new agreement between Ethiopia and Somaliland to pave ways to possess seaport will facilitate the cargo system, assure the development of the national economy, and improve Ethiopia's international reputation and influence.

Beriso Amelo (PhD), Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Azerbaijan appoint state oil company veteran as Cop29 president

The government of Azerbaijan has appointed its environment minister Mukhtar Babayev to be the president of the Cop29 climate talks in Baku in November.

While Babayev will chair the talks, Azerbaijan's deputy foreign minister Yalchin Rafiyev will be his lead negotiator, according to the Cop28 presidency.

Babayev spent 26 years at Azerbaijan's state-owned oil and gas company Socar, where he tried to limit the company's environmental damage, before becoming environment minister in 2018.

One negotiator who met Babayev recently described him as "nice" and "soft" but added "you don't feel the authority and status like from [Cop28 president] Sultan [Al-Jaber], I don't feel he is an independent person able to push for phasing out fossil fuels globally".

Rafiyev is a newcomer to climate diplomacy. He did not attend the Cop26 or Cop27 climate talks and his active X (formerly known as Twitter) account has only mentioned climate change once in over six years.

Babayev will be the 24th man – and the fourth man in a row – to chair the Cop climate talks compared to only five women.

With Azerbaijan's media severely restricted, there is not much information publicly available about Babayev other than his official ministry biography and leaked US diplomatic cables.

What is known is that he grew up in Baku, went to university in Moscow and served in the Soviet military in the late 1980s.

After Azerbaijan gained independence from the Soviet Union, he joined the newly-

named State Oil Company of the Azerbaijan Republic (Socar) in 1992, where he stayed for 26 years.

After a stint in marketing, he was appointed the company's vice-president of ecological affairs, which involved trying to reverse the environmental damage caused by the company.

In this position, he hosted an international conference on rehabilitating contaminated soils in 2008, where he warned that a drop in the oil price could have a negative impact on the company's efforts to clean Azerbaijan's soil.

Around this time, the US ambassador in Baku Anne Derse said he told her that he wanted to change the company's attitude towards the environment while still developing the country's oil and gas production.

Derse says Babayev joked to the company's then vice-president for field development that they were now enemies as he wanted to change the way Socar develops its resources and his colleague wanted to continue business as usual.

"On a broader scale," Derse said, "Babayev said his mission was to 'change the mentality' of Azerbaijanis about their responsibilities to preserve the environment".

She concluded that he "seems enthusiastic and in possession of a clear vision of what he hopes to accomplish".

While in this position, Babayev became a member of parliament for the ruling party. In 2018, Azerbaijan's authoritarian ruler Ilham Aliyev appointed him environment minister.

Previous lead negotiators like Archie Young,

Mohammed Nasr and Hana Alhashimi have been experienced climate diplomats.

Cop29's lead negotiator will be 36-year old Yalchin Rafiyev. The United Nations participant logs suggest his first climate meeting was the annual talks in Bonn in June 2023 followed by Cop28 in November.

Joanna Depledge researches climate talks at Cambridge University. She told Climate home that "Rafiyev seems to be a rather unknown quantity".

She said this will make it harder for him to establish his leadership, good working relationships and trust – particularly as he's been appointed later than usual, with just 11 months to go.

"But", she added, "there is still time for the Azerbaijani presidency team to hit the ground running and to plough political energy and resources into the process."

After an international relations degree from Baku State University, Rafiyev studied at the Nato defence college in Rome and the International Anti-Corruption Academy in Austria.

He joined Azerbaijan's foreign ministry in 2007 and spent several years in their Austrian embassy before representing the country with the United Nations and other international organisations in Geneva, Switzerland.

Depledge said that "Rafiyev's extensive experience in the Azerbaijani diplomatic service, including a stint working on UN affairs in Geneva, will serve him well. But he has a lot of catching up to do".

In 2018, he joined the ministry's international security department where he stayed until

Aliyev appointed him deputy foreign minister in September 2023.

In 2020, Azerbaijan launched a victorious six-week war with Armenia which has led to continuing tensions between the two. Much of his X feed criticises alleged genocide by Armenia.

When Azerbaijan was chosen as the host of Cop29, he posted: "Finally it is official! After World Urban Forum, Azerbaijan was granted the right to host the biggest United Nations event (COP29) in Baku."

The Eastern European group of nations chose Azerbaijan as Cop29 host at Cop28, after Russia vetoed any European Union member state hosting the talks.

E3G negotiations analyst Tom Evans described it as an "unusual and unexpected" choice because Azerbaijan "doesn't have a long track record of diplomacy at the [UN climate arm]".

Azerbaijan gets two-thirds of its revenue from oil and gas, one of the highest percentages in the world and more than the Cop28 host – the United Arab Emirates.

The country has been ruled for 20 years by Ilham Aliyev, who took over as president from his father. According to Human Rights Watch, the government had at least 30 political dissidents in its prisons in 2022.

The campaign group said that restrictive laws continued to impede nongovernmental organizations from operating independently and that there are restrictions on media and systemic torture of prisoners.

Source: [climatechangenews.com](https://www.climatechangenews.com)

Verbatim and Caption

Ethiopia, Somaliland signs MoU to secure access to sea

On 01 January 2024, Ethiopia and Somaliland signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for partnership and cooperation between the two sides. Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Abiy Ahmed (PhD) and President of Somaliland Muse Bihe Abdi signed the historic agreement in Addis Ababa.

Ethio-Somaliland accord harms no party: GCS

The MoU signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland includes wide scopes of cooperation in social, economic, political and military fields. It enables Ethiopia to gain a military base and access commercial maritime services through reciprocity and through a lease agreement.

The comprehensive MoU for partnership and cooperation reflects efforts made by the two parties to further strengthen their friendship and respond to the historic questions of both parties. The new agreement will facilitate a strategic partnership in a sustainable manner based on clear details and transparency.

As clearly outlined in Ethiopia's foreign policy, Ethiopia gives priority



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FDRE Government Communication Service

to its neighbors. Ethiopia seeks to find solutions to its neighbors' problems by working together. No party or country will be affected by this MoU. There is no broken trust nor is there any laws that have been transgressed.

Government Communications Service (GCS) of Ethiopia

Ethiopia, Somaliland set to enact MoU details within a month

Ethiopia and Somaliland will complete the detailed process of the signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for partnership and cooperation and translate the agreement into implementation within one month.

The agreement allows Ethiopia to have a commercial port and military base in the Red Sea coastline of Somaliland. Ethiopia is keen for mutual growth and is trying to work together with its coastal neighbors to achieve its aspiration of securing access to sea only through a peaceful and constructive means.

Ethiopia and Somaliland reached in to the partnership through a give-



and-take approach and the details of the MoU will be finalized within a month.

Ambassador Redwan Hussein, Prime Minister's National Security Advisor

Ethiopia officially joins BRICS: MoFA



Today, 01 January 2024 is a historic day as Ethiopia officially joins BRICS. Ethiopia alongside with officially joined the expanded BRICS on 01 January 2024. Ethiopia has assumed its BRICS membership today following the historic decision of the BRICS Summit in August 2023 to invite Ethiopia to join BRICS as a member.

Ethiopia's BRICS membership recognizes the rich-multilateral contribution of Ethiopia to promote

international peace, security, and prosperity, and the continued commitment and leadership of Ethiopia to South-South cooperation.

The Ethiopian Government has, therefore appointed Mamo Esmelealem Mihretu, Governor of the National Bank of Ethiopia Sherpa.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia statement on 01 January 2024

See Ethiopia, Somaliland ... Page 23