



Ethiopia takes part in high-level BRICS+ meeting

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UNHCR's Grandi appeals to Int'l community to support refugees

• Commends Ethiopia's refugee policy

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

ADDIS ABABA – As the refugee crisis is the global phenomenon, European nations and donors must support counties like Ethiopia to contain refugee influx to the former, so said UNHCR High Commissioner.

UNHCR High Commissioner Filippo Grandi stopped in Ethiopia earlier this week to meet refugees and asylum seekers who have fled conflict in Sudan and become refugees in Kurmuk, Ethiopia.

Briefing journalists, the commissioner said that donors around the world should put their hands in supporting the refugees. "According the global statistics, 90% of refugees do not go to Europe or America; rather, they flee from one poor country to another poor country. The problem is for the poor countries; it is not for the rich nations."

From the onset of the conflict in Sudan, as to Filippo, over 8 million people have been displaced and flee to neighboring nations. During the past few months, Over 20,000 people have crossed the Ethiopian border and arrived at Kurmuk where refugees are waiting for further settlement.

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Photo: Hadush Abreha



Girma Amente (PhD)

Photo: Hadush Abreha

Workshop spotlights Ethiopian food systems' excellence

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA –Commendable results have been gained in the Ethiopian Food Systems (EFS) that would put the country in a good position to attain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) said.

Agriculture Minister Girma Amente (PhD) made the above statement when the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Institute (ATI) hosted a validation workshop for EFS Transformation

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Photo: Gebabo Gebrie

Amb. Genet Teshome (PhD)

Ethiopia, Cuba eye stronger ties

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA– Ethiopia and Cuba are striving to develop their longstanding diplomatic relations, Ambassador Genet Teshome said.

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Ethiopia calls for united commitment to reject attack against humanity

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia calls for the united and steadiest commitment of rejecting any attack against humanity in the face of an alarming increase of xenophobia, intolerance, polarization, racism, and racial discrimination.

The above remark came yesterday at the International Holocaust Remembrance day that was held in the presence of UN Agencies representatives, Ambassadors, religious leaders, international organizations representatives and others.

Speaking at the occasion, the Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Head Ambassador EsheteTilahun stated that exerting collective efforts to prevent today's atrocities is equally important with remembering and honoring victims of the



Holocaust.

"Remembering the Holocaust is a defining reminder because it has been one of the starting points in the defense of human rights, equality, and dignity of all people for the promotion of sustainable peace."

Ethiopia continues to support and promote

a principled and realistic position in resolving the Gaza-Israel conflict through direct negotiation, for the people of Israel and Palestine live in peace side by side, he added.

Ambassador Eshete also expressed

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Ethiopia takes part in high-level BRICS+ meeting

ADDIS ABABA (ENA)- Ethiopia is participating in its first ever meeting as a member of the BRICS+, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). The first BRICS+ Sherpa and Sous Sherpa meeting for 2024 under the Chairmanship of the Russian Federation commenced on Tuesday in Moscow.

The Ethiopian delegation is headed by the Governor of the National Bank of Ethiopia and Ethiopia's BRICS Sherpa, Mamo Esmelealem Mihretu Mihretu and it includes the State Minister for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ethiopia's BRICS+ Sous Sherpa Ambassador Mesganu Arga.

Mamo Mihretu reaffirmed Ethiopia's commitment and readiness to closely work with the BRICS members to strengthen economic partnership and that Ethiopia will actively participate in implementing the BRICS+ strategy for Economic Partnership.

The governor further stated "Ethiopia believes BRICS+ membership will provide a unique opportunity and a much-needed impetus to further develop economic relationship with BRICS+ members both at the BRICS group level and bilaterally—in ensuring



stable and predictable market access, in addressing the infrastructure finance gap, in mobilizing investment capital, in diversifying and modernizing our economy of Ethiopia".

He reaffirmed Ethiopia's commitment to cooperative multilateralism and that

Ethiopia believes in multilateralism that is inclusive, fair and that produces results. He further stressed on Ethiopia's interest to join various BRICS+ sectorial cooperation platforms in the fields of health, education, science, agriculture,

technology, energy, and climate change. The Sherpa and Soup Sherpa meeting is taking place under the motto of "Strengthening multilateralism for equitable global development and security."

BukaMakina CEO lauds Ethiopia's investment climate

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

TARCHA— Turkiye's machine manufacturing and installing company, Buka Makina owner and CEO Lutfi Ozer has praised Ethiopia's favorable business environment for foreign investors.

Ozer said that the country has hardworking people while appreciating the skilled youth participating in the project his company has been engaged in the past two years.

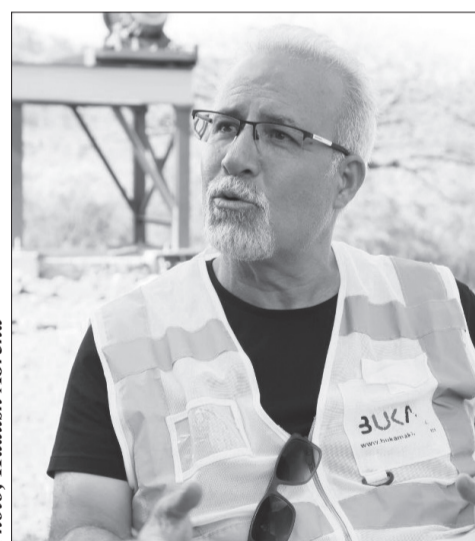
He elaborated that Ethiopia has a good investment climate for its human resource, suitable weather and cooperative administration.

BukaMakina is currently installing the machines of ET Mining Company's modern coal processing factory being constructed in Tarcha Town of Dawro zone in South West Ethiopia.

The CEO told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the local coal processing factory is equipped with modern apparatuses in which his company manufactures and installs the machines.

To do so, Ozer with his team of experts is inspecting the process 24 hours a day. As to him, this duty is his company's first task in Ethiopia and in Africa as well.

"Though it is the first task, thanks to the favorable weather condition, friendly people and cooperative system,



Lutfi Ozer

including the owners of the company, the construction and machine installation is going per the plan," Ozer stated.

"This is my first task in Ethiopia and Africa as well in my 24 years of experience in the sector. I found Ethiopia favorable for business and other investment projects for foreign companies," he said.

The project is located about 430 kilometers away from Addis Ababa. The CEO expressed that his company did not encounter any problem while transporting the machines from Turkiye during the construction period of the project.

Ethiopia to host int'l coffee conference, exhibition

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia has prepared to host international coffee exhibition and conference from February 6-10, 2024, Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority (ECTA) announced.

ECTA Director General Adugna Debela (PhD) briefed the media yesterday that over 800 local and foreign companies would promote their products on the first African Coffee Week, and the 20th African Fine Coffees Conference and Exhibition next week in Addis Ababa.

He indicated that the event which organized by the Authority in collaboration with African Fine Coffees Association (AFCA) and InterAfrican Coffee Organization also participates 25 coffee exporting African nations, and international coffee exporters, buyers.

The exhibition and conference incorporates paper presentation and panel discussion among others, the Director General said.

He stated that the exhibition will increase Ethiopia's coffee export destinations in Africa and the rest of the world as it helps to expand market opportunity through creating linkage among coffee producers and buyers.

A field visit is also part of the program



Adugna Debela (PhD)

to show attendees some selected coffee producing areas of Ethiopia, he added.

Producers and exporters are trading Ethiopia's coffee at the best prices as the country supply specialty coffee to the world market, he noted.

"We are designing new strategy to ensure the quality of coffee and upgrading commercial coffee percentage into higher level" Adugna said.

The Authority strives to increase specialty coffee share of the country from 30 percent to 60 percent.



Moha resumes production, marketing of PepsiCo products

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- MIDROC Investment Group (MIG) disclosed that its subsidiary Moha Beverages Industry has resumed the production and marketing of the PepsiCo products after four months of interruption.

In a press briefing held here yesterday, MIG Deputy Head of Manufacturing Sector Akalewold Admasu said Moha has started the production of the soft drinks in five factories located in different parts of the country.

The deputy head also stated that the famous brands of PepsiCo were out of market and production of the product had ceased for four months due to management problems. “Accordingly, Moha has undergone structural changes and joined the MIG management as per the owner’s decision.”

Akalewold, who acknowledged forex crunch has remained a national challenge, indicated that the MIG has developed a well-devised strategy to secure essential raw materials for Moha’s operation and set the plan to produce 55 million cases annually. “In close partnership with PepsiCo, we have done the necessary study to launch new products.”

Amanuel Muhe, the newly appointed CEO of Moha Beverages Industry said at the news conference that the company has resumed production at some level in its five factories and plan to recommence operation in full capacity soon.

Amanuel recognized the difficulties that the company has been facing particularly with regard to internal management problems and shortages of foreign currency. “Nevertheless, we have been making strong measures that would enable the company to overcome such challenges.”

MIG Corporate Communication Head Seid Mohammed for his part noted that discussion was held with PepsiCo to set up a roadmap to resume operation and regain the soft drinks’ presence in the market while also preserving the workforce. The discontinued products including Pepsi will be made available to customers in desired quantity.

The discussion was also aimed to make reforms so that the famous brands of PepsiCo could get back to the market and Moha could make an important contribution to Ethiopia’s economy, Seid remarked.

Moha Beverages Industry has eight factories located in different parts of the country.

Ethiopia calls for united...

Ethiopia’s readiness to contribute its share for the promotion of sustainable peace development in the world.

For his part, Israeli Ambassador to Ethiopia Alelign Admasu stated that the history of Holocaust teaches today’s world that genocide starts with words of hate, combined with apathy of majority. The atrocities committed by the Nazis and their collaborators 80 years ago were the culmination of centuries of European anti-Semitism.

“On the International Day of Commemoration in memory of victims of the Holocaust, we must fulfill our responsibility in helping to make this world a better place.”

UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Ramiz Alakbarov (PhD) said, “Today, we are witnessing hate spreading at alarming speed. The hate that begins with Jews never ends with Jews. We must condemn all forms of racism, prejudice and religious bigotry.”

Workshop spotlights Ethiopian...

Country Diagnostics Study.

The minister stated on the occasion that the main objective of the workshop is to review and validate results of the successful EFS Transformation Country Diagnostics Study conducted by ATI Analytics in collaboration with EFS’s Member Ministries, development partners, and other stakeholders.

As to him, the workshop helps to facilitate the successful implementation of the EFS roadmap in the country whilst synergy is the crucial area towards food security. Besides, Ethiopia’s food systems are rapidly evolving, being driven by major contextual changes including high population growth, rapid urbanization, infrastructure investments, and income growth. These changes are illustrated by dietary, agricultural, and supply chain transformations.

“MoA stands for inclusive social, economic, and technological developments and justice for all Ethiopians. The food systems approach put light on areas of action to remove binding constraints with an eye on

realizing our promise of an economy-wide transformation,” Girma remarked.

Health State Minister Dereje Duguma (MD) on his part said that his ministry saved over 59,000 children from extinction by making the implementation of the pledge and also prevented another 2,904 children from death by 2022. Similarly, 99,080 children were saved from stunting and 3,033 infants from death last year.

The state minister further highlighted that the level of stunting has decreased from 50% to 39% at present whilst his institution is working tirelessly to bring zero stunting in Ethiopia. Ethiopia has been losing 16% of growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) due to stunting and the problem needs a cooperative approach to bring remarkable outcomes.

The workshop was conducted in the presence of Inter-ministerial Steering Committee (IMSC) members, International Development Organizations, research institutions, academia, civil society organizations and experts from the 15 ministries that are members of the EFS.

Ethiopia, Cuba eye...

Ethiopia and Cuba have a longstanding diplomatic relation that stand the test of time and are working to bolster this tie following the recent meeting of the officials of the two, Ethiopian Ambassador to Cuba Genet Teshome (PhD) said.

He told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that Cuban officials will also pay a visit to Ethiopia within weeks.

On January 27, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister Demeke Mekonnen and Cuban Vice President Salvador Valdes Mesa had talked and agreed on holding bilateral political consultations shortly to strengthen cooperation and mutual support, Cuban Embassy in Addis Ababa announced.

According to Ambassador Genet, the two countries have been cooperating in agriculture, health, and education.

Cuba has an advanced health system in which Ethiopia needs to draw lesson, the diplomat mentioned, expressing that Ethiopia requires Cuba’s support in the sphere.

“We need Cuba to provide sponsorships

for Ethiopian health students,” Ambassador Genet stated indicating that his country would provide whatever it has to share in return.

The biotechnology and water resource management are other areas of cooperation between the two nations which scored better performance, the Ambassador said, adding that the water ministers of both countries are also discussing on the ways of bolstering cooperation.

He noted that Cuba has also been supporting Ethiopia through denouncing international pressures.

Ethiopia is also among the various countries that have been rejecting the sanctions imposed on Cuba, he said.

“We want all sanctions on Cuba to be lifted,” he said recalling that the embargo the US imposed on Cuba is affecting the economy.

Cubans have unforgettable history with Ethiopia since they supported the country during the Ethio-Somalia war, he underlined.

UNHCR’s Grandi appeals...

The registered refugees in Ethiopia are nearly one million. With country’s own challenges, it is a big burden for Ethiopia.”

Taking about the Sudan conflict, the commissioner said, the conflict in Sudan has caused an enormous humanitarian crisis and millions are displaced and came to Ethiopia.

As to him, the Sudan refugee response is

not fully funded. “If we do not put more to stabilize, people will move easily. It is in the interest of the donors to stabilize the people.”

“Ethiopia has a good refugee policy, but it needs help because more people demand services. The international community must help Ethiopia,” the commissioner stated.

Opinion

Unity in diversity to promote social cohesion, inclusiveness

BY GETACHEW MINAS

The concept of unity in diversity underlines the idea that a group of people may come together and form a cohesive whole. These people may have differences in culture and language. They may reflect differences in their culture though they live in the same country or community. They may eat the same food, wear similar clothes, but speak languages that are slightly different. They may have differences in their ethnicity and religion. However, these are sources of strength that are embracing and respecting diversity while working towards common goals. These goals are values shared by diverse groups of people in different countries. Unity in diversity is often promoted as social cohesion, inclusivity, and peaceful coexistence within a society. In the context of Ethiopia, the principle of unity in diversity is very relevant because of the rich embroidery of ethnic groups. These groups use languages that differentiate them from others that reside in the same country.

Ethiopia is home to several ethnic groups, each with its own distinct language, traditions, and customs as mentioned earlier. This diversity is both a source of strength and, at times, a challenge. Each ethnic group has its own unique cultural practices contributing to diversity in various aspects of people's lives. These may include clothing, food, music, dance and religious ceremonies. The clothes people use in different parts of Ethiopia vary in color, shape and style of wearing. The foods they consume slightly vary from one zone to another. The music they play also differs slightly with the style of dancing people display during holidays, weddings and other ceremonies. Religious ceremonies are also different depending on the occasions they are displayed. Despite these differences, the practice of unity in diversity is manifested in the country. People from different ethnic groups, speaking different languages, and having different religions are still having great bondages as Ethiopians. They stand for the unity of the country in time of crises and adversity.

Ethiopia has gripped a Federal system of governance that recognizes diversity of its people. It accommodates the differences in every aspect of lives of the people. The country has several regional States on the basis of ethnic diversity. It provides for each ethnic group to have a certain level of autonomy over its cultural, linguistic, educational, health and other similar issues. However, the implementation of ethnic federalism in line with the Constitution has not been without challenges and criticisms. One source of criticism is that some people living in the northern part have not been allowed by the then ruling party to participate in the drafting of the Constitution. Similarly, the concept of ethnic

Federalism aimed to empower different ethnic groups has been criticized. Political scientists claim that the Constitution has potentially accentuated ethnic differences. This differentiation has fostered negative competition among different ethnic groups. The experts believe that it has sometimes led to tensions between people or groups within the country. They think that it has to be revised in a manner that accommodates the different needs and aspirations of the people.

Ethiopians are known for having various cultural, religious and public holidays recognized by laws and regulations. They celebrate various cultural festivals that reflect their identities, languages and religions. These events show the diversity of traditions across ethnic and tribal groups. These groups of people display their traditional practices in their place of residence. These celebrations often engage people in vibrant rituals. People play traditional music during festivities accompanied by dancers wearing traditional dress and outfits.

Ethiopia being a multilingual country, its people use different languages during festivities. Its language policy provides for free use of the various languages spoken across the country. The government has implemented policies to recognize and preserve these languages. It allows education and official communication to be conducted in multiple languages. In other words, people have legal rights to use their languages in public service institutions.

Apart from languages, national symbols are used in every aspect of the lives of the Ethiopian people. National symbols are designed to represent unity and inclusivity. The flag and the national anthem do represent equality, equity and equal access to opportunities for all the people. The flag, for example, has colors that symbolize diversity and unity. This reveals that there are no Ethiopians who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized. There is no differentiation among people such as those having physical or mental disabilities or belonging to other minority groups.

The inclusivity of all Ethiopians is guaranteed by the Constitution. It also ensures the inclusion of all types of people and treating them all fairly and equally. Inclusivity means making sure every Ethiopian feels welcome, valued and respected no matter who they are or where they come from. Everyone is treated fairly, regardless of their background, ethnic group, gender or beliefs.

Another sign of unity in diversity is the interfaith harmony. Ethiopia accommodates a variety of religions, including Christianity and Islam. The people have been defending their religion from external incursions. In the past several centuries, religious wars had been conducted that had created

divisions, but they could not dismember the country. Despite religious differences, there is a history of peaceful coexistence. The followers of Christianity and Islam have lived for millennia with mutual respect. Ethiopia is a country known for accommodating different religious communities.

One of the factors that may contribute to peaceful coexistence is political representation. Efforts have been made by political parties to ensure that different ethnic groups are represented in different State institutions. The Federal system allows for regional autonomy with which the representatives of the people ensure the implementation of plans and programs specific to their regions. There are also mechanisms to ensure inclusivity in national decision-making processes.

The process of inclusivity canvassed social cohesion initiatives. Various initiatives have been made to realize social integrity in Ethiopia. The initiated programs and projects have aimed at fostering unity, solidarity and understanding among various ethnic and tribal groups. These programs may include educational campaigns with which people are introduced to various social practices of the Ethiopian people.

There may also participation in cultural exchange programs to appreciate the cultures of people in different parts of the country. In so doing, they may engage in community-building activities. Community participation is a cornerstone for unity in diversity which may be a guiding principle for all citizens of the country. In so doing, it is very important to acknowledge the challenges related to ethnic tensions in Ethiopia. There are disparities within and between various groups of people due to political differences. These are reflected by the opinions and heated discussions between political parties on various issues. These diverse expressions of opinions among political parties persist in Ethiopia.

Efforts are made to address these challenges toward unity of ideas. These are preconditions for strengthening unity which is crucial for the stability of Ethiopia, a precondition for the prosperity of the country. Embracing diversity promotes common values and shared national identity. Unity and diversity, therefore, remain a dynamic process in the history of Ethiopia.

Also, historical factors, including interactions with neighboring regions has shaped unity among diverse groups of people in Ethiopia. In time of peace, they tend to look inwards that lead to intensifying divisions and conflicts along ethnic lines. These conflicts are, however, only temporary in their nature, solved by elderly persons within communities. The conflicts differed from wars and skirmishes with colonialists that tried to control Ethiopia

and exploit its natural resources. The resistances to external forces were strong enough to defeat them in different fronts. In fact, the foreign forces have created and influenced the different identities of people for the purpose of "divide and rule." They tried to exploit the perceptions of different ethnic groups for easing their penetration into the hinterland of the country.

The colonialists and foreign foes of Ethiopia have tried to create independent States out of the country. They tried to isolate the country from the rest of the neighboring countries that had not yet acquired their independence. Ethiopia had become bearer of the torch of independence for the rest of colonized Africa. This created tensions between the colonizers and the colonized peoples of the continent. This tension continued in pre-and post-independence period.

Regarding independent Ethiopia, the Superpower authorities wrote and planned to destabilize Ethiopia using ethnic, religious and other vulnerabilities. They introduced the concept of ethnic federalism aimed at empowering different ethnic groups. However, this attempt has also been criticized for potentially accentuating ethnic differences. It has fostered political competition that may be leading to tensions between groups. The political setting in Ethiopia implies accommodation of ethnic representation.

In recent years, Ethiopia has experienced the formation of political parties often along ethnic lines. There are mechanisms in place to ensure proportional representation in various government institutions. Ethnic differences have been related to economic disparities between regions. Some regions may face greater confrontations and disputes in terms of infrastructure development.

Due to war and skirmish in different parts of the country, access to education has been hampered in different regions of the country. Economic opportunities, investment and employment creation have been blocked by war and social strife. All in all, these political and economic problems have contributed to disparities in living standards between people. Some groups of people are suffering from shortage of food and basic services. These social and economic crises have been influenced by interethnic tensions and conflicts in different parts of Ethiopia. These conflicts may be caused by historical relationships. Complaints and competition over resources have led to political tensions between different ethnic groups. Yet, they have displayed unity in diversity in time of crises in Ethiopia.

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

Editorial

Like Tsehay, more heritages ought to return home!

Italy has done an exemplary work in returning the aircraft named Tsehay that was built in Ethiopia in 1930s. This should be replicated by other European and western countries that are in possession of similar diverse, cultural and historical relics that are valuable heritages to the original owners, Africans.

Alongside bolstering the strong diplomatic, economic relations it is equally important to garner the commitment of countries like Italy that are in possession of similar heritages. It is undeniable that many European countries that have colonized Africa had looted historical heritages of various sorts during and after their rules. Almost all African countries have lost a significant amount of valuable historical heritages both during colonization and even later through artifact theft and other illegal means.

Someone could raise the argument as to why African countries insist on reclaiming their proprietorship of these relicts or artifacts while they still have many issues at hand to deal with urgently? If they were not that important, why did the European nations have to steal them from Africans why did they pay a lot of money to keep them as theirs?

Indeed, these heritages carry a lot of significance for the owners. They are not mere representations of the past history but also sources of inspiration. Therefore, countries should return these heritages immediately to the exact, rightful owners. This is at least second time Italy returning such big relic to Ethiopia. The first one was the Obelisk of Axum which the Italians had taken to their country (along with Tsehay and other relics) when they invaded Ethiopia in 1935.

History shows that Ethiopians took them only five years to fight back and fend of the invading forces and liberate their country. But it took more than 6 decades to restitute the relics and reinstall them where they belong. This is an indication that these heritages have such a big value and meaning that everyone strives to keep them at any cost. That is also why the historical or original owners pay the necessary sacrifice for their reclamation next to the independence and sovereignty of their nation.

After years of struggle and diplomatic work the obelisk was transported back home and re-erected on its original place in the town of Axum. It is easy to imagine the financial return as well as historical gain the country can make from its rightful heritage.

Yet a lot more such heritages that belong not only to Ethiopia but also fellow Africa countries still remain in the hands of the European and western captors. Due to the difficulty of the lobbying and advocacy works of restitution them seemed very tiresome.

Everyone should bear in mind that Africans should not pay price any more to regain their historical heritages. For this end African countries need to join efforts and work on reclaiming their precious heritages.

The government of Ethiopia under the leadership of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) also deserves due gratitude for the effective diplomatic work for the return of the aircraft called Tsehay, the maiden aviation engineering work of Ethiopia from Italy.

The making of Tsehay is symbolic as it ushered in a bright future in the country's aviation industry now that the country owns an airline which is the largest in the continent and also globally acclaimed one. Tsehay's coming back home will serve not only reminding the country's pioneer work in the industry but also inspire the current generation.

All the remaining heritages in the museums of the west are equally important to the original owners in many ways also deserve to be restituted to their origins. The Western countries should also make it part of their diplomatic commitment to respect the rights of African countries for the ownership of these heritages and restitute them with due respect as soon as possible.



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Opinion

The game-changing role of GERD in regional integration, economic growth

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

There is no doubt that the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) plays a very significant role in smoothing the path of economic regional integration in the midst of the Nile Basin countries. One of the key features of the dam is its potential to greatly boost the hydroelectric power generating capacity in the region at the earliest possible juncture.

In actual fact, by putting the power of the GERD to use, Ethiopia can provide a significant increase to the attainability of electricity possibly modifying the energy curve of the Nile Basin nations. For the sake of truth, the collective efforts needed to plan, construct, and preserve such a colossal flagship project helps in developing enhanced connections among these nations in next to no time.

In a similar vein, the GERD functions as a stepping stone for dialogue and harmonization allowing them to act in concert towards a shared objective of considerable growth and broader prosperity. Apart from holding the potential to stimulate economic development, the dam plays a huge role in attracting foreign investments making smoother industrial development and creating employment opportunities.

The existence of the dam can attract overseas investments to make possible industrial growth and encourage job creation. For the sake of truth, this economic expansion can give rise to enhanced standards of living for the local populace and provide opportunities for alleviation of poverty. In addition to its electricity generation and economic advantageous, the game changer project plays a very significant role in environmental sustainability and plummeting greenhouse gas secretions backing up climate change alleviation endeavors and fostering a climate friendly future.

The dam's ability to provide uninterrupted supply of electricity holds tremendous potential in attracting foreign investment for the most part in producing capital intensive industries. The existence of credible power infrastructure can meaningfully boost the attraction of the Nile Basin region for international investors who seek balanced energy sources to sustain their business operations.

The construction and operation of the dam have the capability to clear the way for the emergence of renewable energy businesses not only under the umbrella of Ethiopia but also in various parts of the world.

The augmented eco-friendly renewable energy source capacity can act as a starting point for the growth of alternative power technologies. This grants an avenue for the Nile Basin nations to install themselves

as frontrunners in the renewable source of energy and pay a regular contribution to the global efforts to change towards cleaner energy sources.

In addition to supplying electric power for the country, the colossal dam can provide power to neighboring territories in the Nile Basin. This concerted energy exchange arrangement can promote closer cross-border relationships, encourage shared reliance, and play a part in inclusive progress in the region.

Opportunity to use dependable and reasonably priced electricity is a vital baseline for industrial development that can arouse economic growth, generate job opportunities, and elevate the material well-being of people and opens up possibilities for the growth of renewable energy sector on a worldwide scale. Besides, the dam can not only meet Ethiopia's energy needs but also support the economic progress of the Nile Basin countries and improve regional cooperation in the nearest future.

The success of such an enormous development deeply depends on building confidence, nurturing diplomatic connections, and gaining a boosted understanding of the concerns and ambitions of each partaking nation.

This cooperative process not only provides a foundation for the implementation of the dam but also play a part in regional integration. By cooperative efforts towards a shared objective, the Nile Basin nations are able to reinforce their economic associations and enhance collaboration. With an amplified hydroelectric power generating capacity, the dam turns out to be an attractive destination for foreign investments mostly in industries that require reliable and abundant electricity.

The dam has the intensity of arousing industrial development and economic expansion bringing into effect the conception of employment opportunities and enhanced living standards for the societies in the Nile Basin. These positive economic significances further strengthen the alliances between regional integration.

The constructions of the dam demonstrate the capability to partnership in the Nile Basin region and accomplish the intended target at the earliest possible time. Through wide-ranging discussions and conferences, trust is built, diplomatic alliances are supported, and enhanced understanding of each nation's concerns and goals is attained.

The economic integration smoothed by the dam brings about economic growth and development by intensifying availability to electricity and water resources. The resulting positive economic outcomes further reinforce the bonds of economic integration policies setting the stage for continuous collaboration and progress in the Nile Basin.

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

Business & Economy

Dual advantage out of textile, apparel industry

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Job creation and economic growth are becoming the common aspects of every undertaking across the nation. Of the myriads of spheres citizens have run in Ethiopia, a number of people are engaged in apparel industry. Ethiopia has an enormous export potential in the textile and garment industry which is annually growing following its rich sources of the production and excessive labor market. As the textile and apparel industries in Ethiopia are consumer based, eco-friendly material is the need of the hour everywhere, and it ensures that the products could be utilized for re-engineering or to produce components of re-fashionable material in every production cycle.

The *Ethiopian Herald* held talks with Melaku Wolayso, who graduated in industrial engineering and for a certain textile and Garment factory for the last seven years, about the state of apparel industry in Ethiopia and the way forward.

He said, “The Textile and Garment Sector of Ethiopia is attracting foreign investment following the establishment of industrial parks found in different parts of Ethiopia and the industry is positioning itself for massive growth in the future targeting at getting the nation benefited more out of the sector.”

As to Melaku, the apparel industry cuts fabrics and other materials and sews them together to create apparel or accessories, including footwear, outerwear, bloomers, and top-notches, the industry also include lesser-seen knitting mills.

Textile and apparel industries are one of the fastest-growing industries, providing employment to millions, and Ethiopia’s potential would help it become the textile and apparel supplier. These manufacturing units rely on the use of toxic chemicals for processing of textiles, which leads to increased environmental pollution and public concern. This has driven textile manufacturers to adopt environment friendly enzyme-based treatment processes with fungi as the biggest microbial source of these enzymes. Yes, he added the textile is a very lucrative one and even environmental friendly one if managed properly and responsibly.

“The textile and apparel industry is characterized by unpredictable demand, short product life cycles, quick response time, large product variety, and a volatile, inflexible, and complex supply chain structure. In supply chain management, especially in the competitive market environment of the textile and apparel industry, there are a range of styles and approaches to be taken into account.

He further elucidated that product returns,



Textile manufacturing is of significantly useful in job creation and economic growth.

especially in the apparel industry, are characterized by uncertainty and a need for timing and processing.

The textile and apparel industries contribute significantly towards the national economy of Ethiopia and other nations. Although the apparel industry is global in nature, the manufacturing facilities from developed countries are shifting to developing countries to reduce the labor cost. Even in developing countries, the garment industries are facing the greatest challenges in spite of the cheap labor cost, due to the short production life-cycle, high volatility, low predictability, high level of impulse purchase and the quick market response. To reduce the cost of production, the garment industries in developing countries like ours are rather focusing on sourcing of cheaper raw materials and minimizing delivery cost than labor productivity due to the availability of cheap labor.

The local manufacturers are gradually reducing the production and focusing on performing only the entrepreneurial functions involved in apparel manufacturing, which include buying raw materials, designing clothes and accessories, preparing samples and arranging for the production, distribution and marketing of the finished product.

A number of countries such as Bangladesh, Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Honduras have maintained or increased their market shares. In addition to the free-trade policies, the apparel industries are also driven by technical advancements. The use of the Internet has facilitated the buying and selling of clothing and fashion accessories. However, online retailers deal with a high percentage of returns due to poor fit, material quality and customer satisfaction. Interestingly, he said, Ethiopia is well positioned to become the textile and apparel manufacturing hub of Africa, he added.

According to Melaku, Ethiopia has

long been considered as one of Africa’s economic wunderkinds. Until recently, it had relative political stability in comparison to other countries on the continent. And, with an average GDP growth rate of 10% in the past decade and a government that instituted policies friendly to foreign investors, the country was able to attract South and East Asian clothing manufacturers.

Following favorable macro and microeconomics factors, Ethiopia’s textile and garment industry had been steadily growing; the country has become one of the largest domestic markets in Africa, given its population size and rapid economic growth. In the country, investors have the right to transfer a capital goods imported with exemption of Custom duties to others party enjoying similar privilege, as far as I am concerned, he opined.

Since Manufacturers are often heard of complaining about the many challenges of doing business in Ethiopia like bureaucratic red tape and logistical hurdles and the problems that come with an unskilled workforce that had no prior experience of working in an industrial settings, the government has to work hard, of course in collaboration with development partners and prime actors, to solve the problems for the sake of smooth flow of the sector.

Besides, foreign investors and the Ethiopian government need to understand that its collapse could have a symbolic knock-on effect in the region—Ethiopia’s garment sector is often seen as a pioneering experiment proving that structural transformation in Africa is possible.

As to Melaku, as garment manufacturers have already been already struggling to do business, the government has been monitoring developments in the nation and has worked with experts of many experience countries to expand the textile industry. In building the new industrial estates, the government is expected to comply with rigorous environmental standards, because both

it and manufacturers know that buyers from major fashion brands and consumers alike are placing increasing emphasis on sustainable production. Appropriate certification in areas such as wastewater treatment, emergency exits, accident prevention and fire prevention ensures the industry can compete on regional, continental and even global markets.

“So long as the textile industry has been a major driver of job creation, training should be given to interested and capable ones as it is almost a guarantee of employment. At the national TVET training institute, which trains teachers for all the country’s vocational schools, curricula has been overhauled and improvements made in teaching quality. Though Ethiopia’s economy is growing rapidly and the country has a young population, unemployment has become higher; the government should be keen to create jobs in the textile industry.”

Needless to state, he said the Ethiopian government heavily invested in transitioning from an agriculture-based economy to an industrialized one to attract the private sector, and even Ethiopia has a long history of textile production. Nowadays, it is a booming sector for marketers to conduct sourcing activities in Ethiopia. A range of factors contribute to Ethiopians success as a center for textile production.

Ethiopia has a wide availability of raw materials and the easy access to resources though the sector has not yet been well exploited for the benefit of all citizens, and it has to work a lot to be a modern-day apparel market center, it looks hard but attainable, indeed!, he added.

As to Melaku, Ethiopia’s government wants to diversify exports from an agricultural product to strategic sectors like textile and garment manufacturing. Ethiopia’s long history in textiles began in 1939 when the first garment factory was established. The growth in the textile industry is directly linked to the government’s move to set up an industrial development strategy.

Ethiopia has to continue working on the scheme to get economy grow, and the government should address the multifaceted hurdles in due course of running activities in the sector. True, the long term goal of the nation is to reduce poverty and declare economic sovereignty.

Generally, since Ethiopia is a center of abundant workforce, which comprises a large population and skilled workforce who provide a relatively inexpensive labor force, is situated at a strategic location, home to agricultural development and other related factors, Ethiopia should come at the forefront in terms of seizing the ladder of success and making a difference.

Art & Culture

A cultural village Transformed into a tourist destination

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

In our world, two contradictory ideologies have always been in city developers' minds, especially when they think of renovating old villages, towns, and cities. Some authorities, who don't crave to perceive aged domicile, have not come up with any thought other than to knock them down and reinstate them with new skyscrapers. Others, with a desire to protect their historical places as they are, are furnishing them and changing them into tourist destinations to create jobs and generate income.

Thanks to the invitation by Korean Cultural and Information Service, I visited the Gamcheon cultural village which is found in the nearby area of Busan- the second-largest city of South Korea. The densely populated houses that slept on the green mountain looked like a multicolored rock crafted by a renowned architect. The green mountain gave exceptional grace to the cultural village.

According to tourist document, Bandal Hill, located between Mount Gamcheon and Ami, was a flourishing route connecting Chenomasan Dong and Ami Dong. The road on the hill now connects Gamcheon 2-dong and the west part of Ami-dong.

Taeguekdo is a religion founded by Cho Cheol-jae in 1918 based on the idea of Jeungsan. More than four thousand Taeguekdo followers gathered around the Banda hill and formed a village. The current Gamcheon 2-dong was formally established in 1958 around this religious village.

Gamchoen Dong, which preserves the cultural traces of the Korean nation, consists of the Korean War and the territorial features; the hillside roads have significant cultural value.

Gemcheon Dong's neighborhoods were built in the order of unique stair shapes from Oknyebong to the foot of Mt. Cheonma-san. The virtue of building houses can be sensed in Gamcheon-dong, as each house is built to not block the front view of the house behind it. For modern city people, it can be a place to reminisce about past memories. Gamcheon-dong is a beautiful village where the residents live closely with and care for one another, preserving the cultural tradition and



archetypes of the people.

The cultural village is formed by houses built in a staircase fashion on the foot hills of the coastal mountain, earning this village the nickname "Machu Picchu of Busan." Many alleys that cut through this community are vibrantly decorated with murals and sculptures created by the residents.

The cultural village started as a base for the hardships of the Korean War refugees in the 1950s and is a place that has kept the history of Busan, which is the second city of South Korea as it is, an aspect and trace of the modern history of the nation. The traced group housing arrangement along the foot of the mountain and the view of Miro Miro Alley through all roads show the peculiar cultural village.

The village art project, which was launched by local artists and villagers to revive the village's characteristics and historical value, became a steppingstone. Starting with this project, it attracted various public offerings and has become a popular attraction, with more than 3.08 million people visiting in 2019.

When a visitor goes deeper into this cultural village, s/he can have the occasion to scrutinize the interior design and the services these houses are now providing.

One of the houses, which is large, served as a museum. This museum contains traditional home-made appliances that former residents of this village used in their daily activities.

Some of the houses are well furnished and serve as guest houses for tourists interested in extending their stay in the village. They are formed in harmony with the beautiful scenery of Gamcheon culture village by remodeling empty and abandoned houses and bathtubs. These houses help visitors have a special day under the starlight of Gamcheon village.

The souvenir shops help tourists buy relics after touring the village. Visitors can buy winning artwork from the village. Tourist souvenirs as well as commemorative products of the village are also sold in these shops. Souvenir shops such as Asteroid B612 help you see the whole village from a panoramic point of view.

When tourists are inwardly bound into the cultural village, they look at a number of food shops. One of the bakeries found there is known for its moon-shaped sweat cakes. Restaurants brought into being in the cultural village serve various sorts of Korean cultural foods and help tourists experience new cultures. Mackerel soup, grilled mackerel, authentic Goraesha fish

cakes, and nutty laver snacks are a few of the delicious meals that satisfy the interest of visitors.

Residents of the cultural village are busy producing and selling jewelry, relics, and other types of souvenirs for tourists. The old-age but audacious Koreans who are acquainted with the milieu history of the village are not refrained from propping up with English translators. When you go into the village, you appeal to them to verbalize in a soft voice to avoid causing any disturbance to the residents and refrain from taking pictures in ways that infringe on their privacy.

Wherever they are, the shabby but historical cities and towns can be renovated and flourish like South Koreans do in Gamcheon village. The village becomes a tourist attraction that can generate a huge amount of capital, aside from protecting the nation's heritage as it is.

As to this writer balancing old and new architectural designs, not stripping the glamor of a building fully covering it with another, including greeneries in construction works and focusing on developing touristic spots are the commonalities Ethiopia somewhat shares with South Korea.

Indepth

Mourning the loss of veteran, popular journalists

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

In the last few days Ethiopians were subjected to the tragic loss of two very popular and beloved media icons. They are Asfaw Meshesha, TV show producer and presenter and Genene Mekuria 'Libro', Sports Journalist and Author. Both have been popular for decades serving in the journalism sector. Asfaw Meshesha was mainly a TV icon producing and presenting several informative and entertaining programs on EBS Television channel. His career in fact begins with radio journalism when he used to work for the radio station FM Addis 97.1. He used to produce and present entertaining musical program at 2 pm every day in a production called 'Irie' in tandem with his colleague Daniel Gizaw. It was a kind of trailblazer in the sector as it became very popular particularly among youths listeners with very popular songs. The tandem went on for years establishing a new kind of production for FM radio audience and became a trade mark.

Then Asfaw traveled to the US and began presenting a TV program called 'Life in America' on EBS with Ethiopians living in the States. For years it was a very popular TV show and Asfaw gained the love and admiration of Ethiopians both at home as well as in the US. He investigated and presented the life of Ethiopians in the US and the highs and lows of life in America. The program gave an insight into how Ethiopians in diaspora struggled to make ends meet in the US. It gave a good understanding of what to expect when one moves to the US and adopt the new country as their home. This program cleared many vague things about the US because there are so many misrepresentations about life in the US especially for immigrants. It was a very popular program because it gave the opportunity for Ethiopians in the US to have their say in the show. Asfaw Meshesha presented this program for years without being boring and the audience always waited for the program relentlessly.

Then Asfaw came back home and continued to work with the EBS entertainment pool presenting every week the show called 'Sunday with EBS'. This was also an extremely popular show where Asfaw was accompanied by very talented and popular TV presenters. This show was very popular because it had all kinds of life conditions presented on TV. It had family angles where children as well took part in various kinds of entertaining circumstances. There were games with prizes for those taking part in them.

Asfaw Meshesha was known for his warm presentation as much as for his being very

compassionate and emotional whenever there were sad stories presented on the show. He was seen many times exploding in tears on air and this was contagious to every spectator.

Asfaw was known for his sensibility and empathy for others in disadvantageous conditions of life. That was why he was so loved and appreciated by his audience. When it was discovered that he had suffered a stroke and was subjected to special treatment some months ago, people were shocked and more so when he traveled to the US in search of better treatment as it was discovered that he was suffering from a tumor on his brain. He fought against this deadly ailment along with his son and others for a few months before he had to pass away.

The announcement of his death shocked every one because many had hoped that he would win the battle against his malady with the help of the most sophisticated medical support but it was not to be. His fate was sealed and all his warmth and passion for his job, his warm smile followed him to his cemetery. He departed survived by his mother and son. He was only fifty seven. The way people particularly his friends and colleagues expressed their sadness was impressive testifying how much love they cherished for him.

EBS Television suspended all its regular programs to mourn him and transmit his funerals live showing how important he was for the station as well as for the audience. Some people said he was given 'a head of state treatment' and behind all that could be seen how popular and loved he was among the public. May he rest in peace!

The other popular journalist that we lost a few days ago is the famous and veteran sports journalist Genene Mekuria 'Libro' who was in fact a versatile TV and radio personality nicknamed the 'mobile library' as he appeared to know every story around Ethiopia's sports events and the personalities behind them as well as the arts particularly musical personalities. Genene would talk for hours about every football match, player and musician as he made his own research and gathered the necessary information on them. He had an impressive capacity to recall things and narrate them to his audience both on the radio or TV as if they happened yesterday and would indulge in the minutest of details including names, places, events and how the stories materialized without showing any uncertainties and keeping the flow of the story in a very harmonious and fascinating manner. The way he delved into the details of every story he told was simply unbelievable because it showed what sort

of memory he had. He was entertaining when he told the stories he was familiar with and underlined on the most crucial facts presenting to the audience in a very attractive manner.

Genene Mekuria Libro was also a full-fledged writer having presented up to his death eight books dealing with Ethiopia's major sporting events as related to the political and historical background of the times in a very interesting manner. His books are full of very interesting and amazing stories about footballers, coaches, administrators and referees as well. In a country where documentation and preservation of information is rare, Genene could be considered a trailblazer in the sector.

Genene was among the first sports journalists of the country beginning the last years of the Derg Military years. He began by contributing articles and news to the already established newspapers such as 'Merha Sport' and 'Champion' and also the major national newspapers for the sports column but when he realized that he did not get enough space to express his ideas and feelings he decided to found his own newspaper. Given his background also as a footballer and versatile sports person he knew a lot about the trade and writing about it was his comfort zone.

Genene followed well international football and informed himself about coaching and the rules of the games with a lot of focus on Latin American football and in fact his accounts of stories around the Brazilian footballers was very famous and eagerly awaited by his readers on 'Libro' the title of his newspaper which was also his nickname and became a part of his full name following the role he had in his team as a player in the central defensive zone.

When he first began his own newspaper Genene did not have the start up capital and had to rely on the generosity of the Bole Printing Press owner Ato Asfaw who allowed him to print the newspaper on credit. Genene then paid his debt immediately after the first issue and was able to print the successive issues on his own. From 1985 up to 1998 Eth Calendar Genene continued to print his newspaper Libro and it was very popular. There were very few newspapers in those days and there was not the kind of digital communication we have now when stories are immediately shared all over the world. There was scarcity of communication tools but Genene followed the events from radio stations and some foreign magazines and presented not only the news but also the analysis of the events including digging deep in the stories behind the facts and events.

Readers were always fascinated by the detailed reports Genene presented especially regarding the personality of the protagonists, how they came to be who they were, their family background etc. He was specially endowed with the talent of exploring curious stories and bring them to light to his readers.

His investigative capacity was admirable because he had such a passion about story telling as well. He found out the challenges players went through before coming to prominence and success and with his talent of narrating them he also added his personal experience with his contacts. In all radio and TV programs he took part Genene Mekuria 'Libro' has always impressed his audience with the detailed and impeccable narrations he made about stories that he knew personally or was informed by the personalities themselves. He recalled every detail and that was why he was nicknamed 'the moving library'. What was particularly impressive about Genene was his accuracy and meticulousness with which he recalled and narrated every item of history of Ethiopian football, cycling, boxing, athletics and other political and artistic stories linked to them. He knew the stories behind many of Ethiopian songs and the singers and he narrated all those stories. Genene was capable of keeping his audience glued to his program given how he presented them with warmth and colour underlining the major motives behind the stories. When he recalled all those stories he never showed any doubts about the facts, the figures, the names of the people behind each story, the places where they took place and the sequence of the stories he told which impressed all his listeners. He told the stories with full comfort without any uncertainties or blank spaces as some people might say. He recalled brilliantly and his memory must be absolutely extraordinary. In fact Genene Mekuria Libro's quality to narrate stories has characterized his writing skills as well and that has helped him prepare eight books that are a good contribution to the archives of Ethiopian sports and arts story.

Unfortunately Genene was suffering from diabetes and few had known how critically he was sick before we heard about his death. Genene was only fifty nine and he could have written many other interesting books given his talent, passion and preparation, his discipline in working in the trade. It is tragic that his dreams have been stifled by his untimely death and his audience will certainly miss him. Genene is survived by his wife and two children. May his soul rest in peace! He will remain an inspiration for the present generation of writers and journalists.

Law & Politics

One more brick to regional integration

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

The recent MoU Ethiopia signed with Somaliland seems to have raised some eyebrows in many circles, some seemingly a result of anxiety about what next and possibly pertinent, others not so much. It can easily be understood by anyone who wants to do so when Ethiopia claims a legitimate right to access to sea because it is inconceivable that a country with more than one hundred twenty million people and very near to the sea does not have any easy access to it when it can do so thanks to appropriate diplomatic channels and reasonable and legal negotiations with the relevant neighbours with vast and extensive access to sea not even utilized. It is well understood how this situation of remaining landlocked could impact the country and in the long run could have grave and unwanted consequences, not only for Ethiopia itself alone, but also in the region as well because anything negative or disastrous that may happen in Ethiopia will not be limited to it but has a strongly probable spillover effect to neighbours and beyond, given how interlinked today's economic, social and diplomatic relations are.

No one can enjoy peacefully and watch with indifference when things go wrong in Ethiopia. Instability in Ethiopia for whatever reason be it economic or political, and hence put the country under huge pressure on the population is bound to spill over the border to neighbours as well. We have seen how millions of people are trying to abandon their countries of origin from the poor South to the northern and developed countries and the migration and refugee crisis is one of the biggest challenges the advanced nations are grappling with without addressing it from the foundations, the roots. This issue has its own tentacles in the other critical problem of human trafficking and there are criminal gangs and organizations making the most out of similar instabilities. They trade on human miseries and unfortunate circumstances.

Ethiopia could potentially be a huge country that could export its citizens to the outside world if its economy does not grow enough to absorb the great majority of its working age population in its own internal employment schemes. Otherwise its citizens' choice could be an inevitable pressure to cross the borders whichever means they may avail and migrate in search of better opportunities creating huge problems in the countries where they may flock. Already records show that millions of people are migrating to the developed world every year because of the violence that comes from regional or internal wars, conflicts and dictatorial regimes' policies towards their own populations. Political persecutions as well have resulted in many who are pushed out of their countries and trying to land themselves in safe havens. The situation is grim for world bodies which try to cope with this tragic situation. UN

We need to see things in perspective and look at the big picture rather than make every move a political and a territorial integrity issue. Things should be looked at with due caution before running into any hasty and negative conclusions

agencies particularly UNHCR have always been engaged in trying to cope with the predicament of these masses of people.

People are pushed from their original habitats due to intolerable situations in their countries but there are also millions more who try to evade poverty and deprivation in their countries and hope to reach the advanced countries' beaches with the hope of finding better job opportunities and improved livelihood for them and their entire families.

Such pressure has been mounting along the years as the economic situation of these countries worsens and fails to absorb the working age population to its system and

help them win decent livelihoods.

Millions have already migrated to these advanced economies and integrated also because these countries need the young working force for their ever expanding economies. But the pressure lately has been challenging also because not everything was taking place in a legal and regular manner. Security issues have been raised because many among these migrants could be potentially linked to militant and terrorist cells who try to change the world order in the way they conceive it. While legal immigration is welcome in all these countries in a controlled manner also because of the exigencies of their economies, the fact that uncountable migrants flow in these countries presents a huge problem for them to tackle. Countries such as Ethiopia do have opportunities to grow their economy steadily and relentlessly and be self-sufficient but they need some preconditions to be fulfilled for its plans to materialize both in the short term as well as in the long term. It needs the understanding and support of not only its neighbours with whom it has a lot to share, but also the international community at large as well.

Ethiopia has been growing its economy with a fast pace and its GDP is growing equally fast, but the population as well has continued to increase by leaps and bounds. In a few years it could reach one hundred fifty million! Looking at the projection this seems indeed inevitable and Ethiopia needs to plan ready to face its long term future so that its growth is not stifled by remaining a landlocked country while the sea is not so distant from its borders.

International law dictates that landlocked countries do have rights to claim access to sea within legal and diplomatic means without encroaching on their neighbours' sovereignty by force. Ethiopia's recent negotiations and sealing of the MoU with Somaliland must be viewed and understood in this context. It is just one way of facing this potentially highly explosive prospect. In the prospected agreement Ethiopia will give to Somaliland economic advantages in exchange for access to the sea. This is purely an economic deal because in the end it benefits both populations. Better economic growth in both countries will have positive effect on regional integration and it could lead to the continental program of the Africa 2063 agenda. The continent needs to unite and become a relevant factor in world politics and economics. Africa cannot be sidelined from the large landscape of economic transactions in line with its convenience and advantage.

Its growth and development, its influence in the world at large should be commensurate with its contribution of huge and vital resources it avails to the outside world cheaply; its vast youth population and the equally large market possibilities. Africa needs to have a fair share of the world's growth and prosperity and not remain backward eternally. It needs to have its own

legitimate voice heard on world politics. Its recent inclusion in the G20 is a significant development.

Ethiopia is trying to fulfill its responsibilities in this sense. It has no intention of imposing its wishes on others or hurt them, least of all its neighbours, its brothers and sisters. Ethiopia wants to have the best diplomatic and economic as well as military relations with its neighbours and one of them is Somaliland. Another is Somalia for which it has sacrificed lots of lives of its citizens in support of its sovereignty and stability, in the search for peace while Somalia has been suffering the attacks of militant militia and declared terrorists such as Al Qaeda and Al shabaab. It is difficult to conceive that Somalia will prevent Ethiopia's quest for access to the sea which will have positive economic repercussions even to itself as well as the economies of these countries in the sub-region get more and more intertwined.

Somaliland has been transacting with several countries including very distant ones, and one should not be surprised or wonder if it seals an MoU with one of its nearest of neighbours, Ethiopia. We need to see things in perspective and look at the big picture rather than make every move a political and a territorial integrity issue. Things should be looked at with due caution before running into any hasty and negative conclusions.

Ethiopia's move will be one step further for future regional integration and this will bring more strength and welfare to the sub region. Cohesion against poverty will bring about stability in the region and there will be fewer threats of militant factions who try to dominate the area on a number of pretexts. A prosperous Horn of Africa will give little space to outside forces that try to impact negatively on the lives of the population. Such cooperation could also be an example for other regions in Africa because success is susceptible of being replicated and Africans should stop fighting for a number of trivial things and focus on the big picture of liberating their people out of poverty once and for all. Africans should cooperate amongst themselves rather than listen to what outsiders say and be involved in intestinal disputes which are not useful for its population.

Closer diplomatic, economic and political relations and better understanding of one another's needs can lead to more positive years for the future and not resort to hostilities of all kinds. If Africans unite they can solve all their problems. African leaders should thus ponder at length on peaceful means of resolving disputes to avoid any loss of resources due to conflicts. We have seen that conflicts have not served Africans come out of poverty and backwardness despite all the potentials they have. Africa should reject foreign intervention and resolve its issues internally. 'African solutions to African problems' are a good principle to apply.

Women in Focus

Hamere: The women who uses games for mind dev't

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

Hamere Mulugeta is the founder and Managing Director of *Nu Chika Enabuka* Center and Promotion. She was born and raised in Addis Ababa. She went to Hamle 19 Primary School and attended her secondary education in Medhaniale Secondary School.

After attending Visual Art at Ale School of Fine Arts and Design, Addis Ababa University, she went straight to Entoto Poly Technic School and learned 'Music' majoring in *Kirar*, Ethiopian traditional instrument and Piano.

Growing up, she was very active and was able to play all kinds of games that allowed her to explore and connect with nature. She grew up admiring the culture, and the values of the country through all childhood games. Hamere is also known for her love for planting and beautifying compounds.

She believes that it is through those moments that she was able to develop self-confidence, good personality and patriotic feelings. She recalled her childhood vividly as it contributes to where she is now.

Nu Chika Enabuka Center involves children in various creative and artistic works and allows them to interact with nature, plant vegetables, and cook and enjoy delicious foods including playing with mud, water and other recycling materials.

The following is Hamere's stay with *The Ethiopian Herald* where she shared her experience and career journey. Enjoy reading.

Hamere's career journey

My career journey started after I took a Computer Graphics course and was hired in a promotion company where I served for around three years. Soon after, I decided to open my own promotion company with the experience I got from the previous one.

Looking back, my company was very successful with satisfied customers as it filled the major gaps in quality and delivery time at the moment. Since customers have busy schedules, I used to go and do the design in their office to save both of us time. That way, not only I saved time but I would also get their confirmation of the draft promotion design right in their office.

But after getting married and gave birth to my kids, I decided to become a full time mom and raise my children without any distraction. So I hold my outdoor activities for almost seven years. However, those years majorly contributed for the coming into forth of the *Nu Chika Enabuka* Center.

Raising my kids was a bit different as I was very critical and conscious about their holistic development. Looking back to my childhood, the environment, the game and the activities that I experienced as a child had a positive influence on my life. So, as a mother, I am responsible to raise my children in a good compound where they can grow up in a healthy and essential environment.

Hence, we, along with my husband, rented a house around Hayat area which was comfortable and allowed my kids to do the activities that I used to do during my childhood. We used to



perform activities that are not only games but also helpful to explore their culture, as well as develop their minds, be it planting indigenous trees, playing with water and mud, crafting, recycling, coloring and performing art.

The idea behind 'Nu Chika Enabuka'

When my daughter turned four and started school, the school noticed that she was active and smart for her age. That was how they learnt about the activities we were performing at our house and offered to work with them.

Though there was another incident that clicked the idea of opening a space for kids to play the aforesaid games, it was the school's offer which led the idea to become a business.

We along with Flipper Academy opened the game in the school compound where the children get to experience and explore several activities while playing. After that, I decided to make it even bigger to allow others to enjoy the experience.

With that in mind, we requested land to create the center though we were told that we needed to have a huge space then. Unluckily, it wasn't easy as the office we requested the land asked us to present a sample. That is when we came up with an event and we hosted our first event that brought together 3000 children and parents.

I hosted a family event where over 5,000 parents and children took part in Unity Park at the Grand Palace after that. In 2012, a similar event that also brought more than 10,000 people together at Meskel Square was held.

Games and children holistic development

Childhood is about playing and exploring. If we expect them to excel in education and put them apart from experiencing, they will be good at a specific area. It is with this in mind that we try to create children who have all rounded personality.

Children could learn better through games. The experience enables them to have wider perspective and open and creative mind. The games at the centers not only are recreational but target to develop their mind on various aspects.

Challenge and lessons

Challenges are inevitable but it is about



perspective. If you are in a move of achieving something, there are challenges but I believe that they are part of the process. Hosting a huge event especially trying something new is not an easy task but it is vital to focus on the bigger picture and try to accomplish.

Biggest events

I believe that the biggest event is the one that we recently organized at Meskel Square and where more than 30,000 children and parents attended it.

Nonetheless, we held a family festival in Dubai; however, the situation was a bit different as we were told we couldn't take mud outside of the country unless we are exporters.

We had to get an exporter's license just to take the mud for the festival and we did which made us the first mud exporters in the nation. Fortunately, the event was satisfying where over 5000 people attended it. The Ethiopian Airlines was our sponsor. After that, we also organized the event in the United States of America.

Publics' attitudes towards women

Every time I have to visit certain institution, I get similar feedback which almost considers the festival as fun but mostly as something not worthy. Their emotion says it all especially me, being a woman, they made it seem like a child game that is not achievable.

But, what matters is how I see it, not them. So, anytime I get negative response, I use it as a fuel that drives me even further. I take 'No' for an answer, it is something that I developed growing up, and I am committed and strict for something that I believed in, the challenges are my tools

that put me higher. The funny thing is, most are amazed once they experience the event.

Accomplishment

I believe that doing what you love the most is a success; it feels as if you are enjoying not doing a job. Not many people do what they are inspired about.

Besides the event, we have a TV program on Ethiopian *Lejoch* channel. The program aims at enhancing children's creativity and developing their minds. We have also announced another program on Canal + named '*Ye Eweqet Zaf*' literally translated to 'Tree of Knowledge' in both Amharic and Oromifa languages.

We want to present more educational programs on TV in the future. Similarly, we want to build a huge recreational center which is expected to land on 10,000 hectare and consists of boats, cows, recycling and all the other educational games that are carried out in the center. We plan the center to represent the little Ethiopia which will be visited by tourists.

Ethiopian families and raising children

Technology is not something we ignore at this point in life. It is very essential in our day-to-day activity. But when it comes to children, it needs supervision. Parents need to take responsibility how they manage the technology usage given the fact that the outcome would be negative. Their role is to guide children to make use of the technology for good purpose.

Parents should allow trying new activities, exploring things as it would help them grow mentally better and spend quality time with them.

Society

Beat Leprosy!

BY ELIZABETH MENGISTU

Leprosy, also known as Hansen Disease, though is the oldest disease recorded in the history of mankind and over the past decades significant strides have been witnessed in anti-leprosy efforts, eliminating the problem fully and making it the history of the past remains an unaccomplished assignment.

As a result, the disease continues affecting a large number of people worldwide regardless of age, race and gender.

In fact, as to the reports from the WHO on leprosy, the global burden of leprosy has been reduced by 95 percent since the 1980s and the number of patients declining sharply. Unfortunately, since recent years, the case is becoming more prevalent which calls for more efforts to make the world free of leprosy.

As part of this effort, every year, on the last Sunday of the month of January, the World Leprosy Day is marked with various activities with the aim to increase the public awareness about leprosy and reduce stigma against those who suffer from the disease.

Last Sunday, 28 January, the day was observed internationally under the theme "Beat Leprosy".

Ethiopia is also working to eliminate leprosy and create a generation that is free from disability that comes to happen due to leprosy. In view of this, the country also observed the day with various activities held in Harar City, Harari State.

According to the Ethiopian National Association of Persons Affected by Leprosy (ENAPA), works carried out to increase the participation of leprosy victims in the social and economic activities of the country and benefit them have shown encouraging outcomes, Ministry of Health reported.

Speaking on the occasion, the Association's President Kefyalew Bekele said that even though the stigma that was observed against leprosy victims is not fully curbed, compared to the previous years, significant changes are witnessed. Following the activities carried out leprosy victims were able to detach themselves from the yoke of dependence and to lead their own lives.

As to him the increased participation of stakeholders and government's due attention in raising the awareness of the public is one reason for the change. However, a lot of tasks remain ahead to fully address the challenge, increase the participation and benefits of leprosy victims as well as the discrimination and stigmatization they face.

Mentioning that the Association is working jointly with the government, stakeholders and other pertinent bodies to realize its mission and improve the condition of victims, the President said that this cooperation and effort will be further strengthened in the future.

"The forum will not only observe the day but also create a good opportunity to discuss with the concerned parties and the society about leprosy; and to raise the awareness of the victims so that they can develop

self-confidence, integrate with the society, more importantly to familiarize victims with the international and national laws and conventions related to leprosy."

Disability Affairs Executive Director at the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, Asalefew Amedin also said that when the International Day of Leprosy is marked, the society should give a comprehensive response to the victims of leprosy. Activities that enhance the participation and benefits of leprosy victims should be strengthened.

Harari State Vice President Rosa Umer on her part said "The day is a time when the rights and benefits of leprosy victims are strengthened and a platform where we deliberate together on ways to eradicate leprosy. What is more, it is a time that the communities reinforce their cooperation and support for leprosy patients."

Pointing out that leprosy is a disease that can be prevented by early diagnosis and continuous treatments; she said that any kind of stigma and discrimination against leprosy victims and their families in the community should be annihilated.

Disease Prevention and Control Chief Executive Director with the Ministry of Health Hiwot Solomon (MD) on her part said that, the Ministry of Health, joining hands with the Association of leprosy victims and other stakeholders, is working persistently to create a favorable environment for victims of the disease. It is working to fill the loopholes in increasing access to treatment and medicine, and to reduce the number of new leprosy victims by providing new treatment options and offering training for experts, she added.

According to her, the medical provision system has been strengthened to alleviate the social and economic problems caused by the disease in the State. In turn, remarkable achievements have been recorded.

In connection with the International Leprosy Day, prior to the actual day, a joint road walk was held in Harar City.

At the program, including the President the Ethiopian National Association of Persons Affected by Leprosy (ENAPA) and other members of the Association; Harari State Labor and Social Affairs Bureau officials and



employees, leprosy victims and other parties participated. Messages that would help to raise the awareness of the communities about leprosy were conveyed.

A panel discussion was also organized and attended by senior government officials drawn from federal and states, representatives of humanitarian organizations, patients of leprosy, elders, religious leaders, as well as other invited guests.

Research articles focusing on the efforts that have been carried out to eliminate leprosy from Ethiopia, as well as the level of public's understanding about leprosy were presented and discussed thoroughly in the forum.

This year's International Leprosy Day was marked in Ethiopia with the theme "Don't Forget Leprosy"

Leprosy, according to documents, is a chronic infectious disease caused by a type of bacteria, *Mycobacterium leprae*. The disease predominantly affects the skin and peripheral nerves. If the disease is left untreated, it may cause progressive and permanent disabilities.

The bacteria are transmitted via droplets from the nose and mouth during close and frequent contact with untreated cases.

Luckily, leprosy is curable disease with multidrug therapy (MDT). Leprosy is reported from all the six WHO Regions; the majority of annual new case detections are from South-East Asia, it was learned.

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HU training on cities urban agriculture expansion

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Haramaya University (HU) has provided practical capacity-building training to 26 agricultural experts and model urban residents from three cities.

Haramaya University Research Groups and Partnerships Directorate Director Dr. Deribachew Bekana said that the main objective of the training is to expand urban agriculture in the three cities in his opening remarks.

According to him, urban agriculture began to be widely used in the world in the 19th and 20th centuries while research papers show that urban agriculture in Ethiopia has been implemented since the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie.

Understanding the benefits of urban agriculture, the government is working to increase production and productivity by expanding urban agriculture in a modern way alongside the main agricultural work. Taking these facts into account, HU provides various professional support and training to help the local city residents not only to implement but also to expand the



existing urban agriculture.

Haramaya University Research and Community Affairs Vice President and Office Research Development Coordinator Fayyisa Hundeessa said that HU has been working to modernize the sector by carrying out many research projects in the field of agriculture since its establishment. It has been also providing training, selecting and improving seeds, and promoting various modern agricultural technologies.

Following the direction set by the

government, HU has done various works to solve the food shortages in the cities particularly Maya, Harar, and Dire Dawa via urban agriculture. In addition, technical, resource, and advisory services have been provided to them. As a result, the residents can grow vegetables in the small areas they have, he added.

Since urban agriculture has a significant contribution in terms of ensuring food security, experts in the field conduct research that allows city dwellers to grow

different vegetables on their piece of land and earn additional income. Hence, the trainers are expected to implement modern urban agriculture but also to train the residents of the three cities.

This training is imperative to bring results in modernizing urban agriculture and help fill the gap in vegetable supply since many individuals have open spaces in their residences that can be used to grow different vegetables and fruits, he stated.

Besides, the training will enable the community to grow vegetables such as spinach, lettuce, and cabbage in the limited space of the community using frequently used materials, and to market them beyond their own consumption.

Haramaya University Urban Agriculture Project Coordinator Dr. Teklamariam Kenedi said although urban agriculture technology is new in the country, the training will allow the experts and model urban residents to follow scientific and research-based methods to improve the agricultural work carried out by individuals, groups, and associations in each city.