



The Ethiopian Herald

AGI CONSTRUCTING THE FUTURE AFRICA
Abyssinia Group of Industries

Manufacturer of Rebars, Angles, Channels, Flat Bars & Round Bars. Introducing cut & bend service for rebars.

Contact & Address
Tel: +251 116 63 97 55/ 251 116 63 51 22/ 25
Mob.: +251 962 009 072/ +251 949 440 868
+251 911 45 9790
E-mail: sales@agiethiopia.com
4th Floor, Dabi Building, Bole road Addis Ababa Ethiopia

Vol. LXXX No 143 24 February 2024 - Yekatit 16, 2016 **Saturday** Price Birr 10.00



Commission, aid groups ramping up support to drought victims

• *Start fourth round aid distribution*

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission (DRMC) announced the resumption of operation of international organizations in providing full

support to drought-affected areas.

In an exclusive interview with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), DRMC Senior Communication Expert Atalel Abuhay said that international organizations are improving the amount of their donation for drought

victims in Tigray, Amhara and Afar states.

The resumption of international humanitarian organizations' operation helps the government to reach more peoples who are still in need of

See commission, ... Page 3

USAID's GeneXpert donation to scale up TB elimination

• *Invests over 154 mln USD every year in Ethiopia*

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) handed over 156 GeneXpert machine, worth over 3 million USD to the Ministry of Health (MoH).

The USAID handed over some 156 GeneXpert, Tuberculosis rapid diagnosis machine to MoH to support the process to prevent and end TB in Ethiopia. Technologies by itself solve a lot of problems like delay in treatment and diagnosis thereby contributing to end TB.

See USAID's ... Page 3

Metropolis hosts 15th city-wide art festival

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – Having the vision to capitalize on art's power for the nation's development, the Addis Ababa Culture Art and Tourism Bureau commenced yesterday the 15th city-wide art festival.

The festival is being held under the theme *Ethiopianness- the Chariot of artistic imagination, a common narrative of mesmerizing.*

Speaking at the festival launching ceremony, Bureau Head Hirut Kassaw (PhD) said that art has been playing a major role in strengthening the bond among Ethiopians

and encouraging them to stand for their sovereignty for many years. "For instance, the art industry used to revive the economic and social activities that were largely halted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The bureau has been partnering with relevant stakeholders to promote Addis Ababa's attraction sites during the tourists peak season and it has also employed artistic works to attract more visitors. Also, consolidated efforts are underway to garner international acceptance to Addis Ababa's festivals, Hirut elaborated.

Prosperity Party Addis Branch Office Head

See Metropolis, ... Page 3



Photo: Hadush Abreha

Ministry to benefit 8 mln women through 'Yelemat Tirufat'

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA) has announced a plan to benefit some eight million women through 'Yelemat Tirufat' initiatives as part of the International Women's Day.

The Ministry held press conference regarding the celebration of international

Women's Day which is going to be commemorated this year for 113rd time internationally and 48th time nationally under the theme: 'Invest in women accelerate progresses'.

During the briefing, MoWSA's Minister Ergogie Tesfaye(PhD), stated that the day would be marked on various occasions

See Ministry to, ... Page 3



News

New digital system to transform various social services

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

BISHOFTU- The Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MinT) said it has been developing cutting-edge innovative technologies and research that would expedite Ethiopia's digital economic transformation.

The Ethiopian Space Science and Geospatial Institute (SSGI) inaugurated the first of its kind digital addressing system (eDAS) in Bishoftu town on Thursday in the presence of senior government officials, private sector representatives and community leaders.

Speaking at the inauguration, MinT Minister BeleteMolla (PhD) said the system would be a promising step for facilitating any administrative, social and economic services. It would also galvanize Ethiopia's efforts to attain its digital strategic plan by 2025.

Noting the penetration of Digital ID and e-Services, Belete emphasized that the digital addressing system is one of the tools that would realize the digital economy and other national platforms viable to ensure inclusive and sustainable economic development goals. "eDAS would have a prominent role for emerging technological startups, job creation, tourism industry, and electronics transactions."

The MinT, along with other stakeholders, is currently implementing the 10-year strategic plan aiming to reach 73 large and medium-sized towns, he remarked.



The Ethiopian Space Science and Geospatial Institute Director-General Abdisa Yilma on his part stated that the deployment of the system at Bishoftu is a significant milestone that ushers in a new era of delivering efficient door-to-door services and precise location.

Abdisa also noted that the institute is carrying out large-scale space and geospatial related projects that would play a significant role in boosting Ethiopia's economic and social development. "Besides, we are taking bold steps to build a competent and efficient space and geospatial hub in Africa."

According to him, the system helps to deliver

optimized services, including postal and emergency, fleet management and promotes tourist influx and enhances security missions. "We are also in the pipeline to deploy the system in Addis Ababa and Adama and set a plan to expand the project across the country."

Bishoftu Mayor Alemayehu Assefa indicated that the administration is working tirelessly to make the city a preferred tourist destination as it is blessed with many lakes and mountains. "This technology would be a good opportunity to promote the tourist flow to the town and accelerate our vision to

make Bishoftu a smart city."

Lauding the significance of the system, which is developed with home-grown knowledge, the mayor mentioned infrastructure as the instrument to make Bishoftu a smart city and contributes a lot to the safety and well-being of its community.

The newly-developed system is equipped with reliable and higher precision, alternative local languages and many more. It was learned in the inauguration that irregular settlements, shortage of educated and trained labor force and limited infrastructure impacted the project progress.

Stakeholders optimistic about ACITF's economic outcomes

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- The 26th Addis-Chamber International Trade Fair (26th ACITF) will help to revitalize Ethiopia's economy promoting locally manufactured and imported products among potential consumers, the Addis Ababa Trade Bureau said.

The 26th ACITF is taking place from February 22-26, 2024 under theme: "Spurring Development through Innovation" at the Addis Ababa Exhibition and Development Center. The exhibition is organized by the Addis Ababa Trade Bureau and Addis Chamber of Commerce and Sectorial Associations.

Addis Ababa Trade Bureau Representative Meketa Adafre said in his opening remark that the event will modernize the commercial sector and contribute to the revival of Ethiopia's economy.

"There is no doubt that innovation is an indispensable component for achieving accelerated economic growth, and hence the reason for deciding on this motivating business slogan, "Spurring Development through Innovation" to symbolize this event."

Trade and industry are two important components of the Ten Years Development Plan and the government prioritizes the high value adding industry and service sectors in the national development agenda he elaborated.

Meketa further highlighted that the bureau has been facing tenacious challenges including high



Meketa Adafre

logistics costs, low labor productivity, weak rural infrastructure, and limited technological penetration. To address such challenges, the government is improving infrastructure, expanding ICT, revising investment incentives, and promoting international market opportunities through organizations.

In her remark at the occasion, Addis Chamber of Commerce and Sectorial Association President Mesenbet Shenkute emphasized the importance of innovation in boosting economic growth, enhancing job creation, and promoting competition across sectors including agriculture, industry, and service.

While the government is providing new technologies a lot to be one to fully support and empower business communities.

Innovation is not just about creating new products or services; it's about winning competition, customer satisfaction, and finding efficient, timely, and quality ways to do things, promoting the circular economy, she emphasized.

MoLS to present ILO conventions proposition to Advisory Board

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA – Ministry of Labor and Skills (MoLS) announced that deliberations on ratification of ILO convention would be presented to Advisory Board.

Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU) has recently organized an advocacy campaign for the signing and ratification of four key International Labor Organization (ILO) conventions of 189, 190, 97, and 143 that promote decent work for domestic workers, averting workplace violence and protection of the right of migrant workers.

On the occasion, MoLS Labor Affairs Director Tekalign Ayalew (PhD) said that his ministry will work together with CETU on the protection of the right of migrant and domestic workers.

He also pledged to present the deliberations of pertinent bodies about the ratification of ILO convention during the next meeting of Labor Advisory Board which constitutes representatives of labor, employers and authorities.

"We cannot protect workers safety and right violation only by conducting advocacy campaign as it needs to digitalize work environment, create good working structure to transform those international conventions in any nation," he said.

ILO Conventions require conditions of work so as to arrange good system and prepare skill training schemes to ensure industrial peace as well as to make work places human-centered which boosts productivity, Tekalign stated.

On the event, CETU President, Kassahun Follo urged lawmakers to integrate ILO Conventions 189 concerning decent work for domestic workers, 190 on workplace violence and harassment, 97 on migrant workers, and 143 on protections for migrant workers into national legislation, as Ethiopia has not yet adopted these international accords.

These conventions help the nation to reduce domestic and migrant workers' right violations, he noted.

Confederation of Ethiopian Employers Association (CEEAA) President, Tadele Yimer on his part said that women face various harassments at work places which should be stopped by any legal means.

Respecting the right of others must be mandatory for oneself to be valued, he stressed.

"We confirm partnership to lobby the ratification of ILO conventions to respect migrant workers. This all shouldn't neglect those threat and violence happen to workers especially in the overseas. Ethiopia is one of ILO founding member nation so it should ensure safety of workers and protect their human right," he said.

News

Gavi managing HoA's child vaccine

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – Gavi announced that some 1,000,000 doses of life-saving vaccines have been administered to children living across Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan.

In a press release sent to The Ethiopian Herald that the Zero-Dose Immunization Programme (ZIP) funded by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance led by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in the Horn of Africa (HoA), ZIP is responding to the humanitarian challenge of identifying and vaccinating zero-dose children living in fragile settings that are beyond the reach of government health services.

Gavi's Country Programmes Delivery

Managing Director Thabani Maphosa said that over half of the 2.71 million children in the region aged less than five years have never received vaccine in their lives. "Children living in hard-to-reach communities now have a fighting chance for a better future," "But our work is not done: millions of children who are already vulnerable due to conflict, natural disasters and other challenges continue to be under-served by traditional health systems, and systemically miss out on essential vaccines. Innovative partnerships such as this one with the IRC are essential if we are to ensure no child is left behind."

As to the release, in partnership with flow minder, think place and a broad coalition of local civil society organizations, the

IRC is building on its humanitarian expertise to successfully deliver results through ZIP. In the aforementioned countries, humanitarian negotiators are working closely with vaccination teams to access communities living in conflict-ridden areas and vaccinate children who are the hardest to reach.

Project Director for Gavi REACH at the IRC Shiferaw Demissie said, "Through innovative strategies and strategic partnerships, the IRC-led Gavi REACH consortium is bridging the equity gap in immunization, extending Ministry of Health immunization programmes to populations in fragile, conflict and humanitarian settings that are beyond the reach of traditional health systems or government support." He added that

IRC is committed not only to expanding immunization coverage to some of the most vulnerable populations, but it is also determined to utilizing Gavi REACH as a gateway to extend additional critical services, such as primary health care, nutrition and other services, to these communities."

The HoA is grappling with multiple crises. In addition to the millions of lives lost due to conflict, millions more have been displaced and are facing extreme shortages of food and water. Climate change, extreme droughts and flooding are also exacerbating instability, making it increasingly difficult to access communities in need of basic health services, and to prevent and control the spread of vaccine-preventable diseases.

Commission, aid groups...

emergency aid, he said.

He further said that the government has distributed aid in three rounds during the six months of this fiscal year and the fourth round aid distribution is also being carried out efficiently.

The government has provided about 7.3 million and 6.5 million people with emergency aids during the first two and the third round aid distribution phases respectively, he mentioned.

"Though, millions are still in need of aid. We hope the reactivation of donation by international aiders will help us to reach all," he said.

Most people who are in need of aid are drought victims. Two million peoples in 23 Woredas of Amhara and same number of people in 31 woredas of Tigray state have received aid during the past three aid distribution rounds, according to Atalel.

By the same token, he said, about 621,000 people in Afar state have been benefited.

In aggregate, over 894,300 quintals of food and food items have been distributed in three rounds during the past six months, according to him.

The government has spent billions of Birr to rescue peoples in drought affected areas, Atalel said adding that 1.7 billion Birr worth aid from the government and 2.7 billion Birr worth aid from partners has already been distributed to the people in Tigray state in six months.

Since the beginning of the fourth round distribution, 27,000 quintals of food and food items have been distributed. Additional aid is also being transported from aid stores to the Tigray state. "We hope, more people will be benefited as international organizations are engaging in full capacity," he noted.

Metropolis hosts 15th...

that focused on capitalizing the role of women in nation building, as well as ensuring peace and prosperity.

Thus, public movement and various programs have been cascaded from federal to kebele level to commemorate the day starting from February 9 to March 27, 2024.

One of such plan is organizing fund raising event to collect over five hundred million Birr to support vulnerable women and girls as well as those affected by post war effects and manmade disasters. So far, around two million Birr has been collected, she said.

Besides, one stop service and rehabilitation center that comprise psychosocial and legal support and physical medical examination is planned to be available for war affected girls and women.

Over 5,000 women are also said to receive life skill and business trainings while around 500,000 women will receive solar energy technologies, she added.

Moreover, there is a plan to organize

10,000 women in corporate union. Similar plan is set to organize and strengthen women public enterprises that comprises over 10,000 women, as to the Minister.

Apart from benefiting 250,000 women with loans provision, over 15,000 women would be engaged in various jobs.

State Minister Alemitu Umer on her part mentioned that since the implementation of the public movement on Feb 9, around 1,402,535 Birr was collected and one thousand people were provided with food and nonfood items across states.

She said, "Besides, over 1.5 million women were part of cultural exchange and public movements while 653,346 women took part at peace conference programs. Women have been benefited through loan and credit provision, medical examination, job opportunities, voluntary activities, among others."

The Ministry urged pertinent stakeholders and media institutions to play a significant role for the proper implementation of the plan.

Ministry to benefit 8 mln...

Moges Balcha on his part said that the reform government has given due attention to the art industry and artists are among those recognized by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) for their involvement in the national agendas.

Moges further noted that the

expansion of amphitheaters, art galleries and other infrastructure are the clear manifestation for the current government's commitment to art development. Currently, using festivals and other platforms are common to display art works at the international

and national levels.

"The Adwa Victory Memorial Museum is a milestone that helps to display the power of art to Addis' residents in a concrete manner. The government formulates strategies that would utilize the art's virtues for economic progress

and job creation as well as fostering unity and national consensus among others."

Following the presentation of various performances and artistic activities by participants, the festival is scheduled to complete tomorrow, it was learned.

USAID's GeneXpert donation to scale...

Speaking at the occasion, USAID Ethiopia Mission Director Scott Hocklander stressed that the USAID invests over 154 million USD every year to strengthen country's national health care system and to improve the quality of health services across the country.

So far, GeneXpert has been contributing a lot in decreasing child and mother mortality and extending access to family

planning services apart from detecting, curing and preventing TB and multi-drug resistant tuberculosis cases, the director added.

"One of the key components of this support is improving and building health care facilities including hospitals to detect and prevent the disease." The detection is the critical in fighting the disease, he vowed.

For his part, MoH State Minister Dereje Duguma (MD) stated that the support of new rapid molecular TB diagnosis machine would contribute towards preventing and ending TB in Ethiopia.

The donation is a great milestone to solve delays in diagnosis and treatments and help to end TB. In addition to 156 machines, the ministry has currently about 503 GeneXpert machines functioning all

over the country and a leap for patients to overcome their problems, he noted.

Some of the machines will be distributed to the private sectors to build their capacities and fight against the disease. The MoH together with the USAID and other partners developed domestic resources mobilization a roadmap to address the funding gap and limited domestic share, Dereje noted.

Opinion

Ethiopia's agro industries conveyor belts to industry led economy

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

The history of the development of agro industry in Ethiopia dates back to the early 1960s and 1970s in which a number of foreign companies from Europe established sugar, cotton farms and textile industries in the country.

To date, agro-industry in Ethiopia plays an important role in the country's economic development, contributing to employment, income generation, food security, and export earnings. Ethiopia's diverse agro-climatic conditions and abundant natural resources make it well-suited for agriculture and agro industry development. Here are some key aspects of agro industry in Ethiopia:

Ethiopia produces a wide range of agricultural products, including cereals (such as teff, wheat, maize, and barley), pulses (such as chickpeas, lentils, and beans), oilseeds (such as sesame and Niger seed), coffee, tea, spices, fruits, and vegetables. Livestock farming, including cattle, sheep, goats, and poultry, is also an integral part of the agricultural sector.

Smallholder farmers play a crucial role in Ethiopia's agriculture, accounting for the majority of agricultural production. The government implements various programs and initiatives through various institutions like the Ministry of Agriculture Ministry of Industry, Agricultural Transformation Agency, Agricultural Marketing Corporation, and Agricultural Mechanization Agency to support smallholder farmers, including access to credit, extension services, inputs, and market linkages.

Over the last several decades, there has been increasing interest and investment in commercial farming and agroindustry ventures in Ethiopia. Large-scale commercial farms, including foreign-owned and domestic enterprises, operate in various parts of the country, focusing on cash crops, horticulture, floriculture, and livestock production.

Ethiopia's agroindustry sector is increasingly focused on producing crops and products for export markets. Coffee is one of Ethiopia's primary export commodities, renowned for its high quality and unique flavor profiles. Other export-oriented products include oilseeds, pulses, flowers, fruits, vegetables, and spices.

There is growing emphasis on value addition and agro-processing in Ethiopia to increase the value and competitiveness of agricultural products. The government encourages investment in agro-industrial parks, food processing facilities, agro-processing technologies, and value chain development initiatives.

Agro industry activities, including farming, processing, packaging, and marketing, provide employment and income opportunities for millions of Ethiopians, particularly in rural areas where agriculture is the primary livelihood source.

Despite its potential, the Ethiopian agroindustry sector faces various challenges, including limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure, post-harvest losses, low productivity, climate variability, and market access constraints. Addressing these challenges requires coordinated efforts from government, private

sector stakeholders, development partners, and civil society organizations.

The Ethiopian government has developed various policies, strategies, and programs to promote agricultural development, agroindustry investment, value chain development, market access, and agribusiness competitiveness. These initiatives aim to transform the agricultural sector into a modern, resilient, and sustainable engine of economic growth and development.

Overall, agroindustry in Ethiopia has significant potential to contribute to poverty reduction, rural development, food security, export earnings, and economic transformation. Continued investment, innovation, and policy support are essential to unlock the full potential of Ethiopia's agricultural sector and realize its socio-economic benefits for the country and its people.

Integrated agro-industrial parks in Ethiopia represent a strategic approach to boosting agricultural production, value addition, and industrialization in the country. These parks aim to create synergies between agricultural production, agro-processing, manufacturing, and related services within a single location. By integrating various components of the agricultural value chain, these parks seek to enhance efficiency, competitiveness, and sustainability in the agricultural sector. Here are some key features and examples of integrated agro-industrial parks in Ethiopia:

Integrated agro-industrial parks are equipped with modern infrastructure, including roads, utilities, warehouses, processing facilities, cold storage, and other amenities to support agricultural activities and agro-processing operations.

These parks are designed to accommodate multiple industries and businesses across the agricultural value chain, including crop production, livestock farming, food processing, packaging, logistics, and marketing. The clustering of diverse activities fosters collaboration, innovation, and economies of scale.

Integrated agro-industrial parks focus on adding value to agricultural products through processing, packaging, and value chain integration. This helps farmers capture more value from their produce, reduce post-harvest losses, and access higher-value markets.

These parks facilitate access to domestic and international markets by providing infrastructure and logistics support for transportation, distribution, and export. They also promote linkages with global value chains and facilitate trade and investment in agricultural products and processed goods.

Integrated agro-industrial parks leverage technology and innovation to enhance productivity, quality, and sustainability in agriculture and agro-processing. They support research and development initiatives, technology transfer, and skill development programs to improve agricultural practices and value chain efficiency.

These parks promote environmentally sustainable agriculture and agro-industry practices, including resource-efficient farming techniques, waste management, renewable

energy adoption, and conservation of natural resources.

Integrated Agro-Industrial Parks (IAIPs) are a tool for agricultural modernization and agribusiness development. IAIPs are Special Economic Zones, with state-of-the-art infrastructure facilities to provide a conducive environment for companies engaged in agro-inputs, high-tech greenhouse cultivation, focus crop processing, other agro commodities processing, food processing, agri-engineering and associated areas. Examples of integrated agro-industrial parks in Ethiopia include:

Jimma Agro-Industrial Park, currently under development, aims to integrate coffee production, processing, and marketing activities within a single location. It seeks to enhance the competitiveness of Ethiopia's coffee industry and promote value addition.

These integrated agro-industrial parks represent Ethiopia's commitment to promoting agricultural transformation, industrialization, and economic growth through innovative approaches to value chain development and agribusiness investment. They serve as hubs for collaboration, investment, and knowledge sharing to drive sustainable development in the agricultural sector and improve the livelihoods of rural communities.

Yirgalem Integrated Agro-Industrial Park (Yirgalem IAIP) is located about 40km south of Hwassa (315km south of Addis Ababa) in south-central Sidama Region. It is under the Sidama Industrial Parks Development Corporation.

Easily accessible from other places in southern Ethiopia and Lake Langano, Yirgalem IAIP sits on 294.5 Hectares. Yirgalem is gifted with lush, fertile and sub-tropical land and the IAIP specializes in agro-processing.

Yirgalem IAIP plays an important role in the country's economy, reducing poverty and creating a better environment for investors in agro-food and allied sectors.

It is situated within 100-kilometer radius of the park at Bensa Daye, Aletawondo and Morocho. The Rural Transformation Centers (RTCs) are rural development initiatives of the Government of Ethiopia that not only facilitate inclusive rural development, but also serve as a linkage to Yirgalem IAIP in terms of raw material supply. At the RTCs, agricultural produce is collected, sorted, stored and may undergo primary processing before onward transport. For most farmers, the RTCs are the main point of contact with commercial agricultural value chains.

Bure Integrated Agro-Industrial Park (Bure IAIP) is located 411 kms north of the capital Addis Ababa and 156 kms south-west of Bahir Dar, in Bure town in the West Gojjam Zone of the Amhara Region found in the Western Ethiopia. It is under the Amhara Industrial Parks Development Corporation.

Bure enjoys a flourishing business environment and serves as a connection point for businesses between Wolega, Gondar and Shewa. The main modern industrial opportunity in the town is an agricultural training college. Bure IAIP, located on 260.5 hectares of land in the first phase, is complete with water, electricity and telecom connectivity, roads and other infrastructure, including offices, factory sheds and staff

accommodation.

There are 7 Rural Transformation Centers situated within a 100-kilometer radius of the park at Merawi, FinoteSelam, Dangila, Enjibara, Chagni, Amanuel and Motta. The RTCs are rural development initiatives of the Government of Ethiopia that not only facilitate inclusive rural development, but also serve as a linkage to Bure IAIP in terms of raw material supply. At the RTCs, agricultural produce is collected, sorted, stored, checked for quality and may undergo primary processing before onward transport. For most farmers, the RTCs are the main point of contact with commercial agricultural value chains.

The Bulbula Integrated Agro Industrial Park, built on 271 hectares of land in Western Oromia, has been fully equipped with the necessary infrastructures and facilities to accommodate 135 investors in the space of processing of agro-value chains that include fruits and vegetables, dairy, honey, and poultry.

The companies in the agreement are involved in tomato processing, avocado oil production, animal fodder, and dairy products and will supply the products to domestic and foreign markets.

The companies are also believed will play a significant role in import substitution, particularly in food-related product items, and improve the nation's foreign currency earnings.

The author of this contribution believes that integrating agro industrial sector with the current national campaigns of Yelemat Trufat and Ethiopia Tamirt will help not only to boost the development of value added agricultural products but will also increase inputs for the growing textile and food processing industries in the country.

However, the nation still needs to create a conducive and peaceful environment for integrated agro industrial parks and other similar industries outside the park areas.

On the other hand, the small scale farms and clustered farmlands that are enjoying integrated support from the government need to do their part in making the parks hubs for export oriented industries.

Strengthening logistics networks in and around the parks and ensuring smooth linkup with the major land, air and sea transport systems is of crucial importance for the development of the sector. International standards of packing and cold storage system need to be in place for shipping and transiting agro industrial commodities.

Promotion of export standard quality agro processed commodities for the international markets need to be considered. As Ethiopia is closing upon securing ports and access to the sea, the future of agro industry in the country is bright but the major challenges in the sector including technology, managerial skills and access to raw material should be carefully considered.

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

Editorial

Opinion

Ethio-Somaliland seaport deal will accelerate stability, prosperity across the region

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that Ethiopia recently signed with the republic of Somaliland to use one of its ports is intended not to harm any entity. Rather, the agreement largely benefits the region in ensuring mutual benefit through promoting peace, stability and prosperity of the Horn.

According to Tibor Nagy, former U.S. Secretary of State for African Affairs, the Ethiopia-Somaliland seaport access deal is vital to ensure stability across the Red Sea region that recently has seen an increasing turmoil. The diplomat expressed that the seaport access agreement signed between the two countries is promising to stabilize the Red Sea region and secure transport along the route.

Indeed, the MoU, when put in action, can account a remarkable share in the efforts underway by western powers to pacify the Red Sea region, one of the major routes of world commodities. As of the diplomat, the Red Sea faced terrible instability problems including piracy because of Somalia's inability to control its coastline or for the Houthis who are shooting rockets targeting ships going through the route.

He told all the concerned bodies the reality about the region when expressing that Ethiopia as a major nation, could absolutely contribute to the stability of the Red Sea if it gets a port and a navy. And it could also provide training to the Somaliland's navy.

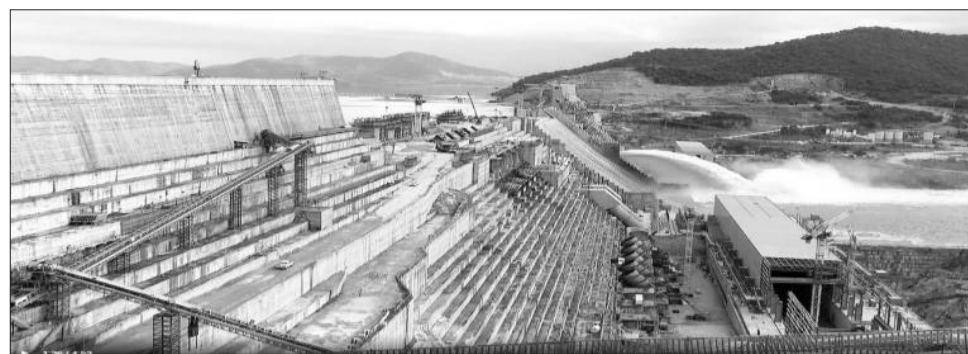
Besides, the Ethio-Somaliland MoU is a win-win proposition to Ethiopia and Somaliland as the first desperately needs a peaceful access to the sea. Moreover, according to Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed sea access is an existential issue for his country that lost its access to the sea when Eritrea seceded in the early 1990s. With more than 120 million people, Ethiopia is the most populous landlocked country in the world.

Though access to the sea is an existential issue for Ethiopia, "The position announced by the government is strongly rooted in a desire not to engage in war with anyone," Ethiopia's communications office said. Apart from unfounded fears by some that this implied trying to take land from another of Ethiopia's neighbors, the deal with Somaliland has been described as historic, and emphasized that its intentions are peaceful. Ethiopia's stance in this regard is strong not to achieve its goal by force.

Somalia's havoc-inducing move in this regard is non-beneficial to anyone except destabilizing the region; creating a hotbed for terrorists' expansion and adversely affecting the region's development and creating hostility among the countries' peoples. Somalia needs to open its eyes to see Ethiopia's fair stance and focus on mutual benefit that the MoU will bring to the entire region and search a way for more agreements that make the region's peoples come together and secure common prosperity by utilizing their natural resources including the Red Sea.

On the other hand, according to Tibor Nagy, there are countries that oppose the agreement including Egypt and the US considering the deal from their point of view. Egypt opposes the deal because of its disagreement with Ethiopia over the Abbay Dam even though the deal benefits its interest as it helps to ensure stability along the Red Sea route that allows the free movement of ships through the Suez Canal.

The deal is even in Somalia's interest because it brings greater stability across the Red Sea region and the coastal water that would cut down piracy which is going on at the cost of Somalia, Nagy stressed. Somalia's government still needs Ethiopia's forces to control the country's territory and to take some of the counterterrorism measures inside Somalia. All in all, Ethiopia's interest to access the sea will add effort to the region's peace and stability besides ensuring prosperity.



The GERD as a model for regional collaboration and development

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

Following the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), Ethiopia has unambiguously been demonstrating its firm stance to the just and appropriate distribution of the dam. The colossal project pledges that all nations embroiled receive a reliable and regulated water flow of water year after year. In actual fact, the country has been unwaveringly sustained a mutually advantageous approach in handling and making use of this shared natural endowments.

Despite the fact that the country's constantly retreated assurance of not instigating any damage to downstream nations, Egypt's self-assigned responsibility as the custodian of the river have given rise to its hostile stance towards the dam. Without doubt, the construction of the dam is a crucial factor in plummeting the consequences of floods and droughts clearly related to the river, which often causes dire damage to agriculture in downstream societies on account of widespread waterlogging.

Reasoning from this fact, it can be stated that adjusting the water flow by utilizing the dam is a workable solution because of the fact that it guarantees a more stable water level.

Notwithstanding the fact that the construction of the dam has unquestionably aroused contestation, the downstream nations should stick to the existing reality on the ground giving the cold shoulder to cock-and-bull stories. There is no doubt that Ethiopia's initiative in constructing the dam is geared towards providing access to electricity, boosting the country towards greater achievements, motivating socio-economic development in the region and other related aspects.

Ethiopia's dedication to righteousness and fairness in exploiting the Abay River is obviously evident through the construction of the flagship project. Throughout the planning and implementation of the dam, Ethiopia has maintained a cooperative and mutually beneficial approach in managing this vital natural resource.

Through its knack for electricity generation and handling downstream water flow, the dam can put forward more than a few economic opportunities and help downstream nations circumvent the negative consequences of floods. The colossal dam will offer a reliable birthplace of power to millions of Ethiopians who at present do not have path to electricity.

Apart from guaranteeing a balanced distribution of the river's resources, the dam opens countless opportunities for downstream nations to benefit from the construction of the dam. Besides,

it plays a huge role in holding the promise of connecting millions of Ethiopians to the national power grid beyond meeting the energy demands of industries.

It is widely known that every twelve months during the filling of the Dam, some groups pull out all the stops to hoodwink the wider worldwide community with old tricks. They often make use of make believe stories to pressure Ethiopia and gain international attention. In fact, Ethiopia has been unwaveringly informing the international community that the dam will not cause any harm to downstream nations.

By lessening energy scarcities and getting higher access to electricity, the dam has the potential to propel economic growth and ameliorate the quality of living for the people of Ethiopia. Additionally, the dam gives prominence to unbiased distribution of the Abay River's resources which indicates a promise to collective growth and cooperation among riparian nations.

In a previous interview with The Ethiopian Herald Tilahun Erduno (Dr. Ir.) said there is no Nile problem as such, the problem they propagate each time is simply a vague problem fabricated by Egyptian officials themselves. Instead of sitting together and play win win game they always gamble with Herodotus say "that Egypt is the gift of the Nile" and the agreements of colonial periods. They know very well that Ethiopia never dreams to let the Egyptian and the Sudanese people without water, except that it insists for equitable use of water from Nile. Therefore the problems are politically motivated, groundless suspicion and mistrust created by Egyptian and Sudanese governments.

It should be underlined that Nile flows from Ethiopia through Sudan to Egypt, not from Egypt through Sudan to Ethiopia. In this regard wherever it is reserved, Nile water alone can serve as a weapon of all types of weapons for Ethiopia. Ethiopia understands that the Nile has been essential for civilization in Egypt and Sudan. Without Nile water, there would have been no food, no people, no state, and no monuments in Egypt. It also credits Herodotus' quote in 425 B.C. positively, that he mentioned "Egypt is the gift of the Nile." But this quote must not be utilized each time to exclude Ethiopia from using Nile water within its sovereign territory.

"His narrow quote may be because he didn't see the other side of the horizon. Therefore, in my opinion Egypt alone is not the gift of the Nile, rather all Nile Basin states including Egypt are the gifts of God who must use the Nile water based on common understanding and mutual benefit and live one for the other, in harmony in one Nile Family than in eternal suspicion and mistrust created by the minds of ill-politicians."

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



The Ethiopian Herald

Established in 1943

Published daily except Mondays
By The Ethiopian Press Agency

Office of the CEO

Tel. 011-126-42-22
Fax. 251-011-156-98-62
email- epa@press.et

Advertisement and Dist. Department

email: etpresspromotion@gmail.com
Tel. 011-156-98-73/011-811-13-15
Telegram :- 0976084707 - press

Editor-in-Chief: Worku Belachew

email- workubelachew@press.et
Address- Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-city

Woreda - 05, House No----
Tel- +251 111 26 41 98

Managing Editor: Wakuman Kudama

Email: wakuma220@gmail.com

Deputy Editors-in-Chief:

Alem Hailu
Elizabeth Mengistu
Zekarias Woldemariam
Desta Geberehiwot
Daniel Beyene

Website: www.press.et
email: ethiopianherald@press.et
Fb//Ethiopian Press Agency/
The Ethiopian Herald

Art & Culture



The 75th Gadaa power transfer ceremony of Gujii Oromo

BY NAOL GIRMA

The Gada system is a very huge and complex social institution in which the traditional Oromo people manage their socio political and religious practices. It is a well-developed and age-based grouping up on which the religious, political, economic and social lives of the people were formed. It is an indigenous socio-political democratic system of the Oromo people that regulated Political stability, economic development, social activities, cultural obligations, moral responsibility, and the philosophy of religious order of the society. The political philosophy of Gadaa is based on three main values: terms of eight years, balanced opposition between parties, and power sharing between higher and lower levels.

Gadaa is an indigenous socio-political system that regulated Political stability, Economic development, Social activities, Cultural obligations, Moral responsibility, and the philosophy of religious order of the Oromo society. In Gujii Gadaa system there are Muudaana, Halchiisa, Dhallaana, Harmufa and Roobalee parties. These five party systems are the operational mechanism of the Gadaa cycle. Gumii Bokkoo is Gujii social assembly of the Gujii confederacy (Uraagaa, Maattii and Hookkuu) is held every eight years at a place Me'ee Bokkoo. It is composed of Haaganaa Saglan comprising Gadaa, Doorriand Raaba from Uraagaa, Maattii and Hookkuu. During this Gumii assembly, different indigenous laws are proclaimed, amended and rehearsed. As Gujii Oromo elders narrate, Baallii transfer may not change unless the country faces natural or manmade problems such as dislocation of people, war, famine, drought etc. The term office of the elected Gadaa leaders was limited to eight years and ending with a formal power transfer ceremony called Baallii. Power was transferred from one party to other party peacefully through fair and free and periodic election. Baallii Ceremony was a transitional ceremony that involved large feasting and extensive ritual activities. It was a period when the strength of the incoming Gadaa members (Luba) was tested and it was a time when incoming

Gadaa class took the socio-political and religious power from the outgoing Gadaa class. The transfer of power was carried out when the legal expert transferred the Baallii Guchii (ostrich feather) from the outgoing Abbaa Gadaa to the incoming one. The two parties exchanged milk and blessings. Then the one who takes power accepted the 'Eebbaa' (blessing) through handing over seven 'Daraara. It confirms the existence of peace, and respect between giving and taking power of Gadaa and ambition of the same by taking Abbaa Gadaa in his Gadaa reign. The 75th Gujii Gadaa Power transferred from leaders of 'Harmuufa Baallii' Jilo Mandho who ruled for last eight years from (2016 to 2024) to the candidates of 'Roobalee Baallii,' Jaarsoo Dhugoo who is going to rule for coming eight years from (2024 to 2032).

At the inauguration of 75th Gadaa power transfer ceremony of the Gujii Oromo, marking the handover of power from the Harmuufaa to Roobalee Gadaa classes have commenced in Me'ee Bokkoo, a ritual site found in Annaa Sorraa district of Gujii zone, Southern Oromia, Oromia president Shimelis Abdisa said that the Oromo Gadaa system is being properly recognized and strengthened by incorporating education into the education system. He also congratulated the elders who handed over their Balli and congratulates the Roobalee elders who took power. The state government is working to introduce the Oromo Gada into the education system to solve socio-economic problems, he said

The ceremony kicked off following Abbaa Gadaas from the three confederacies of the Gujii namely Uraagaa, Maattii and Hookkuu alongside their counsellors and members of their delegation arrived at Me'ee Bokkoo and settled in their temporary house called "Qachaa"

The Oromo have lived in this system for centuries, conducting their daily lives and carrying out their political and socio-economic affairs. This system has been targeted for destruction by numerous Ethiopian regimes, but although being weakened in different times it has remained intact thanks to its solid basis and foundation

The Gada system has its own structure and leadership members who implement the system. The so-called full Gada may include the Gada, Hayyuu, Yuuba, Waabura, Faga, Jaldhaaba and Torbii as its members. To become an Abba Gada, one must go through the stages of Gada from Qarreer, Dabballee, Kuusa, Raaba and Doorrii.

This system has been passed down from generation to generation without being lost, especially in Borana and Guji over the centuries.

According to Abba Gada Jilo, there is no cruelty and injury in this system, it is very democratic. The Gada system, which is known for giving high importance to women and children, especially allows children to practice the way of life through the stages of the system, he said.

He stated that since there were numerous requirements for being a candidate, a candidate's speech pattern had to be sound, compelling, and well-liked by the public. Furthermore, having a family is essential since it is believed that a person with a family and the ability to rule will also rule the nation. They considered his status, his ability to communicate, his politeness, the fact that he had never murdered someone or an animal, his ability to speak, and his acceptance by the public prompted them to appoint him as a judge in less than a week. He visits the rabbi and remains in the quiteplace after they appoint him as a judge. Next, he arrives at the dori, where he performs the circumcision and cuts the waddessa.

The expert claims that in Guji, a person nominated for Gada goes to the Gannalee or Golocha Fooqaa side for training, enduring all the difficulties of detail before emerging and taking the baallii as Gada. The Yuba spend this time training and teaching for a month. This month, he went without food or water for a week. There are also significant battles and illuminations in the training. This is due to the notion that a ruler ought to learn from mistakes in addition to enforcing the law.

Through this process, he learns how the Baallii manages the people and the planet; the training will enable him to bear hunger

and thirst rather than fleeing in despair.

The Abba Gada who gave the baallii is not allowed to retire, per the Gada System, as there are many levels of advancement within the Gada. After providing the Gada, one is promoted to Yuuba by serving in the order of Baatuu, Hayyuu guddaa, and Hayyuu Xiqqaa. In doing so, he brings his life to a close by working as a counsellor, guide, mediator, problem solver, etc. till he attains the status of guduru.

The Abbaa Gada has been famous in the ceremony for asking about the welfare of the people since he took the baallii, he said, adding that it is a provision of the Gada system to leave his home to serve his people. He explained that "it is impossible to travel from Bulee Hora Barguda to Me'ee Bokko where he gives the baallii."

When they reach the jila area, they get their body warm by fire and eat the offerings at sunset, tell the children about the Gada system and raise them with it.

"The migration of the Jila Arda is the place where the Jila Daraartuu Arda is located in Doola Reedde District, Guji Region. The procession is performed when the Abba Gada finishes his baallii and is about to give the baallii.

According to the expert, the conference will analyse the work done by the Abba Gadaa during the baallii ceremony; his work to solve the socio-economic problems of the people will also be examined. In Gada, if the Abba Gada commits a crime, the Hayyuu punishes him. Thus, a meeting would bde held at Odaa Adoola in the presence of the elders of Harmuufaa Gada, the elder and younger clans of Uraagaa, Maatti and Hookkuu as well as Gada intellectuals.

Overall, it is a great achievement that this exemplary democratic system has been preserved and protected and it is a great achievement that it has been registered as a UNESCO World Heritage .

Although it is good that this system is being given as a form of education to keep it beautiful and pass it on from generation to generation, our message is that everyone should take his/her responsibility so that the spread of technology and modern education does not affect the system.

Law & Politics

The dogs bark, but the caravan goes on

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

Although the quest for a sea outlet has been a national concern in Ethiopia for the last three decades, it has topped public agenda this year. And, despite its proximity to this defining region geographically and politically, Ethiopia has been a bystander in the volatile geopolitical Red Sea region.

The Red Sea has been at the eye of the storm in global geopolitics and is a focal point for many actors. Its significance in world commerce and military makes it one of the most-contested regions in the world. Many superpowers around the world put their boots on the region to defend their national interest. Again, nations along the sea have used the chance to lease their lands to those powers in order to gain some advantages.

Unfortunately, those nations that let their land for lease to world's superpowers showed little or no interest on doing the same for their neighboring state, Ethiopia. The Ethiopian government clearly stated its interest regarding accessing to the sea so that its 120 million people are set free. Ethiopian Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed (Ph.D.) stated that the nation is ready to substitute any of its flagship projects such as the Ethiopian Airlines or the Abbay Dam with access to the sea. This shows Ethiopia's intention of living in collaboration with any of its neighboring states that can permit the country to access the sea on its own.

Every nation and leader knows the advantage of having a sea access for a nation that is home for over 120 million people. Accordingly, Ethiopia is leaving no stone unturned to meet its big ambition. The nation called all the responsible stakeholders for a mutual and a win-win approach where both parties would be beneficiary from the deal. Still, Ethiopia is ready and opens itself up to sit around the table and discuss on any deal that suits both parts.

Responding to the call from Ethiopia, Somaliland showed a green light and entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that leads to accessing the sea.

Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic



of Ethiopia, and Muse Bihi Abdi, President of the Republic of Somaliland, signed Ethiopia's long waited Memorandum of understanding for sea access. The two sides sow the seeds of partnership and took the boat of mutual prosperity. Though this preliminary MoU brought so much joy to the people of Ethiopia and Somaliland, multiple nations and blocs, especially Somalia, Egypt, and the Arab League, showed their ill-intention towards the MoU. The aforementioned countries have showed their stands through their numerous statements.

However, the two sides who signed the MoU keep voicing that they have not violated any of the international rules. Some third parties have been meddling in the internal matters of other nations. Such action is strongly unacceptable by countries like Ethiopia.

Recently, Dr. Essa Kayd Mohamud, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Somaliland, who took part in the recently held AU Summit, held an exclusive interview with The Ethiopian Herald.

The minister has raised major issues regarding the MoU and other regional issues. He said, "Our bilateral investments and other agreements including within the context of the Ethio-Somaliland MoU are consistent with international laws and the conduct of business between

nation states."

The minister further voiced, "It is within this premise that we entered into the multi-million dollar investment project with the UAE's Dubai Ports World (DP World) for the expansion and modernization of the Berbera Port facilities and the Berbera Corridor connecting Ethiopia and Somaliland and to other landlocked countries in the greater Horn of Africa. Our ability to enter into the deal with Ethiopia is perfectly within legitimate and legal discourse," the minister stated on its presser.

While staying in Ethiopia to attend the AU Summit, As the minister, "The delegation have been able to explain very succinctly our perspective as Somaliland regarding the MoU we signed with Ethiopia and how it is not only lawful, legal, and legitimate under international law and statutes, but how transformative it is for Somaliland and Ethiopia but also for the region both in terms of the economy, trade, and security spheres."

Again, the minister expressed the stance of the Somaliland regarding the meddling of third parties who refused to accept the MoU. He said that Somaliland is not concerned about statements either from the Arab League or Egypt on the MoU.

"Egypt is the major player in the Arab League, but the MoU cannot be altered or interfered by third entities. It is not something we are paying

attention to," he added.

Speaking on the current status of the MoU, the minister stated that the MoU is an ongoing process, yet to be an agreement; adding "It is in the first phase that we agreed on something and will be followed by technical teams who will be working on changing the MoU to an agreement."

"As far as Somaliland is concerned, the MoU is beneficial beyond imagination and therefore we are on the course without any wavering. We remain seized and are on track in preparation for the implementation of the MoU."

"The President of Somaliland has already embarked on a number of, easures including the appointment of technical team, team of international legal experts, who will be looking at the rights and laws of the process, and a high level advisory group to advise and guide this process. It is going well and it will be for the great good of the two people," the minister noted.

There is a people-to-people integration between the two sides as they have a common border. The relation between the two people is not started after the MoU; rather, it is a co-existence that stands for long.

The Berbera Port and the Corridor that connects Ethiopia will be better for both sides in terms of promoting trade and the economy in general. The Foreign Minister finally called on the people of Ethiopia to back the bilateral cooperation.



Every Ethiopian needs to engage in the National Dialogue

- Azeb Alfred Shafi

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Azeb Alfred Shafi was born and raised here in Addis Ababa. She attended primary and secondary school education at Lycee Guebremariam and Nazareth Girls Schools. Wilson High, a school found in the United States, was her choice to complete 11th and 12th grade education.

She later preferred to join Harvard University, where many famous Africans went and graduated in political science and other field of studies. She then received a second degree in technological management from the American University of Maryland. While she arrived in the USA, there was a political movement aimed at bringing regime change in Ethiopia. Azeb was attracted by the then-political lobby group and joined it.

She later became one among many students who had been struggled against the regime of Emperor Haileselassie I. Though she had lived for over 38 years abroad, Azeb was not able to overlook her home country. Thus, she has been attentively coming across everything going on in Ethiopia and trying to contribute her part. Even now, she is blissful about the start of national dialogue in Ethiopia and trying to add her own input. She is now doing her best to encourage the active participation of the diaspora community in national development efforts.

The Ethiopian Press Agency recently made a short stay with her and discussed multiple issues, giving special emphasis to the national dialogue. Have a nice read!

Shall we begin our conversation on how you decided to travel and live in USA?

Just before I started grade 11 schooling, my brother Samson Alfred passed away following a car accident he came across. The accident occurred in the nearby area. As I have had a special place for my brother, the incident broke my heart. I was not able to condone.

My family was highly disturbed and worried about my spiritual wellness. They sent me to the USA, assuming that might help me overcome the depression I was in. When I departed from my homeland and arrived in the USA, it was high time for pan-Africanism sentiment. I also joined the then-political movement parallel to my education. After I received my first degree, I decided to start some sort of work. Though I had an interest in continuing education, I left it for the time being. I got married and became the mother of one. I have reared my child without quitting a job. Finally, I was able to join the university.

When my daughter grew up, I started a job at the University of Maryland, with the mission of getting scholarships both for me and my child. When my daughter joined the university, I also got the opportunity to do my second degree in technology management. And I had a plan to go back home after I finished my second degree. The primary reason that I came up with this plan was that, in the USA, you can get everything in the form of loan. And I planned to pay the entire loan within a year and came back home.

My friends did not expect that I would take such a decision. However, I prayed day and night to come back home. I prayed "My god, if you take me home, I will not be complaining about everything I look into" As per my plan, my daughter joined the university, and I was hired to access capital and come back home.

I want to convey a message to the youth not to repeat the blunder we made. War has not brought any good rather than death of many people

When you were in the US, how was your political participation in the issues related to Ethiopia?

When I was in school, students including me went to rural parts of Ethiopia during the summer school break and part of the program called Harambe Ethiopia. We visited Wollo, Tigray, Asmera, Gondar, and Gojjam.

We came across the lifestyle of the people residing in rural parts of Ethiopia. The visit highly influenced me. I was confused by what happened there. The famine was out breaking. I was especially touched by the scenario in Dessie. When I arrived in the US, members of the student movement welcomed me. I was ready for this sort of



activity. I joined the Ethiopian Union in North America (EUNA). During that time, I struggled for regime change. I joined the rallies holding placards promoting regime change.

During that time, we read communist books and discussed with friends interested in the matter. We were somehow emotionally driven youth at that moment. Many of my friends lost their lives due to their involvement in politics. First, we sensitively raised the idea of dropping out from school to contribute for the political struggle. I was judicious and exploring escaping mechanisms and I told them that my father warned me not to quit education. Most of my friends back home interrupted their school to join the struggle.

When my friends came home, the Haileselassie regime was thrown away. The territory of the country was under the supervision of the Derge regime. A number of youths with a brilliant mind were slaughtered. The Derge regime was not different from the Haileselassie. Looking at the death of my friends and the derailing of the struggle from its original objective made me reconsider my decision to engage in the politics. I hate politics as a whole. However, this never hindered me from reading books and inquiring.

I want to convey a message to the youth not to repeat the blunder we made. War has not brought any good rather than death of many people. I am living witness for the tragedy on my friends. If they were alive, they would have become doctors and engineers who serve their society. As they adore their country more than self, it is hard to imagine

how much they serve it. I am sure that they will come back home right away after completing their education abroad. They will not spend their whole lives abroad talking about politics.

The time was socialism; my teacher at Howard University was very intelligent. Especially the origin of my political science lecturers were third-world countries and other states where black people lived in large numbers. My political engagement helped me to be brave in education. My political participation has helped me in my research.

What inspired you to plunge deeper in to politics? Is the Harambe Ethiopia Tour alone or you had any other reason better than that?

My father was a man with progressive toughness. He was security director during the regime of Haileselassie. He also served as the governor of Dire Dawa town. He adored his country of origin and wants to transfer this sentiment to us. He repeatedly said do not expect from me any property or wealth. "When there is a regime change, our land will be taken. So you have to work out to be intellectual as it always stayed with you," he told me.

My mother also loves her country. She had a special place for Emperor Haileselassie. She said, "I will curse a man who is against the Emperor". Once she came to the US to rare my child and I had better understanding on her attitude. Both my mom and dad gave an advice for me to serve my home country.

During your decades of participation

continued to page 9

continued from page 8

Every Ethiopian needs...

in Ethiopia's political struggles and movements, what are the main problems that you have observed?

As we were raised under diverse circumstances, our desires also vary like our skin colors. When I was a young woman, I wished to see a revolution in Ethiopia. I now want to have a peaceful regime change. I have seen war as an option; it dragged us toward the back instead of pushing the country forward. So, as of now, we have to engage in various tasks that make our country champion in all fields.

During the reign of Emperor Haileselassie I, I had participated in a political movement to overthrow the regime without properly understanding the purpose. Now, I built a children's care center on the plot of land which I received from my family. While staying in the care center, children learn how to chant the national anthem of Ethiopia and hoist the flag. These small efforts will be further intensified. I think the best solution for this is working on patriotism.

Can we conclude that Ethiopia reached this stage due to the absence of nationalism sentiment?

That is the primary reason that forced me to open Kindergarten. It is good for the children to be educated about their country. However, the most difficult thing is trying to influence them when they become an adult. When children grow up, they evoke what they learned before. I for instance was thought about patriotism when I was a child. Patriotism is a sentiment that I have got from my parents.

The knowledge I have obtained in those days is still intact in my mind. I have cultivated and gained patriotism through different techniques. When I was young, I developed it through revolutionary democracy sentiment. I am getting older and have lost my friends. The change will come through peaceful means, as war cannot be a solution for any problem we faced. Ethiopian politicians who were assassinated both in the Haileselassie and Derg regimes may had a possibility of engaging in various sectors and uplifting the country in all sectors. We lost them as if assassinating people brought something valuable for the common good of all.

At some point we used to consider many intellectuals, such as Aklilu Habtewold, traitors. But when we knew them well and understood the sacrifices they paid for their country, we thoroughly have regretted by what we were doing. Even now we need to refrain ourselves from doing similar errors. Actually it would be a prejudice to consider oneself wise enough to advise others. It is so hard to give suggestion for someone who grew up under a difficult situation. When I lived in Ethiopia, I faced no difficulty. I promised to myself to do something good for my country and doing things accordingly.

However, I was not that courageous and physically strong to involve in any sort of battle fronts. Indeed, I am getting older and am not able to go to the warfront holding any sort of weapon. Therefore, I advise children not to engage in war while



they grow up. I will do my level best for children to have boundless patriotism. What I am doing right now is transferring the knowledge I received from my parents. When our children grow up, I expect them to analyze things critically and bring better things for their country.

How can parents inculcate the feeling of love of nation in the minds of their children?

My father was the Mayor (Administrator) of Dire Dawa city. They named a bridge in the town by his name called Alfrad Shafi and memorize him for the good deeds. My father went to Dire Dawa and has strived to make the city a better place for its residents just because he was a patriot. My parents had practically shown us the meaning of patriotism. My mother is also a patriot. Though there are ups and downs, the patriotism sentiment will definitely come back again.

My father was born in the Gurage zone of the Southern region. While he was in Dire Dawa, he enjoyed the unconditional love of the residents. I have learned much from the good deeds of my parents. I think patriotism is an intangible heritage that can be transferred to posterity. I have seven brothers and sisters in the US.

The situation here in Ethiopia is totally different from US. I was not comfortable in living in the US. The sense of patriotism is within my blood. My engagement in the student movement helped me to know my country well. Since then, I have had a dream of coming back home. 15 years have

elapsed since I came back home. This does not mean that everything here make me content. Ethiopia may not be conducive for a Diaspora residing in the US. However, wherever I go, I cannot feel excited except in Ethiopia.

What is your advice for the Ethiopian Diaspora?

It is hard to advise people to do this or that. However, all of them should evaluate themselves. Patriotism and supporting a country does not necessarily require physical presence. It is possible to support Ethiopia from where ever you are. My sisters and brothers surely have not forgotten their country. As I told you earlier, I am now educating children in my family house. This is unthinkable without the willingness of my sister and brothers. This by itself is a big support.

I have a lot of family in the US. They all want to come back home to live and work here. However, they are still waiting for a better Ethiopia to come. We are the ones who make Ethiopia better, and that is why I come here and work for my country. Now, there are various challenges that I have been facing. Indeed, there is a shortage of electricity, an absence of water, and other governance problems. With all the absence, there is no better place than a country of my origin.

How do you explain the ongoing process of the national dialogue, which has already begun?

Every Ethiopian needs to engage in national dialogue rather than resorting to gossip. We

have done many attempts, but not successful in any of them. Ethiopia deserves to be in a better place than it is today. We are not successful because the approach we chose was not perfect.

We must know that sometimes our own people, who are agents of outsiders, try to cut off the unity and territorial integrity of Ethiopians. In return, they earn an income. Citizens who are working by receiving the agenda of disintegration of Ethiopia hate the country as it is a source of wealth for them.

I consider that the problem in our country will be solved when we stop fighting and start listening to each other. We still exist with the help of the almighty. I am not a religious person. But considering the number of our enemies and the plots they have on us, there is a possibility for us falls apart. Hence, the national dialogue is very important step to move forward together as a country.

What do you want to convey in terms of the national dialogue?

Understanding that it is a tablet for our problems created by ourselves and rooted deep by the influence of foreign enemies, efforts should be made to involve the people at large. For years, they have been working to disintegrate us.

Those who have special interest over Africa have finished the natural resource we have had. They are now going to Mars to get additional resources. Exploiting Africa is a guarantee for their survival. In order to sustain this vision, they have been striving to break up Ethiopia for more than six decades. Unless we understood that they are always searching a point to squabble one another, we can never grow.

I hope, the national dialogue will help us to understand point of contentions. There are some people who may conspire against their country. The dialogue helps to identify them well. Now, everywhere in the world, we are observing the scrambling for resources. The developed countries badly need our wealth than ever.

You are participating in the national dialogue. How do you see the beginnings?

Once, Emperor Haileselassie I, said; "We know how to start up things, but our problem is finalizing it." The national dialogue is a good beginning. I am happy in that. However, we may be failing if our external enemies erode our unity. This is a threat. The other thing is that the willingness of the people to partake in the national dialogue. A thing sturdy in the startup point will further be strengthened while it goes forward but is not botched. We should work in the national dialogue to strengthen its base. This requires having strong motives. There is a big difference between a person who thinks the benefit he or she gets and someone who is ready to contribute for this noble cause. So, I always support and encourage any instrument that helps us to solve our setback peacefully.

I thank you for staying with me.

Thank you too.

Society

Children's books, far beyond narrating stories

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

This is an era where digital technology is enormously influencing the culture of reading among children and young people; and a time that it is taking up the place that books have had in old good times. As technological advancement takes the lead in our day-to-day activities and eases the previous laborious lifestyle, it has also threatened the valuable assets of humankind that they have accumulated for centuries. Reading books (hardcopy books) is one of the wisdoms that technology is eroding from humankind. This is especially true among children and young people who prefer these days to gazing at their tablets or cellphones to reading books. To cope up with these challenges and instill the culture of reading among children, some responsible parents, authors, individuals and NGOs are seen working aggressively to avert the situation.

Yoseph Ayalew is Ethiopian children's book author, winner of the Gourmand World Cookbook Award and Country Representative of the Open Hearts Big Dreams (OHBD). As to him, nurturing children with knowledge and moral values needs proper care and attention both from parents and teachers. In this regard, whenever parents and teachers discharge their responsibilities, books serve as a bridge between the two.

Ethiopia is a land where several cultural values are entertained, and immense historical heritages are found; and children should learn about their culture and history systematically while enjoying reading books. "Ethiopian children must be nurtured to know the cultural values of the society and the true meaning of their history. In this respect, books are the best options."

Children's book need proper care and it must be done with passion. Whenever authors and story writers are preparing children's books, their mind should be free from the financial gains they may earn out of it. If not, their intention will be generating money at the expense of the future generations and they will corrupt the minds of little children.

By their very nature, children get bored easily when we read long sentence stories or give them to read books that have no captivating elements/illustrations. For this very reason, writing and publishing children's books need engagements of experts.

Yoseph said that stories that are written in children's books need creativity. All stories cannot be converted into books. They must be seriously evaluated by the team of experts that have adequate knowledge in the area.

"Whenever children's books are prepared, taking into consideration those children



Books that are exclusively written to children have key roles in enabling Ethiopian children to understand local as well as global issues

with special needs and the cultural values of a given society is an issue that cannot be ignored. Colorful illustrations, captivating elements, short and descriptive sentences are some of the elements that need special consideration while producing children's books."

Regarding poor reading culture among Ethiopian children in most rural parts of the country, Yoseph said that there is still a challenge among children in reading

books as it should be. This may result from the absence of libraries and books prepared in their mother tongue. The problems associated with poorly written books, unappealing stories and low quality books are still the other challenges. In this regard, using its pilot projects, OHBD is trying to fill the gaps.

Yoseph further noted that the challenge to read is not only limited to students' circle. It is also a problem among some teachers in most rural parts of the country. Despite the fact that there are books and libraries in schools, there are teachers whose reading habit is too poor to encourage children. No wonder, children are the reflections of either their parents or their teachers. Those parents who give their time to read are more likely to nurture children who are fond of reading. Likewise, teachers who tend to read books will inspire their students to read more.

Regarding the challenges cellphones are causing on children's time and health, Yoseph said that parents and teachers are the one who should take the responsibility. Parents cannot force their children to read books while their eyes are fixed on social media. Normally, children prefer to repeat what elders are doing. They enjoy copying adults. For this reason, both parents and teachers should be role models.

Whenever the issue of children's books is raised, it needs the concerted efforts of every citizen; it should be the responsibility of the government, NGOs and other stakeholders. As Ethiopia is a land where several languages are spoken, preparing children's books need an active involvement of all these stakeholders to equip Ethiopian children with the desired knowledge, make them readers and responsible citizens. Books which are published in Ethiopia should not only be confined in Ethiopia. It should also be readable in other parts of the world. For this reason, we are working aggressively with OHBD to address the gap.

Seconding the view of Yoseph, Executive Director of OHBD Ellenore Angelidis said that Ethiopia is a land with diverse culture and various languages. Helping children to know their culture and identity is not an option; but a must. In this regard, books that are exclusively written to children have key roles in enabling Ethiopian children to understand local as well as global issues.

Ellenore said that OHBD is a non-profitable organization that works on children's books that are written in different languages in collaboration with several voluntary authors and illustrators in Ethiopia. These books are prepared to ignite the reading culture of children and uplift their literary skills.

Due to issues related to quality and price challenges, those children's books had been published in America. However, they have now started being published here in Ethiopia. So far not less than 88 children's books that are written in Amharic and English languages were published and 26 more books were published in Afan Oromo supplemented by English languages. There are also other books written in Agnuwak, Afar and other Ethiopian languages. These books are published targeting children who cannot afford to buy; but have a desire to read books.

When asked regarding the contents of children's books that are published by the Open Hearts Big Dreams, Ellenore said that children like books that are attractive, readable, and composed of simple and short sentences plus colorful illustrations. In this regard, scarcity of such kinds of books has inspired OHBD to take the initiative. "What is more, I have a daughter who was born in Ethiopia and when she was a young child, she learnt that many children in Ethiopia have no access to quality books or have no chance to read books with their mother tongue. This inspired me to work with Ethiopian authors, illustrators and others."

Verbatim and Caption

Ethiopia hosts the 37th AU ...



Ethiopia achieves successful diplomatic activities over the week: Amb. Meles

Ethiopia has carried out successful diplomatic activities that respect its national interests during the 37th African Union Summit.

In addition to successfully hosting the 37th heads of State and Governments Summit, successful diplomatic activities have been carried out on the basis of national interest of the country at the summit.

Parallel to the summit, sideline discussions were held with many African countries to further strengthen effective bilateral and multilateral relations with the countries.

Ambassador Meles Alem (PhD), Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia

AU should endorse Amharic as official language: Nigerian film writer

The African Union should add Amharic as its official language. Making Amharic one of the African Union's official languages is subject to leaders' commitment. I have a vision that the AU leaders would make Amharic an official AU language.

I will continue to advocate and campaign to make Amharic as one of the

AU official languages. To realize it, I am making partnerships with influential Ethiopians including Athlete Haile Gebreselasse and other figures to mobilize strong local support for the campaign. As a film writer, director, and producer, I am utilizing Amharic's subtitle for my films.

Rahmatou Keita, Campaigner, Nigerian philosopher, linguist, film writer and director



Verbatim and Caption

Ethiopia hosts the 37th AU ordinary session successfully

Ethiopia welcomed 8,000 African Union guests

Ethiopia has successfully hosted the 37th African Union ordinary session of the heads of States and Governments and the 44th Ordinary session of the AU Executive Committee last week. Ethiopia welcomed over 8,000 AU guests during the AU ordinary session with better hospitality.

Performing its regular task, Bole International Airport received 54 charter flights during the AU session. The whole process of the AU summit was successful on all fronts. The summit saw the participation of 31 heads of state and six vice presidents.

Ambassador Bertukan Ayano, State Minister at Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia



Ethiopia finalizes preparations to trade under AfCFTA

Ethiopia has set to exchange goods under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) following endorsement of country's tariff line. Leaders of the African Union member states have endorsed Ethiopia's tariff line for goods to be traded under the AfCFTA.

We have now the opportunity to join the nine countries which are implementing the AfCFTA. Tariff concessions have been made on commodities on aggregate. During the summit, our goods tariff offer was endorsed by the ministers of trade of African governments to trade under AfCFTA and this is a great success.

Ambassador Mesganu Arega, State Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia

Adwa museum African pride, glory: Chad Prime Minister

Adwa Victory Memorial is a living African pride, independence and glory. I visited the Adwa Victory Memorial; the grand memorial is an asset for all Africans.

As an African I really feel honored and proud to come here and see that there is this Africa that we don't talk a lot of. I think this is a time for all Africans to remember that here in Ethiopia, here in Africa some from day one were free in their mindset, in their battle and they remain free.

Succès Masra, Prime Minister of Chad

