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Brotherly cooperation turns Africa into peaceful, prosperous place

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – Revitalizing cooperation and nurturing a brotherly partnership among member states are the prerequisites to a peaceful and prosperous Africa, a noted historian said.

History Lecturer and Researcher Awegachew Amare (PhD) told FBC that African people must cooperate and boost brotherhood to ensure continental peace and prosperity across the continent.

Realizing a prosperous Africa requires strong cooperation among countries, designing several agendas, implementing AU set goals, enabling the continent to have its own political and economic strategy and others, the historian elaborated.

According to him, the task further requires strengthening brotherhood and encouraged development values. “The Pan-Africanism worldwide movement served as a platform to strengthen African people coming together. Pan-Africans is also contributed to achieve a common goal, the unity of Africans and the elimination of colonialism and white supremacy.

Awegachew further highlighted that

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Ambassador Nebil Mahdi

Ethiopia good at putting in place regional infrastructure

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopia has kept promises with South Sudan through implementing cross-border projects that facilitate economic integration

See Ethiopia good ... Page 3



Photo: Hadush Abreha

Agricola Medal attests Ethiopia's attempt for nutritional improvement: MoH

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – FAO's Agricola Medal that has been awarded to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) manifested Ethiopia's

See Agricola Medal ... Page 3

House green lights SoE extension

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA - The House of People's Representatives (HoPR) has endorsed extension of the State of Emergency (SoE) by another four months.

The house approved the motion to extend the SoE for a further four months by a majority vote with two votes against and three abstentions.

On the occasion, Justice Minister Gedion Timotheos (PhD) told the members of the parliament that the SoE has spared Amhara State from distraction.

Noting that the state's security structure has been reorganized well and put it to operation, he said adding that peace and stability had significantly improved.

Moreover, he added that stability in the state has been restored following the efforts carried out in collaboration with the people.

However, the minister stressed the need to extend the SoE with a view to further



solidifying the existing peace in the state with a level that could never be reversed.

By the same token, the house has also extended the SoE Inquiry Board's mandate.

News



Amb. Bacha Debele

Ethiopia's arch-enemy sole Ethiopia-Somalia deal opponents : Amb. Bacha

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA – Only those who envy Ethiopia's growth oppose the recent seaport access deal with Somaliland, said Ethiopian Ambassador to Kenya.

Ethiopian Ambassador to Kenya Bacha Debele said that those parties who accuse Ethiopia of being reckless on peace and the sovereignty of others just for signing seaport deal with Somaliland, have no understanding about the longstanding diplomatic position of Ethiopia.

He told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the country has been working to ensure peace in the region as well as the continent while respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other nations.

The accusers must understand that the Ethiopian government didn't violate Somalia's sovereignty or border, he noted, saying that it rather doesn't want to see a disintegrated Somalia.

The disruptors of the deal must be aware of the fact that Somaliland has signed the same agreement with many nations, he stressed.

It should not be a sin when Ethiopia signs a development agreement as many have been applying it for years, according to Bacha.

However, it requires diplomatic efforts to convince this fact to the world, he said, adding that Ethiopian ambassadors and other diplomats have to spare no effort to aware the international community on the matter.

Ethiopia has been working for every nation's sovereignty and territorial integrity while sacrificing its troops for the peace of the world, he reiterated.

"We should be aware of the fact that Ethiopia's government has never been violated any sovereign state's border," Amb. Bacha said.

He underlined that Ethiopia has been playing a leading role in peacekeeping missions in the continent mainly in the neighboring nation of Somalia in the fight against terrorist organization.

Ethiopia has been protecting the government of Somalia encountering the terrorist al-Shabab militant group, he said.

Therefore, Ethiopia is known for peacekeeping role not for violating other's sovereignty as we heard these days form some entities following the port access agreement, according to the Ambassador.

Pretoria Peace deal most importantly requires practical response: GCS

ADDIS ABABA (FBC) – In a statement the Government Communication Service (GCS) announced that the federal government has attentively looked into the TPLF's statement that demands that the Pretoria Agreement is respected.

In the statement, the GCS stressed that the federal government firmly believes that the full implementation of the Pretoria Peace Agreement is main solution to address the problem occurred in the Northern Ethiopia in a sustainable manner.

Beyond the Pretoria Peace Agreement, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has and has been taking practical measures to address the issue, the statement says.

The Government has shown its commitment for peace, political solution and cooperation ahead of the Pretoria Agreement, the Statement underscores.

The decision for the National Defense Forces not to enter Mekelle City was made to give peace a chance, statement disclosed.

It is the federal government which sent, the federal government sent a high delegation led by the Speaker of the House of Peoples Representatives to Tigray State immediately after the Pretoria Peace Agreement, the GCS stated.

Putting aside the role of the federal government as per the Pretoria Agreement, the government has allowed the formation of the Interim Administration of Tigray comprising the TPLF and armed forces in the state. It was aimed to save time till the leaders included in the interim administration introduce one another. And this shows how the federal government is committed to peace for the people of Tigray, the statement indicates.

To supply basic public services to the people in Tigray, the federal government sent leaders of the banking, telecom, road transport, health, education and relief operation sectors to Tigray for discussions with the regional officials on the restoration of services in the region just two weeks after the Pretoria Peace Agreement was signed.

A range of activities have been carried out to restore the learning teaching process in the Tigray state. Human resource development, capacity building and restructuring of the leadership of universities in the region have also been undertaken, the statement says.

Appropriating the budget for the leaders, the federal government has managed to restore basic services in the region, according to the statement.

Through the Education Quality Improvement Program, a budget of 165.8 million Birr has been included in the plan and appropriated for the reopening of the State Education Bureau. For the implementation of the plan of first and second quarters of the fiscal year, the federal government has dispatched a budget of 517.9 million Birr via the Ministry of Finance.

In partnership with governmental and non-governmental organizations engaged in the education sector, the federal government

has provided support of 1.46 billion Birr to the Tigray state, and appropriated a budget of 111.08 million Birr for implementation of educational activities to be carried out during the 2023/2024 academic year in the region, the Government Communication Service explained.

The federal government has also provided the Tigray government with support of 441.5 million Birr for restoration of educational facilities in the region. In addition, the Oromia State and the Addis Ababa City Administration have extended support of 5 million and 109 million Birr respectively for the restoration process.

The federal government also extended equipment and materials needed for the rejuvenation of the mining sector in the region. And exhibition showing investment opportunities in the region has also been organized at the Millennium Hall in Addis Ababa at federal government's expense.

Apart from the measures taken by the Ministry of Finance to strengthen its branch offices in the region, the government has appropriated a total of 16.7 billion Birr budget to the region for the 2023/2024 fiscal year. A total of 5.1 billion Birr has been appropriated for universities in the Tigray region, according to the statement.

Through development partners, it has been managed to provide 1.7 Birr for the Tigray state in assistance, the statement added.

In addition, following the Pretoria Peace Agreement, 1.7 billion Birr has been disbursed through Channel 1 and 565 million Birr through the office established under Ministry of Finance for rehabilitation and climate change activities.

The Ethiopian Roads Administration has also sent a total of more than 418.6 million Birr for salary and administrative works.

Moreover, 164 various professionals have been deployed to the region to strengthen the capacity of the health sector.

Besides ambulances, drugs and medical supplies worth 2 billion Birr have been dispatched to the state. During the 2022/2023 budget year, in partnership with partners,

the government has extended 600.2 million Birr for the health sector in the Tigray state.

As part of the efforts to reopen industries in the region, 217 factories in the region have been enabled to resume production.

As per the activities carried out to strengthen the agriculture sector in Tigray, 51.3 million birr has been disbursed for purchase of crop seeds, the statement disclosed. During the year 2022/2023, 13.4 million quintal of fertilizer has been distributed to farmers in the region, the statement indicates.

In general, the federal government has appropriated a total of 37 billion Birr budget to the Tigray region for the aforementioned activities and other works, the Government Communication Service says, stressing the need to utilize the budget for intended goals.

To rehabilitate IDPs, the federal government has embarked on activities together with concerned stakeholders, the statement says. In some places, actual IDPs have been reinstated to their homes.

According the Pretoria Peace Agreement, combatants who were fighting alongside the TPLF have to be returned to peaceful lives, the statement stressed, highlighting the significance of the Federal Rehabilitation Commission to this end.

Regarding some crimes committed during the conflict, the federal government has taken the necessary measures on its side, and held those responsible accountable. To carry out other activities, the federal government has finalized preparation of a transitional justice policy draft document, the Government Communication Service said, calling the Tigray region to contribute its part like other regions for the realization of the transitional justice.

The Government Communication Service reaffirmed commitment of the federal government to fully implement the Pretoria Peace Agreement for the sake of peace, development, and security for citizens in Tigray state and the entire nation as a whole, calling all stakeholders to provide their full support for the implementation of the agreement.



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FDRE Government Communication Service

News

Ethiopia to conduct fourth Nat'l population, housing census in 2025

• Launches statistical development program (SDP)

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- The Ministry of Planning and Development announced that the fourth national population and housing census is to be conducted in 2025.

The Ministry of Planning and Development and Ethiopian Statistical Service officially launched the Ethiopian Statistical Development Program (ESDP) yesterday. The program will be held for 2023/23-2025/26.

Speaking to journalists during the launching program, Planning and Development Minister Fitsum Assefa (PhD) stated that the fourth national population and housing census is to be held in 2025.

Population and housing census is the census that the government wants to do with great commitment. However, international standards must be met. One of the conditions that must be met for the population and house census to be conducted successfully and the information obtained from the census to be reliable.

The house and population census that was to be held earlier was postponed due to the instability in the country. This is because it may disrupt the census and the information obtained from the census may not be reliable, she elaborated.

“What we are noticing in the current situation is that the conflict in the northern part of the country was ended by the Pretoria Agreement and the improvements of the security issue in the Amhara State shows the conditions that will enable us to conduct a population and house census in 2025.”



The minister added, “However, in the future, we will identify the security situation in each area and census the population and houses with the support of new technology, for example, not only going from house to house to conduct the census, but when we face a lack of peace, the ministry and Ethiopian Statistical Service are discussing with development partners to use technology that will help to overcome the problem and conduct the census.”

Population and housing census data is technical. The information obtained from the census should be reliable and quality as a starting point for a country's development plan, investment and people-oriented work, Fistum emphasized.

In the current year, the demographic and health survey, the census of business institutions has been started and the agricultural census will be done in the next year in every area, every type of product and season.

Meanwhile, the Ethiopian Statistical Service

officially launched the Ethiopian Statistical Development program (ESDP) yesterday.

Ethiopian Statistical Service Director Beker Shale (PhD) said at the occasion that the launching ceremony that ESDP underlines modernizing statistical legal and institutional frameworks, strengthening the system of national and regional accounts and government finance and balance of payment statistics and other strategic activities.

The total project cost of ESDP will be about 34.83 billion Birr or 622 million USD. The government will contribute 50 percent, 40 percent from donors and partners through grand and grand concessional loans and 10 percent from innovative financing sources from non-state actors, Beker added

As to the Director, the expected output and policy outcome of ESPDO of the program by 2025 will be rebased national GDP and official dissemination of regional GDP, improved Ethiopia's consumer price index, fourth national population and housing census is to be held and others.

Agricola Medal ...

endeavor for nutritional improvement, Ministry of Health (MoH) said.

Health State Minister Dereje Duguma (MD) told The Ethiopian Herald that the acknowledgment showcased country's strong measures to achieve nutritional adequacy so as to create healthy and productive citizens.

As to him, the recognition comes on the heels of the implementation of drastic reform measures by the incumbent to ensure food self-sufficiency through various initiatives such as irrigated wheat production, Yelemat Trufat, Green Legacy and so forth.

However, the State Minister disclosed that the result is not plenteous compared to the untapped potentials of the nation.

He further stated that MoH has been undertaking various activities to reduce malnutrition, climate change, and the likes in collaboration with various stakeholders.

For instance, Dereje said, the ministry is undertaking more than 600 detailed activities to realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs-2030).

Besides, the ministry has been applying Food and Nutrition System Evaluation Strategy in order to improve the diversification of the matter, he added.

“Seven years ago, the Seqota Declaration was launched in 40 districts in Amhara and Tigray states aimed at combating stunting there. Currently, the Seqota Declaration scope expanded to 240 districts to address nutritional constraints. This activity has been playing significant role in saving maternal, infant death and protect youth from malnutrition, who are the most vulnerable citizens,” Dereje reiterated.

He also noted that FAO has been supporting Ethiopia's agricultural activities through various mechanisms as it promotes food self-sufficiency, increase cooperation, and maximize agricultural mechanization.

Brotherly cooperation ...

building prosperity in Africa needs cooperation and collaboration of member countries in in all fields.“ Achieving the 20263 Agenda goal also needs Pan-Africanist leaders too.”

Such synergy further encouraged and strengthened bonds of solidarity between indigenous people and African Diaspora. The Pan-Africanism movement brought a golden time for the unity and prosperity of African people. It encompassed a variety of historical, political, and cultural movements seeking to create connections among diverse societies in the continent and beyond, he added.

Since it was needed to take the idea into institution level, some 32 independent countries realized the establishment of the Organization for African Unity (OAU) meeting in Addis Ababa. The movement contributed to establish their own institution to coordinate, lead and aware African issues.

The leadership of the Pan-Africanism movement was transformative. The leaders successfully realized the initiative to organize, strengthen cultural and others bonds among Africans, coordinate, lead and aware African people. The OAU also contributed much to facilitate and coordinate continental issues and others, the scholar remarked.

Ethiopia good at putting in place ...

between the two, said Ethiopian Ambassador to South Sudan.

In an exclusive interview with Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Ambassador Nebil Mahdi said that Ethiopia has completed road projects and is facilitating other mutual benefiting infrastructural developments as per the agreement of the two countries.

He, however, said that road constructions on the South Sudan's side have been delayed, thus, they should play their part to link the cross-border infrastructure. Expediting the infrastructure is essential to South Sudan to have alternative export outlet via Ethiopia and solve the foreign trade challenges it has faced due to the conflict in Sudan, he highlighted.

“We need no more international funds to make economic integration. The financial agreement which was signed in 2015 is also a showcase of economic integration opportunities. South Sudan has abundant natural gas that could benefit Ethiopia and Ethiopia has renewable energy sources which could benefit South Sudan in return,” he stated.

He also indicated that the African Development Bank is conducting a research to help the integration between Ethiopia with South Sudan with electric energy which the Ethiopian government is keen to do so.

According to him, the research is progressing well and the implementation of the project would be launched as soon as

possible.

He further stated the two countries have trusted cooperation on peace.

Ethiopia has been supporting South Sudan since its struggle for independence, the Ambassador said, adding that the Ethiopian peacekeeping force has been honored by the South Sudanese.

Moreover, the diplomatic mission is also dedicated to support South Sudan for the implementation of the peace agreement, he noted.

“We are supporting the peace agreement and peacekeeping mission and will be continued until South Sudan regains a complete peace. We will also support their upcoming national election too,” he added.

Editorial

Gov't's efforts must be supported for Pretoria Agreement fruition

Discharging all responsibilities and duties expected of it in tune with the very essences of the peace agreement reached in Ethiopia, commonly called the Pretoria Agreement, the Ethiopian has urged all stakeholders and development partners to make the agreement further successful and to be completed as per the notion the agreement has stipulated.

The government of Ethiopia has strongly believed that the viable means to make sustainable solution to the problem created in northern Ethiopia is practically and fully translated the words incorporated in the agreement into practical actions. For such a sacred move, the government has portrayed a consistent stance and firm determination. In simple terms, the government has been discharging its duties in all aspects.

The necessary assistances, transportation services, humanitarian aids have been flown in the right channel in the states in need of assistance and support as a result of the northern conflict. The Pretoria Agreement is a peace treaty concluded and has attracted permanent cessation of conflict, and it has been bearing fruits as humanitarian assistance and other safe services have been well underway.

A number of citizens found especially in Tigray and Amhara in dire need have also been supported accordingly. Besides, the Ethiopian government has been working for the effective implementation and proper completion.

As of the peace agreement and proceedings following it, for instance, the government has spent over 37 billion Birr supporting the Tigray State. The State is expected to make a difference via properly using the assistance pumped to it, of course.

A range of social, economic and political activities have also been undertaken to help the Tigray State come to full-fledged normalcy.

Since Chaos and instability in the country is negatively impacting all its stability and citizens' well being, the government along with development partners is arduously working to further fuel the effort geared towards ensuring peace and security across the nation. Taking proper application of 'African solutions to African problems,' into account, Ethiopia is seriously capitalizing on activities to guarantee peace and security as it is when peace prevails all the humanitarian supports and other social, economic and even political undertakings can be run as properly and smoothly as possible.

Although the government has contributed a lion's share in due course of meaningfully implementing the peace agreement, a lot remains to be done. This gap can be bridged following coordination and courageous move, the issue should not be left only to the government and some parties working on the area; instead it requires the combined effort of all.

In sum, the beginning of a new dawn for Ethiopia has to be declared through ensuring peace serenity, stability and overall change. The effort of the government along this line in all circumstances is a case in point. What is left is the amalgamation of efforts that confidently back the relentless endeavor of the Ethiopian government. True, essential services, humanitarian assistance and labors to address problems emanated from food shortages and lack of access to basic utilities are wide rife in Tigray state. Besides, the Ethiopian government has committed to allowing unhindered access to aid, with the help of humanitarian agencies, to address, if possible quench, myriads of needs and thirsts, peculiarly centering women, children, and the elderly. The government is also committed to facilitating the return of displaced citizens to their previous residents in due time. As the government is actively discharging what is expected of it, others are expected to play their part since it is high time for the country to be able to make a difference in all aspects.



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Opinion

Ethiopia's commitment to regional stability, cooperation

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

It is known that the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland lays bare advancement for Ethiopia's time honored measures that aim to ameliorate economic regional integration and bring about collective benefits as soon as possible. On top of that, it is advantageous to give attention to the fact that the agreement does not constitute a hazard to any country in the horn of Africa.

Needless to say the country is passionate about accomplishing the goals put forward in the MoU through both bilateral and multilateral discussions. More to the point, it is conducive to give attention to the fact that the agreement does not constitute a hazard to any country in the horn of Africa.

It is quite clear that Ethiopia's aspiration is for peaceful collaboration and sustainable development alongside the neighboring nations.

In point of fact, the nearby nations possess enormous opportunities with the intention of securing notable advantages by capitalizing on Ethiopia's various clusters starting from source of power to the delivery of transport and logistics connectivity. This diverse assortment of areas provides a foundation for regional economic integration setting the stage for harmony and broader prosperity among nations.

It is important to mention that Ethiopia's underlying principle pay heed to protect the peace and security of the horn of Africa. With the purpose of safeguarding this norm, the country not only reveals its firm stance through simple words but also strengthens it with practical measures. This reality on the ground unambiguously places the emphasis on the country's steadfast determination to safeguard the well-being of the whole region. In fact, it is vital to disprove any mistaken belief or qualms that may arise. Besides, come hell or high water, Ethiopia has no inclination for knocking off the balance of any country or impinging on the privileges of others.

In actual fact, the country's ambition exists within nurturing steadiness, collaboration, and shared respect for the rights and interests of all nations. The devotedness of non-intervention and the protection of independence are deeply entrenched in Ethiopia's standpoint. Against this backdrop, the country aspires to enhance collaboration, promote peace, and ensure harmonious coexistence with its neighbors at the earliest possible moment.

In a similar vein, Ethiopia is firmly convinced that the region's growth can only be accomplished through a collective commitment to inclusivity, reverence, and sustainable development. Notwithstanding the fact that there could be primary concerns from few nations, this writer is absolutely convinced that after the smoke settles, all concerned stakeholders will understand its genuine desire to grow alongside the region through actual integration and collaboration.

Above and beyond, the agreement inked by Ethiopia and Somaliland marks a noteworthy landmark in the country's steadfast dedication towards nurturing regional economic integration and collaboration. It also brings to light huge numbers of opportunities and potential advantageous that will unquestionably have all-encompassing impact on the member states.

By strengthening their economic cooperation, Ethiopia and Somaliland showcase their joint determination to foster a peaceful and stable environment in the region. This partnership is important, principally considering the common concerns. Honestly speaking, making use of their joint efforts, they can address common threats and promote regional peace and security. This collaboration will unquestionably enhance trade, investment and all around development in Somaliland, thus encouraging economic growth and brings to light additional opportunities for Ethiopia and Somaliland.

By providing a guideline for partnership, the agreement stimulates expanded business and investments between Ethiopia and Somaliland. It also brings to light new market outlets for commodities and services making possible knowledge transfer, and encouraging closely held cooperation causing to happen diversification's of economies.

This corporation underlines the benefits of multilateralism and economic integration as core elements of sustainable economic growth. By combining efforts, Ethiopia and Somaliland reveal their belief in the clutches of collective effort and the need to work together to tackle common challenges and shared aspirations. This partnership establishes an assessment on other nations in the region heartening them to see the sights similar boulevards of cooperation and guaranteeing the region's shared prosperity.

The country's considerable investment in diverse infrastructure projects has not only promoted its neighboring countries but has also had a positive result on the entire region. These remarkable investments are now succumbing considerable achievements and paving the way for the realization of the goals set forth in Agenda 2063 with a specific emphasis on achieving economic integration.

Ethiopia in a proactive manner has collaborated with its bordering countries in setting up vital infrastructure linkages and the provision of vital utilities. The development of well-built transportation networks has laid the foundation for transportation efficiency assisting the progress of smoother trade flows and enabling regional cooperation.

These infrastructure projects are vital in giving center stage to interregional trade and augmenting economic ties among neighboring nations. Apart from holding tremendous potential for regional economic integration, prosperity, stability, and sustainable development, the agreement plays a huge role in leveraging their shared interests and resources.

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

Opinion

Conflict and debt sustainability

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Ethiopia has been confronted with severe challenges related to internal clashes and divergence in the recent past. It has also been challenged by economic crises such as debt sustainability, foreign trade imbalances. It is also noted that the inflow of investment has been on the decline. All these external challenges have their impacts on the domestic front. They contribute to low employment opportunities and income for the people.

These negative economic and political impacts have all been instigated by alien forces that refuse to see the socio-economic development of Ethiopia. They recruit power mongers that help in the destabilization of the country using ethnic, religious, economic and other vulnerabilities of the country. Foreign involvement in the internal affairs of the country is not a novel or unique to the history of the country. Both colonialists and neocolonialists have been intriguing and designing the decline and fall of the Ethiopian state. One of the reasons for that is the country has been an independent country that had become a shining star for Africans that had been suffering under imperialism. For the imperialists that star must disappear as a menace, threat and danger.

One strategy of diminishing the role of Ethiopia as a bright star in the continent is to create and multiply the number of liberation fronts. These fronts either aspire for independence or for power within the country. Only one front succeeded in establishing the independence of its region. Others postponed the time of liberation just to stay in power within Ethiopia. These fronts fought with the Ethiopian government in their region or in neighboring regions.

The war and skirmishes conducted within the country caused severe humanitarian crises. These fights or skirmishes have led to social disaster, calamity and adversity causing displacement people from their place of origin. They were forced to move into the unknown or dislocated from their residence. They have been subjected to food insecurity, starvation and hazards. All these crises have been accompanied by human rights abuses. These maltreatments of innocent people have been instigated by war mongers and the so-called freedom fighters. Consequently, there are concerns about the severe impacts on civilians, including access to essential services such as shelter, water, health and education.

International response to the Ethiopian people who are suffering from the impacts of fights, skirmishes and social crises has been too little to late. The international community, including the United Nations, has expressed concerns, but with little material support to the war affected people. Of course, they have reported that access to the battle affected zones has been difficult. But, the UN called for a peaceful resolution where access is difficult, making the real humanitarian support a futile one. It also suggested for humanitarian access in war

trodden areas. It also advised for dialogue between contending parties. But, all these do not substitute food, medicine and other necessities of people trapped in the battle zones. Of course, it takes two sides to conduct battles on issues that do not require fighting, but dialogue. The question is who is weighing and judging the issues that could be settled without fight. Ethiopia is endowed with cultured elders who settle disputes that may lead to confrontations. The question is who would resort to these traditional means of keeping peace at all levels in the country.

Another challenge Ethiopia faces is related to its debt levels. It is not, however, the only country confronted with such challenge. Many developing countries are bound to look for external funds to finance their planned programs and projects. It is assumed that these developmental efforts create output, employment and income for the Ethiopian people. The country has borrowed for infrastructure projects, including roads and dams. It has also financed other development initiatives that contribute to growth and development.

However, these efforts have not been without challenges, including debt servicing. Interests have to be paid on borrowed money that is assumed to have been used for implementing projects based on the development goal of the country. Economists have expressed their concerns about the ability of the country to service its debt. This is particularly worrying in the context of the economic challenges posed by pandemics and other factors.

Ethiopia has engaged with international financial institutions that provided it with assistance to support its economic reforms. However, such assistance has been based on discussions and agreements with these institutions. Moreover, debt relief initiatives have been on the agenda at the global level. The global community has been discussing debt relief initiatives to help countries, particularly low-income ones, including Ethiopia. The purpose of the discussion has been to enable these countries manage their debt burdens. Nevertheless, managing the burden seems different from reducing it. Managing debt burden requires economic policy based on structural reform. Supply side structural reform is deregulation, the release of vitality and let the market mechanism play a decisive role. This helps to reduce the system of transaction cost, improve the quality and efficiency the supply system, and improve the effectiveness of the investment. Ethiopia has been implementing economic reforms with the goal of addressing macroeconomic imbalances. Macroeconomic issues involve all sectors of the economy to enhance fiscal sustainability.

These issues may be addressed with reforms aimed at improving transparency, governance, and debt management. The management of debt is literally impossible without openness in financial transactions at all levels. Debt management calls for good governance, authority and control.

etc. for different sectors of the economy.

Currently, Ethiopia is in war-economy, which disables the operations. It entails economic challenges that require great political and economic skills to surmount it. One of the challenges originates from external pressures. The country faces foreign exchange shortages which hampers the import of basic necessities and productive inputs for different enterprises. Another challenge is inflation which is caused by shortage of goods and services in the domestic market. The effect of all the above mentioned challenges is reflected in periodic trade imbalances. The economic challenges, therefore, contribute to the difficulty of running debt sustainability in Ethiopia. These challenges are interrelated to other problems of economic management. The challenges of war, skirmishes and social conflicts in the country have intensified the problem of debt sustainability. These conflicts disrupt economic activities in the different parts of the country. They intensify the risks to development undertakings. These challenges may negatively affect the intent of the government to solve the post-conflict issues.

The humanitarian implications of conflicts are unfathomable as researchers find it difficult to reach all the people affected. The humanitarian consequences of conflicts, including death, disability, displacement and food insecurity are all interlinked. They are interlaced and interwoven with broader development challenges. Efforts, attempts and endeavors to address these critical issues of humanitarian impacts of war and social conflict required a comprehensive approach. It is futile to use piecemeal approach for the assessment of results.

The assessment of impacts of war and dislocation of people considers immediate relief as well as long-term development in the country. Generally speaking, Ethiopia faces a complex set of challenges. Moreover, these challenges are interconnected and related to internal conflicts. As a result, they exacerbate humanitarian crises leading to death, starvation and displacement.

Added to these issues are the problems of debt sustainability. Addressing all these complex challenges demands coordinated efforts and measure at national and global levels. This calls for a focus on conflict resolution as soon as it begins to escalate. Reliable plan of action should be designed and implemented for facilitating humanitarian assistance. This act should be preceded by economic reforms and sustainable development strategy. The effectiveness of current developments strategies to address the challenges of war and sustainability of debt should be monitored and evaluated through reliable sources and data and analyses.

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The challenges of war, skirmishes and social conflicts in the country have intensified the problem of debt sustainability. These conflicts disrupt economic activities in the different parts of the country. They intensify the risks to development undertakings. These challenges may negatively affect the intent of the government to solve the post-conflict issues

There should be no leakage in the flow of finance from its sources to the implementing sectors and agencies. Debt provided to these agencies and enterprises has to be traced and reported on a periodic basis before it is too late to prevent wastage and abuse of borrowed money. The reason behind such endeavor is to ensure that debt is used for its intended purpose only.

The goal of economic development is achieved if and only if all enterprises in all sectors are generating planned output, employment and income. The output may be used for export to earn foreign exchange with which external debt is settled. It has to be underlined that those enterprises producing for export are also using inputs imported from abroad. These inputs may be machineries, fuel, spare-parts, fertilizers,

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

Law & Politics

Ethiopia's unwavering principle:

Cooperation for peace, prosperity

BY SOLOMON WASSIHUN

History witnesses Ethiopia's policy toward its neighbors has always been based on fostering sustainable peace, good neighborliness, and cooperation for mutual benefits. One fact that proves this statement is that Ethiopia has never invaded or carried out unprovoked military action against its neighbors.

A look back at recent history records proves the two wars between Somalia and Ethiopia that broke out in 1964 and 1977 were started by the then Somalia's despots disillusioned by expansionist military adventurism. Likewise, the bloody Ethio-Eritrean war in 1998 was started by the Eritreans' violation of Ethiopian sovereignty by invading Ethiopian territories in a resentful response to Ethiopia's corrective action against the inequitable economic relations grossly biased towards Eritrea.

The incumbent Ethiopian government is committed to peaceful coexistence with its neighbors and the realization of the visions and missions of the IGAD and AU, thus making unreserved efforts towards economic integration, the bolstering of people-to-people relations as well as ensuring sustainable peace and security in the Horn.

It is with such spirit of good neighborliness and pan-Africanism that the Ethiopian government is handling the diplomatic row brewed by the Somali government following the signing of the MoU between Ethiopia and the Somaliland governments last month. Peaceful engagement and unconditional dialogue among the leaders of the Horn is the way forward that best serves the interests of the people of Somalia and Ethiopia.

In a recent speech, the Ethiopian Premier said, "Somalia, more than anybody else, is a relative, a brother and a neighbor to Ethiopia.-More than anyone else! Over the last decade, thousands of Ethiopians have paid the ultimate price defending the peace and security of Somalia.-Thousands of them! No country has paid the sacrifice for peace in Somalia to the extent comparable to Ethiopia. Ethiopia has never had and never will have intentions to war with Somalia."

Since Ethiopia and Somalia are close neighbors intertwined in so many socio-economic spheres, it is a foregone conclusion that they share a common destiny. That explains why Ethiopia has been the primary peace partner of the Somali governments in the fight against lawless extremists since it was plunged into civil war following the demise of the Siad Barre regime.

For over two decades, the Ethiopians have been fighting unilaterally as well

multilaterally as a peacekeeping force with such terrorist forces in Somalia like the Islamic court and, al Shabaab and other terror groups that are linked with sponsored by global terrorist groups like al Qaida and ISIS. The effective military action of Ethiopians has crippled the potential of the terrorist groups in Somalia to proliferate and create havoc in the entire Horn region.

Yet there are thousands of Ethiopians in uniform, both outside and within the AU peacekeeping mission ATMIS, who are actively working for peace, security and respect for the rule of law so that the Somali people and the Somali government can find some semblance of stability and normalcy.

A recent study done on Ethiopian defense diplomacy asserts that Ethiopia's biggest and ongoing peacekeeping involvement in Somalia has been crucial in the pursuit of peace, stability, and regional security in general, and paves the way for a prosperous, secure, and self-reliant Somalia, in particular. The paper further noted Ethiopia has exemplified its commitment to collective security efforts and its determination to address common challenges faced by countries in the region.

In light of all these facts, it is indeed sad to see the Somali president and some of his colleagues waging a smear campaign against Ethiopia, which is siding with Egypt instead of giving it due credit for its contribution to peace building in Somalia.

A veteran Ethiopian diplomat said recently "Ethiopia has made unrivaled contribution to the international effort for peacemaking in Somalia, sacrificing the blood and sweat of thousands of her son and daughters in defense of the freedom of Somalia against lawlessness and destruction. Now, tell me. Which Arab League state contributed a peacekeeping force to Somalia, and helped that country in the struggle to restore peace and security? None! The Arab League is acting like a puppet of Egypt. Egypt's naked interference in the agreement between Somaliland and Ethiopia is no surprise. It just shows the continuation of the implementation of a longstanding malign foreign policy of Egypt to block Ethiopia's each and every ways to peace and prosperity."

An Ethiopian diplomatic analyst backs the abovementioned comment by asking rhetorical questions: "It is funny. Since last month, Egypt is suddenly acting like Somalia's big brother. But where was Egypt in the last three decades when Somalia was a stomping ground for Al Qaeda, Al Shabaab, Al Itihaad and others? And Somali towns were awash in the blood of innocent civilians? Where was Egypt, when the fragile post-Barre Somalia's

central governments were tittering on the brink of collapse, with its several officials being slain by terrorists? Where was Egypt when Somalia was considered a failed state for the last 30 years?"

Somalia is a special neighbor to Ethiopia given the fact that it is a transit state to the sea that shares the second longest border with Ethiopia and has the longest coastline in Africa. Besides Somalia and Ethiopia share a common religion, language, and cultural norms. Because of their contrasting and varied natural resources, there is an immense potential for the growth of trade between the two nations which is yet fully unexploited.

Even in the present condition where there is wide room for improvements in economic cooperation, Somalia stands as one of the top four destinations for Ethiopia's export trade. A 2022 report indicates that Somalia was the third top destination of Ethiopian export trade in terms of value amounting to \$265M US dollars.

The recently signed MoU is a groundbreaking development that would set precedence for more bilateral cooperation among the nations in the Horn which would undoubtedly transform the lives of millions in the region, and expedite the regional economic integration.

Unfortunately, the Somali government could not see the peaceful intentions of the MoU blindfolded by the influence of such powers like Egypt who want to see the Horn remaining in a state of disarray, poverty, and at the mercy of external powers that are focused only on pursuing their selfish interest at the expense of the people in the region.

Being under the influence of centuries-old Egyptian anti-Ethiopian sentiment, it would not be surprising if the Somali government misinterpreted Ethiopia's benign business intention to legally and temporarily lease a small coastal strip as a belligerent annexation of Somali territory.

Moreover, the Somali government's reaction to the news of the MoU is unprincipled, distorted and unfairly double standards. The Somali government did not utter a peep when Egypt wooed the Somaliland government to enter into a similar agreement as the Ethiopian government.

Likewise, the Somali government did not protest against the deal made between the UAE and Somaliland on the development of Berbera Port. That is unfair. We hope the Somali scholars and politicians will come to their senses, and that they are making their nation a war horse for Egyptians and start acting in the interest of Somalia and their neighbors in the Horn region, who are bound to remain together in both the bad and good times.



The recently signed MoU is a groundbreaking development that would set precedence for more bilateral cooperation among the nations in the Horn which would undoubtedly transform the lives of millions in the region, and expedite the regional economic integration

After the establishment of AFCA, we have seen improvements in [COFFEE] price,

Feven Genene

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Today's guest, Feven Genene, is a Coordinator of African Fine Coffees Association in Ethiopia. She was born and grew in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Attending primary and secondary education in the schools found at the capital. After completing her high school education, she went to Haramaya University where she received a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science and Marketing. Feven has taken various courses on market analysis, coffee quality, and coffee processing to gear up for her dream position.

She later on worked with USAID Agriculture Program, Coffee Quality Institute and other international and local organizations. Feven has been serving the African Fine Coffees Association for nearly six years as the Ethiopian representative. The Ethiopian Herald had a short stay with Feven in connection with the upcoming African Fine Coffees Conference & Exhibition and 1st African Coffee Week from February 6-10 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Have a nice read!



What does AFCA mean? What is the primary reason for African countries to establish it?

The African Fine Coffees Association (AFCA) is one of the biggest regional coffee entities that represent eleven coffee growing countries, including. AFCA's mission is to convene, motivate, and professionalize the African fine coffee sector through building capacity, creating market linkages, and hosting coffee events.

It facilitates members' attendance at premier specialty coffee events held worldwide to promote and prominently feature their finest coffees. Additionally, AFCA annually hosts the largest coffee event in Africa, the African Fine Coffees Conference & Exhibition.

The association organizes trade missions for its members to selected target markets to enhance market linkages and build business relations. AFCA also delivers education programs and business insights to enhance its members' businesses, with a focus on accessibility.

In addition, AFCA organizes and conducts national coffee cupping competition, coined the "Taste of Harvest" to promote the highest quality coffees within its member countries. The national competitions are held in each member country, and culminate at the Regional Taste of Harvest Competition held each February at the African Fine Coffees Conference & exhibition, where

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AFCA

has been creating a network to connect the value chain and greater value for the coffee subsector. In the upcoming conference, we are expecting upwards of 1,000 attendees from around the world, including Europe, Asia, the Americas, to connect directly with farmers and exporters from across Africa

the winning coffees from each country are graded by a panel of international and regional coffee professionals.

Creating an economic hub through networking specialty coffee importers/exporters, leading the development of an East African specialty coffee exchange, promoting quality from tree to cup through vigorous education programs, a robust network, and strategic alliances.

One of our goals is to provide market opportunities to African farmers and exporters' and that they have the latest information on coffee pricing, financing, and quality control.

AFCA is now preparing to host the 20th edition of the African Fine Coffees Conference & Exhibition this February. Would you further brief us please?

Founded in July 2000, the African Fine Coffees Association (AFCA) is a member-based, non-profit association that represents producers, traders, government, and other support organizations.

AFCA is currently made up of 11 member countries, including Burundi, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, Tanzania, and Zambia. The Secretariat is headquartered in Kampala, Uganda, with representative staff in other member countries.

This year, AFCA is excited to announce its partnership with the Inter-African Coffee Organization (IACO), the Robusta Coffee Agency of Africa and Madagascar (ACRAM), and the Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority (ECTA) for the grand occasion of hosting the event's 20th edition in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from February 6-10, 2024. The theme "Specialty Coffee at Origin" sheds light on the high-quality coffees being grown and consumed in producing countries. It also invites coffee professionals to explore Ethiopia, the land of origins.

In this landmark 20th edition, the event promises a lineup of esteemed international and regional speakers, an expansive exhibition hall, engaging workshops, exclusive B2B cupping sessions, and vibrant social events! Additionally, we are proud to host the Africa Barista Championship and the Regional Taste of Harvest Competition.

Hosting such an international coffee exhibition and conference is quite imperative to promote Ethiopian coffee, as the main coffee buyers will come to Ethiopia and meet our coffee traders. The paper presented at the conference is expected to illuminate challenges and find the best solutions. A coffee safari—a tour of coffee growing regions—is also part of the event.

Continued to Page 9

After the establishment of AFCA, ...

Continued from Page 8

Except for consumers, all coffee stakeholders, including coffee buyers and sellers, international NGOs, government bodies, and coffee buyers drawn from Europe, Asia, and the Americas, are expected to participate in the conference. Coffee growers from African countries will also be part of the conference by promoting what they produce in a booth rented for this purpose. Those who produce equipment related to coffee will also prop up their products in the exhibition.

Other competitions, such as the Taste of Harvest, which is a coffee cupping competition between African coffee growers who won the national competition held in their respective countries, are also expected to identify the champion of the year. There is also a competition between African baristas.

In order to make the conference successful, the national committee is already established and has been doing various tasks to make the conference successful. Local and international coffee companies have already booked up to 120 booths to promote themselves.

The African Fine Coffees Conference & Exhibition has increasingly been regarded as pivotal in providing a unique opportunity to exhibitors showcasing the best coffees and affiliated services in the African coffee sector. The exhibition floor provides ample opportunity to network with coffee luminaries from all over the world. This will be the perfect platform for gathering valuable coffee information, building trade relations, and facilitating buyer-and-seller interaction.

Taking part in this international conference, what sort of benefits African coffee growing countries gaining?

AFCA, mainly works as a platform to connect buyers and suppliers, including the value chain from coffee producers, exporters and importers, and roasters.

Since its inception, AFCA has been creating a network to connect the value chain and greater value for the coffee subsector. In the upcoming conference, we are expecting upwards of 1,000 attendees from around the world, including Europe, Asia, the Americas, to connect directly with farmers and exporters from across Africa. So, one of the achievements we made so far is, we have created a largest platform in Africa and connected coffee sector players.

With a vision of building capacity of its members, AFCA offers various trainings so as to fill the knowledge gaps. In the coffee growing countries, we have members from individuals' farmers to large scale importers. Hence, we are working together with members finding ways and means of promotion that make them competitive in the international market. So, we provide trainings for farmers to come up with high quality products in order to connect them with the international buyers and importers.



Many African countries may have an interest to be member of AFCA. Are the doors open for anyone wishes to join it?

Most of our member countries are coffee producing. Previously, when AFCA come in to being, it was named East Africa Coffee Association. After a while, the name is changed after the other African countries joined it. At this instant, countries that are not producing coffee are our members. South Africa, for instance, is not a coffee growing country nevertheless it came to membership due to its large coffee customers.

We are now working with largest coffee consuming African countries such as Egypt, Nigeria, and Algeria with a vision of expanding membership and this way we want to bring all the African countries to become members. As AFCA is working with inter Africa trade platform, we have a desire to export coffee to Nigeria, Egypt and Algeria. As it is one of our projects, we work in that.

How do you evaluate coffee trade before and after the establishment of AFCA?

Africa needs to have one responsible organization or entity that brings in all of us in the coffee value chain as there are many players in the coffee sector including governments and the small holder farmers. So, we have been able to bridge the gap in the producers, policy makers, importers, exporters and every one in between. So, we have been able to bridge that gap with in the value chain.

After the establishment of AFCA, we have seen improvements in price. Now, farmers are getting up to date information about the coffee in general and its price in particular. Due to various constraints, we are not reaching all the members in AFCA, farmers in the member countries have got trainings. We have different projects that we do together with our partners in each member country including the government itself. We also work with farmers to improve coffee quality and the way of getting better pricing. So we have been able to achieve that. That does not mean that we relied in farmers alone, we do the same with the exporters as well. So, farmers and exporters have been able to get more access to the market and get better pricing on coffee improving quality product as well.

Let us move towards another important issue which is called European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). How do you understand it?

The EU Deforestation-Free Regulation (EUDR) is the new EU initiative to limit deforestation caused by agricultural activities all over the world. The new regulation will see new mandatory due diligence requirements for EU businesses due in 2024, massively expanding upon the scope of, and eventually replacing, the EU Timber Regulation (EUTR).

As we all know, Europe is one of the largest importers of commodities linked to deforestation, including 50% of the world's coffee and 60% of all cocoa. These

commodities alone accounted for over 25% of global tree cover losses from 2001 to 2015. With such a significant role in the market, the deforestation regulation aims to reduce the impact that products bought by EU citizens have on the world's forests and woodland areas. It is critical for the route to net zero, and the EU hopes to lead by example. Similar regulatory requirements could follow in other markets, including the UK.

The EU defines those obligated by the EU Deforestation-Free Regulation (EUDR) as 'operators' and 'traders'. Operators (companies that first place products in the single market) will be required to implement due diligence on their supply chains to ensure they are deforestation- and forest-degradation-free, while traders will be responsible for storing and sharing information on their supply chain with operators.

The proposed deforestation-free regulation targets those commodities and some of the products derived from them, like chocolate, leather, and furniture, with the greatest impact on deforestation.

As AFCA, we have a session to explain the EUDR regulation to all the attendees, including Ethiopians as well to the EU representative who will be attending in this event. Afterward, being well aware of the regulation, there will be a platform where farmers, policy makers, exporters deliberate on. One of the biggest platforms we are having in coming February consists of that as well.

As the AFCA member countries are highly relied on coffee export, Will the EUDR have negative impact on coffee export trade?

Yes, it is going to have an impact but I feel like it is going to be a process. For us receiving or hearing about this EU regulation, we will start studying from now on. It may be hard at this juncture to say something about it. However, we will raise awareness of members on how the EU regulation is going to be affecting the sector.

I think we will go to that trend as it is coming up. So, we are learning again to meet that expectation that the EUDR has been putting in place. As the regulation might affect the previous working system, we will learn how to proceed next through process. However, I do not personally see a problem in the near future.

If you want to add any more points, please take the chance.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Ethiopian government, the Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority and other stakeholders who have partnered while we prepare this conference and exhibition.

Thank you so much.

It is my pleasure.

Society



Increasing social inclusion: Unlocking potential

BY ELIZABETH MENGISTU

Increasing the social, economic, and political participation of all segments of a society, regardless of any differences - be it ethnicity, religion, age disability, gender, socio-economic status, education level, or any other form- is of critical importance to address social, economic and political inequalities, promote inclusiveness, empower citizens and uphold sustainable development and peace.

In a direct contradiction to this, however, in several cases, large portions of the population throughout the world, especially women, children, people with disabilities and elders are seen systematically excluded from their social, economic and political rights owing to reasons associated with ethnicity, religion, age, disability, gender identity or other affiliations.

Despite their potential to contribute immensely to their countries social and economic growth, these social groups around the globe encounter common barriers which keep them from involving in income generating activities, growing and leading a healthy life for the reason of long attached compounded stereotypes and lack of supportive legal and regulatory frameworks that promote inclusivity.

Governments, recognizing the potential of these segments of the society and their irrepressible contribution in countries' overall development, as well as the undesirable consequences and incalculable cost exclusion and marginalization can incur, are making every effort to increase the active participation of the disadvantaged section of society.

By developing constructive policies and strategies that can curb barriers and obstacles that limit the involvement of these groups; and to enhance their active participation in each and every activity of their respective countries, they are working to address the challenges thereby guarantee a more equal and sustainable economic development. It has been possible to set legislations that benefit all equally, irrespective of any differences.

As a consequence, even though it is not possible to pace at the desired level and a lot remains to be done, some improvements are



witnessed. Today, it is possible to see more women and disabled people engaging in areas that were once restricted or almost closed for these segments. Seeing women and disabled people engaging in the most challenging tasks and performing well at various areas including in the leadership positions is common.

The case is not different in Ethiopia. Several women and disabled people for long were discriminated against and excluded from participating in the country's social, economic and political affairs and their rights had been violated for reasons that are beyond their control. As a result, a great deal of potential that is capable enough to bring about visible changes and accelerate the country's growth left underutilized.

In fact, various activities have been carried out to address the problem, ensure their rights and increase the involvement of these groups in their country's overall activities.

To this end, aside from devising a number of national laws and regulations that are decisive to ensure the rights of women, people with disabilities, children and elder people at different times and levels, the country ratified international agreements and conventions, including the UN Conventions such as on the Rights of People with Disabilities, women, children. Not only that, local organizations that advocate for the rights of their members were established and works are ongoing accordingly.

Currently, joining hands with various local, regional and international organizations, the nation is working to increase the active participation and benefits of women, children and people with disabilities at all levels.

Recently, the Women, Children and Social Affairs Bureau of the Addis Ababa City Administration highlighted the importance of coordination with institutions to ensure the universal benefit of women, children and the disabled people.

This was stated at the consultation forum the Bureau held with executives drawn from government and nongovernment institutions focusing on the implementation of women, children, people with disabilities and the elderly people inclusiveness, Addis Ababa City Administration Women, Children and Social Affairs Bureau reported.

Speaking on the occasion, Peace and Security Bureau Head with the Addis Ababa City Administration Lidya Girma said that the activities that have been commenced to ensure the overall participation and benefits of women, the elderly and people with disabilities are bearing fruits. Thus, they should be continued in a more organized and concerted manner than before.

Institutions that are working in the city should exert utmost effort for inclusiveness and work committedly and in collaboration for the successful implementation of the program,

she added. The Head also urged institutions to play a role and enhance the participation and benefits of these groups by giving due emphasis for inclusiveness.

Women, Children and Social Affairs Bureau Head with the City Administration Woineshet Zeriyyhun on her part said that various activities are being carried out in the capital with the aim to benefit women, children, the elderly and the disabled. In order to ensure the benefit of these segments and to make the effort a success, numerous activities are undertaken to enable institutions to implement the principle of inclusiveness properly and effectively.

She also underlined the necessity of identifying gaps that are witnessed in the implementation of inclusiveness in institutions; and the need to prepare accordingly to do better in the future. In this regard, institutions operating in the capital are required to work in coordination and give special attention on the implementation of inclusiveness, she remarked.

She also revealed the establishment of a Community-Wide Coalition Care Council that is responsible to provide support for those people who have been affected by various kinds of problems and menaces due to various reasons. According to her, the Council has already entered into operation.

Chairperson of the Standing Committee of Women, Youth and Social Affairs of the Addis Ababa City Council Zeineba Shikur also said that in this year, though not in all institutions, some improvements are witnessed regarding the implementation of inclusivity, and the standing committee was able to observe that in the sectors it monitors.

According to her, there are limitations among institutions in terms of implementing inclusiveness properly and effectively. If inclusion gets special attention by the leadership of all the institutions and implemented effectively, the rights and benefits of those people will be ensured. Therefore, she stressed that all institutions should pay due attention to the implementation of inclusiveness to guarantee the participation and benefits of women, persons with disabilities and elderly people. "The necessary support will be provided by the Council," she vowed.

Art & Culture

A city of contrasts, a cultural melting pot and asymmetric growth

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

Obviously, the Addis Ababa of our youth and childhood is starkly different from the city of our adulthood and old age. Cities, like human beings are born, grow, get old and sometimes die of natural causes or man-made calamities. People build cities, live in them and die in them. This cycle repeats itself indefinitely. Sometimes cities live in people as the latter carry their sufferings and struggles, loves and deaths in their memories. Cities are not founded just by chance. There are certain requirements that have to be met in order to establish cities are permanent settlements.

Cities may be established through conquests, invasions or the decisions of rulers who may want to establish the seat of their governments at a specific place to accommodate their political, economic and cultural visions. The founding of the Ethiopian capital has followed a familiar pattern to make particular places lucky enough to become the political, cultural and economic centers of nations.

Addis Ababa was chosen as the Ethiopian capital because it met some of the fundamental requirements for human habitation. The availability of water and woods for construction as well as a suitable climate had made Addis the ideal candidate for a national capital. "To found a city, pioneers faced many obstacles. They had to find land that suited their purpose. City founders also needed sources of water and land to grow food. Depending on the goals of the city, other factors might also be important such as access to trade routes."

Like people, cities develop and grow according to their own natural rhythms and the residents' lifestyles and cultures that play key roles in shaping the faces and lives of people and the cities themselves. Like people, cities have their cultures, and their heartbeats are usually synced with the heartbeats of the residents that give them life, meanings and even symbolic names to their cities. "Urban culture is the culture of towns and cities. The defining nature of a city is the presence of a large population in a limited space that live according to the prevailing economic, political, social and cultural norms. "This makes it possible for many subcultures to survive and thrive close to each other and are exposed to social influence without necessarily intruding into the private sphere."

Addis Ababa (New Flower) is a symbolic name that reflected the hopes, aspirations and visions of the people who founded its more than 125 years ago. At the time of its founding, Addis was a small town

or village surrounded by forests and more particularly eucalyptus trees after emperor Menelik introduced them from as far as Australia. "The introduction of eucalyptus trees to Ethiopia goes back to the time of Emperor Menelik II after he established the capital of the country." As history showed subsequently, turning a forested settlement, which Addis Ababa was in its earliest days, into a flowering capital required sustained efforts and a determination to turn its symbolic role into living reality.

Addis has indeed gone through various phases of development since its establishment. There was a long period of stagnation that characterized the reign of Emperor Menelik followed by an accelerated tempo of growth under Emperor Haile Sellassie and then ups and downs under the following governments that came on the heels of the Ethiopian Revolution of 1974. Under the revolution, Addis witnessed more devastations that flowing as its residents were subjected to a chronic state of material deprivation and psychological torments culminating in the notorious Red Terror period. No development projects worth speaking of were carried out in the capital.

The last thirty years have also witnessed ups and downs in the development of the Ethiopian capital that has undergone major facelifts and renovations. This was also a time that witnessed the most impressive modernization of Addis Ababa. As city planners often agree, Addis is not a structurally or topographically uniform city. Like any African capital, it is rather an amalgam of the old and the new and the super modern, old quarters coexisting with newly created ones and the architectural legacy of the five year Italian fascist occupation coexisting side by side with state of the art structures.

A good example of this pattern is the part of the city known as Piazza which is now home to the modern Adwa building which is facing one of the landmarks of the capital, namely the old building which is now occupied by Abyssinia Bank that used to serve as the headquarters of the fascists officers who ruled Addis for five years back in the 1930s.

Addis is a capital city striking for its contrasts not only in its buildings and residential quarters and business areas but also in the lifestyle of its residents. One example is the part of Addis known as Gullele sub-city or district, where famous landmarks like the Institute Pasteur medical research and diagnostic centre were located. This place was formerly known as "Doctor Lambe", named after a foreign veterinary doctor who took

care of the health of livestock in the area, long before it was replaced by the Pasteur Institute.

The area around that place were surrounded with thick forests where residents lived in small mud houses and were mainly engaged in handicrafts, wood selling and small trades.

Surprisingly enough, that part of the capital is largely kept intact with its old and crumbling houses while the main highway linking it to central Addis together with some of the modern building structures are major constructions that have emerged in the last thirty years or so. The major road from Merkato to *Addisu Michael* is still an old, narrow and crumbling artery that links Gullele with the biggest market in Africa. Uneven development of the various quarters (*sefers* in Amharic) has thus become a defining aspect of the present face of the capital.

Most of the residential quarters around Merkato are still overcrowded, dirty and crumbling while the residents are mostly poor traders engaged in small businesses or in undefined occupations. At one time in the not so remote past, there was a highly advertised plan for urban renewal around that most downtrodden part of Mercato, known as '*min alesh tera*'. This is still a crowded and chaotic part of the market for all kinds of old utensils, fittings and equipments, most of them stolen and sold at the same place. After a decade or two of the announcement of the so-called urban renewal plan, there is nothing one can see on the ground by way of improvement let alone renewal.

While major renovation works have taken place almost in all parts of Addis, Gullele is still 'underdeveloped' and reminds one of the old ways of life and the old atmosphere of poverty and stagnation. Compare this part of the capital with the new residential quarters and business centers that have emerged in the last thirty years or so. Meanwhile, the old red mud houses of Gullele have traversed decades staggering on the brink of collapse while poverty is still visible and palpable. Walk or drive through Merkato and its surrounding slums areas and you have the perfect example of a typical African capital where impoverished shanties surround the posh areas further to the south and the centre of the capital.

There are also many interesting facets of life in Addis and its cultural variety is really amazing. People from the rural areas who migrated to Addis in search of better opportunities have settled in various parts of the capital without abandoning their traditional and rich cultures in all areas of life. If you go to what is known

as *Shiro Meda* area, past the US Embassy and up towards Entoto hills, you observe the busy handicraftsmen and women and the traditional clothes makers who are congregated in one large area on both sides of the road leading to Entoto. They have kept their language, traditions and cultures intact and they usually give you the impression that they have turned the area into a living museum of southern culture.

If you have time to visit an area known as *Ketchene* a little farther, you find a different type of handicraftsmen who are engaged this time in the making of various clay utensils whose trademark activity is to give life and beauty to clay through pots and pans and cooking vessels, water containers and other such paraphernalia. The residents have maintained the ways of life of their ancestors back home and their foods and drinks are the same delicacies they enjoyed in the old days in the rural areas. A visit to that place would give you the impression that you are not in Addis but in one of the villages these people came from in the highlands or lowlands.

However, standing on the elevated areas around Entoto, you can see the new skyscrapers in the remote centre of Addis where the new CBE headquarters stands prominently as a major landmark and a beacon of hope and looks like the Statue of Liberty in Manhattan New York harbor. The contrast between the place where you stand and the distant skyline down in centre of Addis becomes all the more striking and amazing at the same time.

Addis is still hostage to a kind of asymmetric or haphazard building structures that are more reproductions or imitations than the products of conscious creativity. Many architects suggest that Addis has jigsaw puzzle kind of architecture rather than a well planned or thought about design. Even the colors of the buildings are often criticized for their oddity or lack of harmony.

Addis is obviously in dire need of urban planning and radical renewal which is a process of developing and designing urban areas to meet the needs of a community. "It is also a process of guiding and directing the use and development of land, urban environment, urban infrastructures and related ecosystem and human services." Despite its many development problems, Addis is still a flamboyant, vibrant, promising and growing African capital worth visiting in this season of holidays when the city displays its vivid religious and secular faces and colors to the amazement of both visitors and residents.

Verbatim and Caption

Ethiopia striving to achieve food ...



Ethiopia's food systems progressing

Ethiopia's food system has been progressing with an eye on realizing an economy-wide transformation. There is a synergy among the food systems transformation and the 10-year Development Plan and relevant sectorial programs and investment portfolio

Ministry of Agriculture 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 Amente, Agriculture Minister said during a validation workshop for the Ethiopian Food Systems



Funding gaps hinder climate change initiatives: ECA

Insufficient financial assistance hinders African countries' efforts to fight climate change. Expert expressed the urgent need for African nations to build climate resilience and integrate climate change into their national development visions.

To build climate resilience, integrate climate information into decision-making processes, and securing adequate financial support from developed nations is vital.

Ethiopia's effort in utilizing its vast natural resources, including river basins and forests, to build resilience and achieve sustainable development goals is appreciated. The Ethiopian Green Legacy initiative also has a positive impact on combating climate change and fostering sustainable development.

Nassim Oulmane (PhD), ECA Technology, Climate Change, and Natural Resource Management Division Director

Verbatim and Caption



Ethiopia's agricultural transformation an inspiration for Africa: FAO DG

The achievements registered by the government of Ethiopia under the leadership of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed to transform the agricultural sector with a view to becoming food self-sufficient have been a source of inspiration for Africa.

The commitment and passion of Prime Minister Abiy to realize the revolutionary change of agriculture and rural development and the Green legacy initiative is amazing.

Qu Dongyu, Director-General of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said while awarding PM Abiy FAO Agricola award

Ethiopia striving to achieve food sovereignty: PM Abiy

The government of Ethiopia is committed to meet zero hunger goals, to achieve food sovereignty and to attain national prosperity.

"I am grateful to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization for recognizing Ethiopia's diligent efforts over the past five years in addressing food and nutrition security. The endeavors we have begun in the past five years are thus solid foundations for the next generation."

Ethiopia will continue its efforts to achieve food sovereignty. Ethiopia continues to be a resilient nation remaining steadfast in its development goals even in challenging circumstances.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD), speaking during the FAO Agricola Medal award ceremony in Rome, Italy



Ethiopia is model for African countries: UNIDO

Ethiopia is becoming a model for African countries and for the whole world in its effort to realizing food self-sufficiency and achieve the goal of Zero Hunger.

The efforts being undertaken in Ethiopia to achieve the vision of zero hunger has really been showing great progress. Ethiopia's achievement in doubling the yield in the sector of food is laudable. It is becoming an exporter.

Ethiopia has demonstrated that investment in agriculture and the strong leadership from Abiy Ahmed has made it possible to reach zero hunger and to attain food security for the people

Gerd Müller, Director General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) during FOA's Agricola award to PM Abiy in Rome, Italy.

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