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Liberating liberator

- ‘Heavy reliance on foreign financiers makes AU toothless’

News Analysis

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

Extreme financial reliance on foreign donors has curtailed the political leverage and weakened the decision-making ability of the African Union argue experts as the call for self-financing of the continental bloc grows.

Considered widely as a toothless institution, the Union has been struggling to emancipate itself from financial dependency.

Some of the critics of the 55 States Union had even gone as far as to criticize the bloc as an organization that was unable to build its headquarters. In 2012, the Union came under fire from some critics after it received a 200 million USD headquarters fully funded and built by China as a gift.

Arguably, the union is also seen as a weak decision-making body with some attributing it partly to the financial issue of the organization. Its heavy dependence on foreign funding according to the experts put a hurdle in its efforts to fully

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FINANCING THE UNION

TOWARDS THE FINANCIAL AUTONOMY OF THE AFRICAN UNION



Shimelis Hailu

Scholar underscores enhancing Ethiopia's role in Red Sea security

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA—Given its strategic positioning, Ethiopia has been at the forefront actor towards sustaining peace and security of the Horn including Red Sea, so the political science researcher said.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press

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Selamawit Kassa

AU Assembly's theme aligns with Ethiopia's reform

- Ethiopia to hold two sideline continental sessions

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA-The African Union this year's theme of "Educate an African fit for the 21st Century" is coordinative to Ethiopia's reform, the Government

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Japan expresses support for Africa's Agenda 2063

- Japanese official visits Kaizen Center in Ethiopia

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA-Japan devotes support to Africa's aspiration to achieve Agenda 2063 and to address its challenges as well as supplement efforts towards seeking African solutions to African problems, a high-level official said.

The visiting Japan's Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Fukazawa Yoichi made the above remark yesterday.

Yoichi further expressed his country's desire to facilitate innovation works together with Africans through Kaizen philosophy and to employ the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), JICA and other platforms.

"Japan's partnership with Africa helps and

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Shedding more light on the Victory of Adwa

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Expanding pre-primary schools in rural Ethiopia to improve early, quality education

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News

First-ever coffee research institute to be launched in Yirgachefe, Gedeo Zone

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- The first-ever coffee research institute is going to be inaugurated in Yirgachefe, Gedeo Zone aiming to fill the education and training gaps witnessed in the coffee sector, Ethiopian National Coffee Association and Dilla University announced.

The Ethiopian National Coffee Association together with Dilla University and the Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority are readying to host a symposium in Hawassa city to expedite the launching of the first coffee center of excellence in the nation.

During the media briefing held at the Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority, Hussien Ambo (PhD), President of Ethiopian National Coffee Association said that the coffee research institute eyes on addressing the major challenges in the coffee industry.

He also noted that the institute, which would be inaugurated with the cost of 2 billion birr, would pave the way in curbing the challenges starting from production to trading.

It also aims at equipping the coffee sector with skilled farmers, growers, suppliers as well as consumers, he added. Therefore, a symposium will be held in Hawassa city on March 7, 2024 where coffee producers, suppliers, exporters, and representatives from the government come together.

The President further stated that the deep-rooted challenges of the coffee industry need to be addressed through knowledge and research based approach. Thus, the coming in to force of the institute would allow the nation to get the necessary benefit from the sector once curbing the drawbacks.

Dilla University President Cherotaw Ayele (PhD) stated that absence of knowledge and research based approach has affected the nation from getting the necessary benefit from the sector.

Despite being the backbone of nation's economy, the nation has failed in putting the right curriculum and creating skilled manpower that fits in to the sector.

Mentioning that the institute will be governed by the University, he highlighted that there will be fund raising event as well as various researches will be presented during the symposium.

As per to the duty bestowed up on Dilla University, he said the University has held three symposiums. Moreover, it will continue offering coffee post graduate programs.

Ethiopian National Coffee Association Deputy President Zerihun Qamiso noted that due to the aforementioned gaps in the sector, farmers are the least to benefit from the sector.

To this end, the institute would play an essential role in solving production, purchasing and research gaps in the sector, as to Zerihun.

Furthermore, the Ethiopian national coffee association has signed memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the University to curb the longstanding challenges of the coffee sector.

Dilla University was said to be suitable due to the fact that it is adjust to five coffee growing areas such as Sidama, Guji, Yirgachefe, among others. The University has so far hosted three symposiums regarding coffee, as to him.



Ethiopia seals agreements to deepen relations with Angola, Libya

• Holds productive deliberations with Zimbabwe, Burundi

BY EYUEL KIFLU & FIKADU BELAY

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopia's Foreign Minister Taye Atskeselassie signed cooperation agreements with Angolan senior diplomat Tête António that are believed to deepen the two countries relations and held a productive consultation with his Zimbabwean counterpart Federic Shava.

The parties signed the agreements at the sidelines of the 44th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union here yesterday.

Ambassador Fisseha Shawel, Director General of the African Affairs Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who attended the sessions, stated that the agreement with Angola aims to bolster bilateral relations and promote joint efforts in multilateral forums.

The two ministers signed a General Cooperation Agreement covering various fields, as well as a Memorandum on Political Consultation, marking a significant milestone in the bilateral relations between Ethiopia and Angola, he added.

Ambassador Fisseha further emphasized the importance of the cooperation agreement, indicating it would facilitate a more effective partnership between Ethiopian and Angolan institutions. Additionally, the political subdivision accord would facilitate regular consultations and further strengthen the relationship between the two countries.

"Both Ethiopia and Angola have

successfully transitioned to democratic systems, leading to remarkable economic growth and prosperity. Acknowledging the potential for even greater achievements, the two countries foreign ministers emphasized the necessity of increased cooperation to leverage their strengths."

Ambassador Jorge Catarino Cardoso, who is Director of the Africa, Middle East and Regional Organizations Directorate of the Angolan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, expressed confidence that the signed agreement would foster cooperation in various areas and align the two countries' political agendas.

"The longstanding relationship between Ethiopia and Angola has laid a strong foundation for this collaboration, and both nations are eager to explore new opportunities for mutual benefit."

Similarly, FM Taye Atskeselassie met with his Zimbabwean counterpart Federic Shava to discuss bilateral and multilateral issues of mutual significance. During their deliberation, the two officials expressed commitment to seek ways to invigorate the Ethio-Zimbabwe cooperation in various sectors including agriculture, tourism, mining, and others and maximize mutual benefit.

Ambassador Taye also exchanged views with his Burundian counterpart Albert Shingiro on matters of bilateral and multilateral interests. The focus of the meeting was to highlight the shared goals and priorities of both nations, emphasizing the importance of strengthening fraternal ties that will contribute to mutual growth and prosperity.

It was stated in the discussion that Ethiopia's increased collaboration in

various sectors will not only benefit the two countries directly involved but also contribute to the overall stability and progress of Africa. "Also, these positive steps highlight the potential for further constructive engagement among African nations and set the stage for a brighter future of cooperation, peace, and development across the continent."

In a related development, Foreign Affairs State Minister Mesganu Arga held talks yesterday with Libya's Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammed Issa at the sidelines of the AU 44th Executive Council meeting.

The meeting is said to have resulted in significant agreements that pave the way for closer cooperation between the two countries. Accordingly, consensus was reached to review existing mechanisms and develop a framework for conducting political consultations.

The parties expressed their mutual interest to engage in regular dialogue and exchange ideas, aiming to deepen their understanding of each other's perspectives and facilitate cooperation on various regional and international affairs.

More importantly, Ethiopia and Libya reached an agreement to enhance their cooperation in the aviation industry that sets up opportunities for joint initiatives including the establishment of direct air links, the promotion of tourism, and the facilitation of trade and movement of people.

Additionally, the two countries agreed to advance their cooperation in the labor sector which is expected to create more jobs, foster skills development, and facilitate the exchange of expertise.

News

Liberating...

liberate the resource-rich continent from the yoke of colonialism.

Over the years, the bloc launched various initiatives to overcome its financial reliance and expand self-financing schemes.

In the Kigali Decision in 2016, member states pledged to finance the Union by contributing 0.2 percent of their levy, there have been no big headways to date though.

Recent figures reveal that around 15 members out of the 55 states have been living up to the pledges. And, many float the idea that financial constraint makes the Union to be a rubber stamp institution, succumbing to the interests of donors.

The bloc relies heavily on partners to fund its activities, with two-thirds of its 2023 budget drawn from external sources, a report by Institute for Security Studies indicated.

“African Union is a toothless lion. Being financially dependent on external donors brought it into self-abnegation. This is forcing the countries to bow down to the interest of financiers”, argues Dawit Mezgebe Tsegaye, a lecturer at Dila University and Ph.D. candidate of African and Asian studies at Addis Ababa University speaking to The Ethiopian Herald exclusively.

The union also faced unpredictability and volatility of its revenues because of dependence on external partners and few member states’ contributions, hampering efforts of addressing historical challenges.

Back in 2017, Paul Kagame spoke at a Consultative Meeting on African Union Reforms in Kigali, saying “The decisive factor here was changing our mindset

from dependence to ownership, and from “we can’t” to “we can”. That is an asset that cannot be imported. The levy is the formula we came up with to assure our independence as Africans. This is first and foremost a choice to no longer be dependent on outsiders. It’s really about the value we attach to being effective and self-reliant as an organization and as a continent.”

“Since its establishment in 1963, the African Union has not been able to be financially independent due to multiple factors. The colonial legacy and Africa’s domestic political instability are some of the major factors,” Dawit added.

Dawit mentioned that Kigali’s Decision to contribute 0.2 percent of the nation’s import income is based on the amount of goods and items imported from the outside world. And, the relation between the African nations and the global economic powers determines the quantity.

For the Angolan Ambassador Jorge Catarino Cardoso, Director of the Africa, Middle East, and Regional Organizations Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other challenges play into the weak financial contribution of member states. He said that African nations have dealt with a number of global challenges including the COVID-19 pandemic and conflicts in Europe and the Middle East. To this end, African nations were unable to commit themselves to the Union. Yet, member states will remain committed to their obligations to the AU, he added.

Further, Dawit noted that though Africa and other nations have established the non-aligned Movement, Africans cannot escape the domination of the West. Such domination is structural and it negatively affects the economics of the latter, adding

“Africa is a resource-rich continent, but it is politically and economically mismanaged. It is directly and indirectly affected by external factors.”

The expert elucidated that the European Union, for example, is intelligently collecting its budget support from member states, and such action is a luxury for African countries. The African Union should draw a lesson from other blocs like the European Union (EU) on how to collect what is promised.

“The 0.2 percent contribution is for the Union and Peace fund. Africans are not contributing putting us under the mercy of donors and blocs supporting us.”

Multinational companies like banks are investing in Africa; Airlines are passing through the continent. Accordingly, the African Union must create a sort of mechanism for generating its own income from these opportunities, he added.

African states and leaders should have full commitment to come closer and work. They need to understand the importance of financing the Union. “We need to have very strict rules and regulations on financing the Union with transparency and accountability. We, Africans, must be unified to have a strong Union.”

Regarding political meddling in the internal affairs of African nations, scholar, Africans have been under the colonial legacy since the colonial period; even West African states are still dependent on their colonial masters. Yet, there is an external interference in Africa’s internal politics. This interference has also an impact on Africa’s domestic economy.

AU Assembly’s...

Communication Service (GCS) said.

In a press briefing she gave yesterday, GCS State Minister Selamawit Kassa stated that Ethiopia is campaigning for quality education and school reconstruction which the AU’s theme for 2024 is based on. “Ethiopia has a lot to be presented on the leaders’ summit since its government has been campaigning to ensure education quality.”

Aligning with the AU purposes, the government of Ethiopia has launched community-based school reconstruction campaigns guided by reformed policy. Accordingly, over 21 billion birr worth of campaign has already been devoted to educational quality improvement within months, she added.

“Within the past six months, about 3,180 preschools, over 10,000 primary schools and 1,494 high schools have been reconstructed. Moreover, 1,366 primary schools and 236 boarding schools have been constructed.”

The state minister further highlighted that the Ethiopian government will host the continental food sovereignty and technological development sessions at the recently inaugurated Adwa Victory Memorial Museum.

The issue of food security has been a concerning agenda for almost all African countries. Technological development especially Artificial Intelligence is also another emerging issue that needs the mobilization of all countries and Ethiopia is enduring itself with motivated capacity on both subjects, Selamawit remarked.

More than 49 African delegations are expected to take part in the 37th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly which will be concluded tomorrow.

Japan expresses support...

contributes to the progress of African people; realize structural transformation for sustainable economic growth.”

He also visited the Kaizen Excellence Center in Addis Ababa.

The official mentioned Japan’s expectation of the Kaizen Excellence Center’s becoming of the hub for human resources development and nurturer individuals who lead the future of Africa’s business and industry.

It was recalled that the former Kaizen Excellence Centre (KEC) does not have adequate training facilities and the training is limited to Addis Ababa, which has been an obstacle to nationwide dissemination.

In 2018, Japan agreed to grant over 20 million USD for the construction of the Kaizen Excellence Center which was completed and transferred to the government of Ethiopian in October 2023.

According to Yoichi, the project aims to

improve the human resource development function of the KEC by developing training and administration office building and an accommodation facility and procuring equipment for training.

“Moreover, the objectives of the project are to accept trainees not only from Ethiopia but also from all over Africa, utilize the KEC as a facility for learning kaizen and contributing to improving the quality and productivity of industries in Africa.”

Yoichi also met with Ethiopian Industry Minister Melaku Alebel and exchanged views on the development of the manufacturing sector and the future economic growth in African countries including Ethiopia as a result of permeating Kaizen philosophy.

The minister said on the discussion that Ethiopia has been focusing on human resource development and employing Japan’s kaizen as a means to expedite industrial competitiveness and promote manufacturing.

Scholar underscores...

Agency (EPA), Political Science Researcher Shimelis Hailu said that owing to its history and proximity to the area, the country would have of a paramount importance on the sustainability of peace and security in the region and Red Sea as well.

Mentioning the establishment of a council which is aimed at countering various maritime security threats and crimes, he remarked that Ethiopia’s membership would help expedite the sustainability of regional peace and security.

As the Red Sea is the route that facilitates 10% of the global trade, he said that it is critical to consolidate surrounding countries’ efforts to promote the economic and peace sustainability.

“The escalating of terrorism, expansion of Al-Shabaab, chaos in Yemen and other related loopholes are becoming a threat to the region. Therefore, it is critical to

make Ethiopia member of the council and beneficiary of sea outlet to help ease the tension in the region,” he pointed out.

As to him, its proximity counted for 60 kilometers from the Red Sea, Ethiopia’s access to sea and membership would be a milestone for so it to play its immense role on countering terrorism.

“Leveraging its vibrant military base in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia has been stretching its hands for the sustainability of peace and stability in the entire region, including Somalia and the Red Sea. In its historical background, Ethiopia, had managed protecting several ports in the Red Sea.

Therefore, it is worth mentioning for respective countries to resonate their voices for Ethiopia to admit its quest to sea outlet and discharge its role in the region and ensure mutual benefit more than ever, the researcher remarked.

Opinion

Wake up Africa!

Don't lag behind

BY MENGESHA AMARE

The African leaders are really left with a tough but attainable assignment, the issue of peace and serenity, as it is a decisive as well as determinant factor in all aspects. The expression, 'the one which should have come first came last,' does automatically come to everyone's mind whenever they are thinking the situation in Africa.

From the outset of producing this piece, this writer would like to cite the golden expression what Oprah Winfrey once put reads, "One person can change the world with love, compassion and courage," Which in one way or another, or even prettily related to, the issue of peace. Africa should declare its rebirth and renaissance to decide on its own future and freedom, a new African era characterized by democracy, sustainable economic development and a reawakening of the continent's rich cultural values and heritage. The destiny of Africa should never be decided by palms outside of African sons and daughters, but win-win approach and firm collaboration matters, be it in peace, economy, political, or other related aspects.

Incredibly, being the birthplace of human life, the cradle of mankind, the source of human ancestors, home to numerous natural resources, Africa has now, calculatingly or unknowingly, made the tail of the planet. Where does the problem emanate from is the very burning question, too, and needs to be addressed as promptly and precisely as possible. The very factor that highly contributes to its sluggish pace behind the world has been proved to be peace. This piece tries to jot down some points about the role of African leaders in due course of ensuring peculiarly these days when the continent has become itchy and its population is devoid of repose. A lot is expected of the Summit underway, indeed!

The question why Africa is moving really very slow and be conflict hub is a pugnacious query that has long been left unanswered. The meaning of the dynamic minds born to African womb, the invaluable and untapped resources with which the continent is endowed as well as the unexploited human labor prevail in Africa is wrongly interpreted and make it a parasite. Truly speaking, the African continent wouldn't have exposed such a dismaying scenario had the continent known what it is in real terms.

Unfortunately, the African continent has never these days passed a solid night and daylight devoid of conflict and lack of serenity at every corner though the degree varies. This situation must be

well reversed and Africa has to have the position tantamount to its affluence. It is the respective leaders of every nation who are responsible for making all conditions quite normal and sound stable as no one can come and act accordingly to get the continent emancipated and come out of the grip of poverty and instability it finds itself in.

Surprising, if one would like to request why, they might have gotten the response because it is poor, lack responsible and determined leaders that are confident enough to live up to truth and social promise towards heartily serving their prestigious and well-to-do nations, and respective citizenry, of course there are exceptions. The question is for how long can Africa lead life in such a tumultuous fashion by waging war and conflict against one another?

Most definitely, Africa has been becoming the continent of paradox: rich in untapped resource and affordable human labor, and labeled as the poorest of the poor in the planet. Nothing is more annihilating and embarrassing than this one no matter what the parameter and absolute gadget is used to weigh. Poor Africa!

Where are leaders, where are the guardians of the continent to rescue it from the grip of lack of peace and serenity, poverty and underdevelopment, power monger and state of ocean corruption. Enough is enough! Wake up Mother Africa, wake up Mother Continent, stand up to tear out war, rivalry and conflict tenet, instill peace, fraternity and communalism instead!

The 37th AU Summit should not be a mere coming together and superficially raising several issues to substantiate reports and get the latter hubs of spider webs on various shelves. The Summit must provide Africa with a fresh proof that makes the continent ever serene and economically or politically dynamic. Fundamental change must come from the gathering and help the continent get out of every political, economic and social shackle.

As a decade, two decades, three decades etc... of war has made Africa handicap or lame, there must be new ways to think about the role the continent will play in the world in the year to come. Unless it helps Africa rein all sources of conflict, disagreement and societal suffering and devoid of a sigh of relief, what is the meaning of convening counting intervals and keeping time-frame and selecting places comfortable to relax?

Unless the concept of peace is altered, this is the right time for Africa and Africans to capitalize on it more than anytime else. In the era of the 21st century when United States of Africa should be definitely aspired,

how on earth bridging differences and disagreements as well as getting sources of conflict dried for good has become tantamount to calcimining a remote summit of a high mountain.

Unequivocally, Africa's instability, lack of peace and prevailing conflict, be it recurrent or intermittent, is a suffering for it and wedding bedding bedecked with myriads of accompanies for other who would never like to see the rise of the continent.

Perhaps, this might not be obscured for the leaders of Africa since they can have their own reasons to cite. What matters here is African problems had to be well addressed solely by its sons and daughters. Obviously, peace is everything, a priceless human asset on the continent, on earth at a larger scale as it is the source of all success and nation building efforts.

No one can argue that the old notion of going to war, conquering an enemy, and walking away is no longer viable in a much more complex and interconnected and interdependent modern world. Yes, conflict is part of the human feature and condition, but what should come first is solving it through close talks and negotiation. This is what Africa lacks. When can the continent wake up to come out of the vicious circle of conflict? The Summit must have the answer.

Sure as shooting, Africa can't afford war after war financially, nor can every member states national identity and conscience afford it.

Africa has to make negotiation, close talks, dialog and appreciating governing idea without gun sounds. Such an audacious practice all the time attracts communication, negotiation, and mediation from government to grassroots levels to reduce and eliminate the frequency and severity of violent conflict and destructive war. Leaders have to work to help their continent preclude and/or end conflict. True, it is about equipping individual citizens, groups, associations, parties, communities on the ground, especially those in conflict parts, with the operational tools and feasible peaceful weapons they need to mediate with groups in conflict or negotiate a peace settlement. Unquestionably, it takes time, but in the end it is about saving lives that would have been claimed following wrongdoings, protecting property damage thereby making respective nations sustained.

As preventing conflict is a cost-effective national security strategy at any time in any country, Africa has to make it a culture. When countries can resolve more conflicts without resorting to violence, they can be in a position to conserve capabilities for

those times when they really need it and save social, economic and even political volume. Africa! Say no to armed conflict as it costs money—big money, claims precious human life and deep sucks resources.

Dear leaders! Where do you want to take Africa in 2063? Help it quench its peace thirst, and all other things come next. Pump collective action, cooperate one another, be united and truly value peace that can prevent catastrophes and stop the suffering of citizens. The Summit must be made a critical juncture in African history as the post-colonial period is over and the African Renaissance is underway; economic growth has been steady for a decade and the number of wars and coups d'état has to be nullified.

As far as the writer's view is concerned, it is imperative that regional organizations in areas of proximity to conflicts should be empowered and supported to take necessary actions to restore peace and security. In due course of improving the cooperation and coordination between/among regional organizations especially through the African Union, leaders can play a decisive role along this line. The Summit needs to be made a springboard to take measures based on the type, nature and feature of conflicts so as to ensure peace in the entire continent.

There is no doubt that the best way to prevent conflicts is when the African Union partners with regional organizations and even international entities in cases where the parameters of such partnerships are well-defined and well-coordinated. There are several reasons of course why the role of regional organizations in fueling peace efforts should be encouraged and supported although a range of difficulties exist.

Despite its being the birthplace of human life, the source of human ancestors, it is lagging behind, which is quite unfair. It shouldn't lack peace even for a fraction of seconds. The continent now requires new elite in politics, business and culture to takeover more responsibilities for their still young countries and old tribes, and not merely to enjoy the honey of power for the inner circle of their own family. Africa must be emancipated from within to flourish in peace. Most importantly, by assisting in the prevention and resolution of violent conflicts all citizens of the continent are also contributing to the prevention of war, conflict and poverty, too.

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

Editorial

AU summit ought to translate the slogan into practice

The catchall slogan “African solutions to African problems” was coined by the eminent political economist George Ayittey who was a Ghanaian author and president of the Free Africa Foundation in Washington, D.C. It seems that this slogan has recently taken the attention of the leaders of African nations. And the 37th AU Summit is expected to bring about a range of meaningful steps in this regard.

Unequivocally, if Africa continues formulating its own solutions to the myriads of problems it has been struggling with, it would continue registering significant successes in terms of social, economic, political and other related spheres.

The African continent should never, these days, pass a solid night and day without thinking of its lasting solutions that can be declared by its sons and daughters under the auspices of the principle ‘African solutions to African problems.’

The unattractive face of the continent for which it has been known must be well reversed and Africa has to have the position tantamount to its affluence. It is the responsibility of respective leaders of every nation to make all conditions quite normal thereby creating a stable and affluent continent as no one can come and act accordingly to get the continent emancipated from the grip of poverty and ocean of corruption, instability and turmoil it finds itself in.

Without a shadow of doubt, external solutions were not viable in Africa since they were either “imported” or “dictated” to Africans. Therefore, Africans do not own those solutions; instead its leaders ought to establish systems that promote African solutions for its problems.

True, the notion of “African solutions to African problems” implies that this is the time for Africans to take things into their own hands and make use of their resources to solve Africa’s troubles.

For how long Africa has been labeled as the continent of paradox: rich in untapped resource and affordable human labor, and labeled as the poorest of the poor in the planet. Nothing is more annihilating and embarrassing than this one no matter what the parameter and absolute gadget is used to weigh. Enough is enough! Wake up Mother Continent, stand up to tear out war, rivalry and conflict tenet, instill peace, fraternity and communalism instead!

Being the birthplace of human life, the source of human ancestors, and the African continent is lagging behind, which is quite unfair. It shouldn’t lack peace even for a fraction of seconds. The continent now requires new elites in politics, business and culture to takeover more responsibilities.

Whatever the reality of the situation, solutions must be generated on the continent by its citizens instead of importing solutions to African problems. The solutions won’t be Africans and could never attract lasting healing if they are imported. Yes, no doubt, Africa shall continue rising provided that initiatives adopted to assist Africans are generated from research by African scholars, scientists, and prominent senior citizens thereby building lasting peace, heartiest censuses and even unwavering social cohesion.

In sum, leaders of the continent have to be well aware of all the problems and devise possible mechanisms to make their continent anew. Africa must be emancipated from within to flourish in peace, security, economic growth and lasting development. Most importantly, by assisting in the prevention and resolution of violent conflicts all citizens of the continent are also contributing to the prevention of war, conflict and poverty.

Opinion

AU summit enables member states to develop common education vision

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Education is a fundamental human right that is essential for accomplishing collective socioeconomic development goals. When a country fails to provide accessible and inclusive education, it may be considered as denying the people’s rights. It also restricts the possibilities for structural reform.

In many respects, education is essential to a nation’s progress. It gives people the abilities, knowledge, and skills necessary for economic growth and production. Driving innovation, technical advancement, and general economic development requires a workforce with a high level of education.

When people receive high-quality education, they are better able to escape poverty, find higher-paying employment, and support the nation’s economic expansion. Furthermore, it has a strong correlation with better health results. People with higher levels of education are more likely to make knowledgeable decisions about their health, which improves health outcomes and practices for both the person and the community.

By encouraging tolerance, understanding, and respect for differences, education may strengthen social cohesiveness. It makes society more stable and cohesive, encourages social mobility, and lessens social inequality. Additionally, it guarantees the advancement of democracy and good governance as a well-informed populace is more likely to engage in democratic procedures, hold public servants responsible, and support the general growth of democratic institutions.

As a result, education is acknowledged as being crucial to national development in all development frameworks, whether they are created by continental or international organizations. Thus, to support the goals of the various development frameworks, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2063, education in Africa has been given top priority for significant investment. However, quantity, quality, and equal access remain major barriers. Here, the question is whether the curriculum and educational system now in place can equip young Africans to handle the complex issues facing the continent.

Nearly one in two youth worldwide will be African Americans by 2030. Unfortunately, the necessary skills for Africans to fully engage in a changing workforce are not aligned with the evolving dynamics of the population. The UN 2022 report reveals that 40% of children from the poorest families do not complete primary school, compared to 80 % of children from the richest families who do. Additionally, UNESCO reports that over 700 million youths and adults lack basic literacy skills, with a larger proportion of women than men. According to the most current (UNESCO/AUC 2023) reports, girls from the lowest households have nil upper secondary completion rates in several African nations. Furthermore, Africa accounts for approximately 0.1 % of global innovation, with continental research and development spending averaging only 0.45 percent of

GDP. Furthermore, Africa accounts for only 0.5 percent of worldwide patent applications, compared to Asia’s 66.8 %.

These statistics clearly demonstrated that the existing African curriculum and educational system are inadequate in preparing young Africans to deal with the continent’s complicated difficulties. As a result, Africans should commit to and increase their investment in their education system since it helps them improve productive capacities and promote global competitiveness. Sustainable industrialization and economic diversification continue to be the most potential sources of employment and income growth. As a result, improvement in education is imperative for Africa.

Taking these realities into account, this year’s Africa Union Heads of States and Governments Summit chose education as the most significant subject. The African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, hosted the Summit. The 2024 AU theme is “Educate and Skill Africa for the 21st Century.”

Although each African country has its unique education system, quality education remains a concern. The region needs a digital transformation of educational systems as the global workforce undergoes a digital change. As a result, the summit encourages all African nations to collaborate on infrastructure and resource investments, as well as the development of appropriate curricula that allow Africa to capitalize on its natural and human wealth, as well as the demographic dividend.

It enables them to develop collaboration between industry and educational institutions to match curriculum with job market demands. Improvements in the efficiency of educational spending and investments through strengthened performance accountability frameworks can also yield results. Accordingly, the summit also paved the way for cross-continental educational networks to promote intra-Africa knowledge sharing and mutual recognition of education and training systems and qualifications.

In this way, they can produce continental citizens who can bring the skills required for many sectors of Africa. This, as a result, supports the continent to be self-sufficient in terms of smart agricultural technologies, digital platforms, e-commerce, automation, and artificial intelligence. It also allows Africa to achieve Agenda 2063 Aspiration 1 which calls for a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development.

In general, Africa should invest in education since it is not only necessary for individual growth and development, but also plays an important role in pushing a country’s overall advancement and development. A well-educated population is the cornerstone for long-term economic growth, social advancement, and general prosperity, whereas inadequate investment stifles national, continental, and global development. As a result, the summit pushes member states to adopt a common education curriculum and vision that extends and enhances education to provide world-class learning and research infrastructure.

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The Ethiopian Herald

Art & Culture

Adwa Museum: Preserving Ethiopia's Historic Triumph

BY NAOL GIRMA

A massive project that borders Piasa, the Minelik Monument, and the Church of St. George of Arada is located in the centre of Addis Ababa. Additionally, a bridge connects it to the newly remodelled Municipality of Addis Ababa Mayor's Office.

More significantly, the historical event that the Adwa Museum project is meant to honour is the reason for its size. Unlike other African nations' bent, this huge government undertaking honours the Adwa Victory, which preserved Ethiopia's independence and sparked anti-colonial movements in numerous other nations.

The museum's principal architect, Eskender Wubetu, stated that this massive project is about more than merely using building design to fulfil a client's objectives; like other works, it goes beyond that. It is more than just a building, according to Eskender, who has conducted extensive experiments with the idea of urban architecture. It is situated on more than 1.5 hectares of land.

The project began with the city's original plans for the structure, which were led by Takele Uma, a former deputy mayor of Addis Ababa. Ensuring that the building stays within the same footprint as the Minelik monument and does not rise to an excessive height is one of the top priorities for the administration.

The Adwa Museum has four main entrances that allow access to various areas of the building with various amenities and features. Heroes of the South, Heroes of the North, Heroes of the East, and Heroes of the West are shown at the names of the entrances. Eskender said that history shows that there has been involvement in the war from all sides of Ethiopia. So they are all represented in direction. "It is the feeling and the likeness when the doors are named," he says, explaining the reasoning behind the name.

The main issue I tried at the Adwa Museum was the idea of incorporating Ethiopian symbols and manifestations into the design of a building.

The architect also says that signs taken from the Axum monument and Lalibela architecture are also reflected in the building's stair supports and corridor areas.

Eskender says that when he was working on the design of the Adwa Museum, it included about 40 sculptures related to the war. The architect noted that half of these standing and wall-to-wall shapes have been made, adding that "some of them are expected to work in the future."

Among the monuments currently carved are those of Emperor Minelik and Empress Taitu, as well as 12 veterans of the war. The statue of Emperor Minelik and Empress Taitu sit side by side on the plaza where the water fountain is located. Monuments to war veterans are also placed on columns located on the exterior of City Hall.

According to Eskender, further ideas were included in the design he originally made regarding the layout of the monuments. In the design, the monuments of the 12 military commanders were placed on one chamber. The Empress Taitu's statue was also designed to be placed in the centre of a water fountain built as a memorial to the war style brought by the



Queen in the Battle of Mekele.

According to the architect, the crucial of the sculptural works housed in the Adwa Museum is settled on the design of the building so that they can be made of bronze. However, he added that the material currently used for the construction of the monuments is different.

He said mechanical, electrical and audio-visual works were also carried out very intensively with the construction of the museum, adding that the materials used during the construction process were also standardized. We've done everything we can to make sure that we're doing the right thing. We're always here without doing other jobs for a long time. No building like this can be perfect, and I know there's going to be a lot of criticism. But we tried to do everything we could.

The project consists of several multipurpose buildings, the main one being the Adwa Memorial Museum, along with an amphitheatre and library. Interestingly, the museum is connected to a cutting-edge parking structure that can hold more than 1,000 cars at once. Additionally, the museum will honour the bravery of common people who bravely defended the country's sovereignty—a victory that has since made the black community as a whole extremely proud of.

"From the intricate geopolitical climate of the era to the meticulous preparations undertaken by Emperor Menelik II and his generals, the museum will allow visitors to explore and understand the battle's historical context," he explained.

Immersed in history, the museum will proudly display a vast array of artifacts, including weapons, uniforms, and personal belongings of the brave soldiers who valiantly fought in the Battle of Adwa, forming a tangible connection to the past.

Eskender says the museum has more to offer. As visitors step in, they will encounter an array of immersive and interactive exhibits that transport them back to the historic battlefield. Through cutting-edge audio-visual presentations and virtual reality technology, guests will witness pivotal moments of the battle, gaining a deeper understanding of the strategies employed by both sides.

The museum's commitment to creating a sense

of presence is expected to enable visitors to experience the intensity and drama of the conflict.

However, the scope of the museum goes far beyond the military aspects of the battle, delving into its political, social, and cultural dimensions, offering visitors a comprehensive exploration of the battle.

Thematic exhibits also shed light on Emperor Menelik II's diplomatic efforts to rally support from other nations, underscoring the global significance of the Battle of Adwa. It will also explore the profound impact of this historic event on Ethiopian identity and consciousness, emphasizing its role as a transformative moment in the nation's history.

The museum aims to serve as a platform for reinvigorating the spirit of Pan-Africanism and celebrating the remarkable victory of Ethiopia's forefathers.

"The museum itself will house thematic exhibits that depict the sacrifice of Ethiopian warriors, honour the military leaders, and celebrate the integrity and ingenuity of Ethiopian women," he emphasized. Notably, one of the key themes will be the invaluable role of Ethiopian women in the Battle of Adwa.

He also notes the pivotal contributions of Ethiopian women in the conflict. "Ethiopian women played crucial roles as strategists, suppliers, and fighters in the battle," he explained. "Their extraordinary contributions will be prominently highlighted, paying tribute to their strength and resilience."

Visitors will have the opportunity to learn about notable women such as Empress Taytu, whose significant role in the battle's success will be showcased.

In addition to its enlightening exhibits, the Adwa Zero Kilometers Project encompasses various facilities designed to enrich the visitor experience. An impressive amphitheater will serve as a venue for performances, lectures, and cultural events, fostering the appreciation of Ethiopian arts and traditions. A well-equipped library and research center will provide invaluable resources for scholars and researchers interested in studying the Battle of Adwa and its broader historical context, ensuring that the museum serves as a hub for knowledge and exploration.



Within the sprawling complex, a dedicated youth center awaits, poised to ignite the passion for learning and heritage among young Ethiopians. These educational spaces will offer engaging programs and workshops, meticulously designed to instill a profound sense of pride and identity within the younger generation.

By immersing them in the history and legacy of the Battle of Adwa, the center aims to ensure that this remarkable triumph continues to reverberate through the annals of Ethiopian history.

As visitors explore the museum, they will also have the opportunity to delve into the world of Ethiopian cinema. The cinema halls will showcase a captivating selection of documentaries and films, presenting a delightful blend of entertainment and enlightenment. Audiences will be transported through time, experiencing the vibrant tapestry of Ethiopian history and culture in a visually captivating manner.

Beyond the screens, the museum complex houses a gymnasium that not only promotes physical well-being but also serves as a recreational space, where visitors can engage in healthy activities.

The victory at the Battle of Adwa in March 1896 remains an indelible triumph, echoing with profound reverberations across the African continent and beyond. This historic event shattered Europe's perception of African inferiority, challenging the prevailing notion of European invincibility. It served as a clarion call for colonized African nations to rise up and demand their independence, becoming a beacon of hope and inspiration for future liberation struggles.

The Battle of Adwa became a symbol of African resistance against colonialism, forever etched into the collective memory of the African Diaspora and the emerging Pan-African movement.

The Adwa Zero Kilometers Museum stands as a testament to this extraordinary victory, beckoning visitors to embark on a journey of learning, reflection, and connection with their past. By preserving and promoting the history of the Battle of Adwa, the museum aims to reinforce national pride and unity, while fostering a deeper appreciation for Ethiopia's diverse cultural heritage.

With its grand opening on the horizon, the museum holds the promise of becoming a catalyst for tourism and economic development in the region, breathing new life into the once-depressed and demolished Addis Ababa and beckoning the world to uncover its hidden treasures.

Law & Politics

Shedding more light on the Victory of Adwa

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

A lot has been said about the Victory of Adwa but reports show that not everybody in Ethiopia has managed to appreciate well what exactly it means to the history of the country and how exactly it changed its position and status in the world. It is known that the Victory of Adwa was a huge blow to all colonialists not only the Italian forces who had thought that colonizing Ethiopia was a walk in a park. Some historians have said the Italian forces never expected such resistance and organisation or fire power, the resolve of the patriots, and probably they may have been misinformed and misled about Ethiopian troops, their courage and resolve to fight up to the end of their resources. Instead they had to face defeat and consequent humiliation not only for them but also for others who supported or encouraged them to embark on the invasion of Ethiopia. On the other hand, Ethiopians and all those who identified with them and supported their cause were exhilarated with the news of the victory. They felt proud of the exploit by Ethiopian troops.

It is sad to see that many present day Ethiopians seem to undermine this huge victory or take it for granted as if it was a simple endeavour. It has instead changed the history of relations between colonialists and those who were subjected to exploitation and indignity of all types. The old narrative that Europeans always had the upper hand when it comes to fighting with Africans was also changed after Adwa. Reports show that when the news of the defeat of the colonialists by the invaded Ethiopian troops was disseminated European governments were surprised and anxious about how to operate their colonies in Africa. They tried to down play the news and prevent it from getting full dissemination in their colonies. Reports of those days have also shown that Adwa was such an extraordinary event that it was bound to change history, especially for those who were under oppression or subjugation and were suffering in injustice.

In any case, the history of Adwa has not been told in grand and extended detail because the focus was always only on the result and the main protagonists of the victory. However, the battle of Adwa was a complex and long history that has changed life in the entire country. Citizens were asked to prepare for the war because 'an alien force has come to deprive you of your land, your freedom and religion. Hence we should all mobilize and be prepared for a hard struggle.' Those were more less the words of the then emperor who launched the campaign.

It was Emperor Menelik II who made the declaration of war admonishing every capable citizen not to stay behind. As the emperor was very popular, the entire nation got mobilized and prepared its



provisions, arms and ammunitions with all they could avail. The place where every one was to gather was months of foot walk and there were several challenges even to reach the place of gathering. It involved huge logistic challenge and there were the huge efforts of organizers including women. As there were so many animals that helped in the transport of provisions and other materials, there were people who were assigned to take care of all these activities.

The preparation of food for the tens of thousands of troops was another massive challenge. In fact, the country was also undergoing challenging days in terms of harvest and agricultural products. It was all a sort of state of emergency and they had to move into the right direction. At the same time there were artists who with their war chants kept the morale of the troops high and incited them to be brave, courageous and expect victory in confidence over the alien invaders. In all these operations the strategic leadership of the Emperor and his spouse was indispensable and irreplaceable and got the admiration of all those who reported on the victory. That was where the wisdom of the emperor was well highlighted by both friends and foe alike.

Motivating the troops for the necessary sacrifice was very important because without belief in what they were doing there would not have been any chance of victory. The troops were all ready to die for their dignity, pride and freedom and every one of them was proud of their engagement in the campaign. The Battle of Adwa hence had immense activities that had to be channeled to one huge objective that is victory. And yet few Ethiopian scholars have written to the deserved details and depth commensurate with its glory. As a milestone in the history of black people of the world beyond Ethiopia, it deserved huge research and not be limited to being observed only on

a day in a year event that occurs on March 2.

Undoubtedly the Adwa Victory Memorial has now gone a huge step in to filling this vacuum to a certain extent. The fact that this memorial outlines to a great length the entire operations in the Victory of Adwa is a significant step in terms of showcasing the various aspects of the battle and how it managed to inspire the history of all Africans. The memorial depicts the images of the main protagonists of the battle and the background to the war but it also highlights the role of women and others who normally do not feature in the history of this battle. Moreover, the Memorial also depicts the implications of the victory in the Panafrikan movement. Finally Addis Ababa is now blessed with this immense, state of the art memorial that can now inspire every Ethiopian who visits it.

Furthermore, the Memorial is also an attractive tourist destination because many Africans have not had enough exposure with the history of Adwa. Now a visit to the Adwa Victory Memorial would fill that gap stimulating for further study and research. Young Ethiopians will not only be aware of the story but get further motivated to study in depth the various facets of the war and victory as well as the consequences of the victory. They will appreciate more the immense sacrifices their forefathers and foremothers have paid to preserve the country free and sovereign. It is often said that freedom is not a gift that is presented on a golden plate but a precious thing for which bitter fighting and struggle is imperative. Most of those who took part in the inauguration of the memorial were heard stating that just as we got organized and fought hard to defeat the invaders we have to organize, work hard and defeat our current shortcomings with a united effort.

Above all what Adwa showed to the

world is that with unity anything is possible. Ethiopians should learn from Adwa that united they can overcome any challenge including poverty, ignorance and drought or any other challenges such as the environment. We have seen that differences along political lines could be natural and even healthy but resorting to armed struggle involving a lot of violence and casualties and waste of so much economic resources in today's world is unimaginable and destined to fail.

Today we can achieve any political objective using peaceful means, sitting at a table and negotiating. The costs of conflicts we have seen even very recently were extremely high and yet they did not offer permanent solutions. The violence only exacerbated our problems with a huge cost in terms of resources both human and material. President Sahlework Zewde highlighted this point at the inaugural ceremony of the Adwa Victory Memorial while Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said we must inherit the values of Adwa and put them in practice.

Adwa is a living witness that unity is bound to win even against formidable enemies. It is hence an inspiration and the fact that the Adwa Victory Memorial is placed right in the heart of Addis will be a golden opportunity to offer us the right stimulus to go ahead and try to face our current challenges in unison.

The Victory of Adwa has now got its deserved place in our day to day life because we should never forget the tremendous sacrifices paid to achieve such a huge and glorious history. More books will be written about this story; more films will be made around the various protagonists of the battle, and many unknown facts will be revealed and reported. The Adwa Victory Memorial is hence a tremendous stimulus to help fill this huge gap. Ethiopians must own their history and avail of its positive messages in their day to day livelihood.



“Any sort of politics in the Horn that doesn’t recognize Ethiopia’s right to have access to a port won’t be successful,”

Brook Hailu Beshah (prof)

BY MESERET BEHAILU

Our today’s guest is Professor Brook Hailu Beshah. He served in North Carolina State University, Department of Political Science, and an online adjunct professor at the Scripps School of Journalism, Ohio University. He has 30 years of lecturing experience in political science and international relations and years of foreign policy and diplomacy experience in bilateral and multilateral fora.

In his diplomatic life, he was Ethiopia’s special envoy, Minister Plenipotentiary, D/Ambassador of Ethiopia to the United States. He also worked at the UN in Paris/UNESCO. He is also president of the recently established Ethiopian Diplomatic Association. Enjoy reading!

How do you appraise Ethiopia’s give-and-take diplomatic strategy in the pursuit protecting its national interest?

Ethiopia’s diplomatic activity has not come forth suddenly; it could be traced back to centuries. The country boasts an age-long diplomatic history, or it has been engaged in diplomatic activity for thousands of years. The diplomatic relations we had with Rome during the period of King Kaleb could be a case in point in this regard. Over the last 150 years, Ethiopia has been actively engaging in diplomatic relationships with many countries.

During the period of Emperor Haileselese I, Ethiopia had a strong diplomatic activity, when compared with its predecessors. Over the past five years, Ethiopia’s diplomatic activities have been far greater than in previous times as well.

The Horn region lacks peace and Ethiopia is central in terms of its strategic position. Diplomatic activities in the region have a direct or indirect bearing on Ethiopia’s interests. The reverse is also true: The neighboring Somalia, Kenya, Djibouti, Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan, and Somaliland are intertwined in one way or the other.

Presently, our diplomatic activity is at its peak. One of Ethiopia’s principles is creating sustainable tranquility with its neighbors. Ethiopia upholds firmly the international principle of creating peaceful coexistence.

Given the facts about Ethiopia such as its large territory, huge population number and expanding economy, the country could play a pivotal role in the region. Credible international institutions forecast Ethiopia’s economy as one of the fastest growing in Africa, which is the reflection of the thriving diplomatic activity. Consequently, the achievements of Ethiopia would create a positive impact on its neighbors. Ethiopia, in while safeguarding its national interest, pursues a policy of win-win approach,

which is very important for the region and beyond. Ethiopia should also create a lasting peace internally.

Because the East African Region is at times volatile, it is expected that one of the agendas of the AU could focus on Ethiopia’s quest to have access to the sea and its relations with Ethiopia, Somaliland, and Egypt.

Can you share with me what is expected of our diplomats?

I believe Ethiopia needs to have trained, professional and proficient diplomats, who are equipped with the ability to encounter emerging issues. We need to have well-disciplined diplomats with a strong moral compass, who put the country first.

Ethiopia’s MoU with Somaliland has made headlines on international media. Do you think the signing of the agreement goes against the interest of Somalia?

Over the past 30 years, Ethiopia has no access to the sea. Ethiopia had its own port in earlier times. The previous government has made historical mistakes. The previous Ethiopian government could have negotiated access to the sea.

Consequently, the country is exposed to the present state of affairs. The United Nations Conventions and the law of the sea would permit them to access the sea. About 44 countries in the world are landlocked and do not have access to the sea. Ethiopia, a country with over 120 million people, is the most populous of the landlocked countries. Kazakhstan is another country, that is landlocked, that has a vast territorial landscape.

European countries such as Austria, Switzerland, and Luxembourg are landlocked countries, but have no access to the sea. Accordingly, they use the **Rhine and Danube Rivers** to import and export goods. Unfortunately, Ethiopia has no river that connects it to the sea. In the case, where Ethiopia decides to construct a tunnel, it requires the consent of Eritrea. The MoU signed



between Somaliland and Ethiopia, which is initiated by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (Ph.D), should be supported, appreciated and recognized as a bold move by Ethiopia to address its quest to have access to the sea.

It goes without saying: Ethiopia has considered various sea ports and has also conducted studies on the possible options before deciding on Somaliland.

Ethiopia has chosen Somaliland as the best possible options for access to the sea. Ethiopia’s request to have access to the sea outlets is based on the willingness of Somaliland.

When we come to the AU for instance, there are some countries that believe in the importance of accepting colonial boundaries. Somalia joined the AU after the unification with Somaliland; When we talk about present-day Somalia, it includes Somaliland. Currently, some countries opened representatives and consulates, such as Djibouti, Egypt, Denmark, Turkey and Ethiopia. This,

I believe, is a de facto recognition of Somaliland.

Somaliland has existed as an independent country for the last 33 years. Not recognizing this fact can be considered as denying the reality. The bold move of Ethiopia to directly interact with Somaliland, I predict, would be followed by other countries to eventually recognize Somaliland as an independent country.

The MoU between Ethiopia and Somaliland would eventually be followed by a detailed and comprehensive agreement in regard to access to the sea. It might be difficult for the AU to take a position currently.

It should be understood that Ethiopian soldiers under AMISOM are in Somalia since 2007, which was replaced by ATMIS in 2022. Ethiopia has played a greater role by joining AMISOM as a peacekeeping force, playing a pivotal role

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One of Ethiopia's principles is creating sustainable tranquility with its neighbors. Ethiopia upholds firmly the international principle of creating peaceful coexistence

in the maintenance of peace and security in Somalia and lifting Somalia out of the category of "failed state". Considerable number of Ethiopian soldiers given up their life for Somalia, fighting Alshabab and in the maintenance of peace and security in Somalia. Be it Somaliland, Somalia or Ethiopia: In this globalized world all of the countries are aspiring to bring about regional economic and political integration in the Horn.

How can Ethiopia create awareness of entities about the Sea Access to get more supports?

That is a key question. We need to reflect on the following important points: Given Ethiopia is a country with a total population of 120 million and a wider territory, any sort of politics that does not recognize Ethiopia's right to have access to the sea will not be successful. If Ethiopia has access to the sea, it is an opportunity to register integrated economic growth among countries in the Horn. It can play an enhanced role in the maintenance of peace and security in the Red Sea and Gulf of Eden areas, given its military strength as well as its naval forces, when it is deployed in the near future.

Almost 10 countries such as Japan, China, USA, Germany and Italy have crossed oceans and opened bases in Djibouti for the maintenance of peace and security in the region. Given this fact, there is no reason that Ethiopia cannot equally play a stabilizing role in the region by having sea access as well as maintaining robust naval forces fighting sea piracy and sea

terrorism. The presence of Ethiopia is a plus to international and regional powers that have opened bases in this part of the world.

What do you advise Addis Ababa, Mogadishu, and Hargessa to do to create excellent relations?

Hopefully, better days are on the horizon. What is important here is accepting the reality that a political entity called Somaliland has existed for the last 33 years and has literally almost all features of statehood.

Ethiopia is on the verge of officially recognizing Somaliland's independence. Other countries would follow Ethiopia's lead. One wishes for Somalia to be stable and to have a far-sighted leadership and stable government. I see no reason that Somaliland can live in peace with Somalia, just like Ethiopia, after so many ups and downs to a reality to accept Eritrea's independence. The three countries can work together to bring regional economic integration for the wellbeing of their people.

Let's move to Ethiopia's diplomatic week. What relevance can you see in observing it?

The exhibition is well-organized, and hats off for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ethiopian Press Agency. It showcases Ethiopia's diplomatic journey. It is good to see the diplomatic community actively participating in the parallel meetings that were organised. I have found the exhibition to be a source of a rich resource for researchers,

students and all those who are eager to know about the start and progress of Ethiopian diplomacy, since Ethiopian diplomacy started 116 years ago. I suggest the exhibition to be placed in a permanent place for all to see, if possible in the future as well.

What do you think of the role of the government in terms of strengthening its foreign diplomacy?

The Foreign Affairs Ministry is the responsible body for directing the country's foreign and diplomatic activities. In addition, in this age and time Ethiopian foreign policy should give attention to citizen diplomacy and digital diplomacy. Ethiopians should contribute as "diplomats" whenever opportunities arise. The young generation can consider to join the political science and international relations field of studies, which would enable them to join the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as career diplomats.

Veteran Diplomats should provide advice and assistance. In regard to mentoring the young generation as well as assisting the ministry, one new development that is worth mentioning is the establishment of the Ethiopian Diplomatic Association. Members of this association are literally veterans, former and current diplomats, who have served in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The governing document is ratified and the leadership of the Association has been elected.

What is in store for Ethiopia's future diplomacy?

In the future Ethiopia needs to focus on digital diplomacy. Basic digital diplomacy has already started in Ethiopia. Ethiopian diplomacy should come of age by intensifying digital diplomacy. Ethiopia needs to modernize and update its diplomatic operations with modern technologies. In the African continent Ethiopia stands out by its diplomatic representations as well as by having a well-organized diplomatic activity in the world arena. Hence, this should be further strengthened in the near future.

Last week, the government led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed appointed Ambassador Taye AtskeSelassie as Foreign Affairs Minister of Ethiopia. What would it add to the advancement of Ethiopian diplomacy?

Yes, Ambassador Taye was appointed as Foreign Affairs Minister of Ethiopia. I would like to use this opportunity to congratulate the new foreign minister. I will say, for the first time a career diplomat like Amb. Taye has become a Minister. And this is a right choice, for he worked for 30 plus years, starting from the lowest rank all the way up. This shows us the future direction and attention of Dr. Abiy to place professional and competent people in the right position. As far as I know, he served in Sweden, Cairo, Washington, Los Angeles, and New York.

I wish the new foreign minister good luck.

Thanks

It is my pleasure.

Society

Expanding pre-primary schools in rural Ethiopia to improve early, quality education

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

Improving the quality of education has become among the key priority areas of the national reform in Ethiopia. Ethiopia, during the past two or three decades, has registered remarkable achievements in expanding access to education. The country's continued endeavors in expanding primary education nationwide helped it to score extraordinary outcomes in the education sector. With this sustained effort to achieve universal access to education for the past several years, currently around 30 million students are attending their education from primary to higher education level.

Though the effort to access education has helped the country to reduce the rate of illiteracy and bring more children to schools, quality education remains a serious challenge that the country cannot overcome. Considering the role of education for the overall development of the country, since recent years especially following the 2018 reform, Ethiopia has turned its face to improve the quality of education. As part of this effort, a number of reform measures are being taken concurrent to expanding schools across the country to achieve universal access.

Just to mention but a few, improving the standard of schools, reforming the education system, introducing school feeding programs to support children from low-income families and expanding pre-primary education are among the actions being undertaken. These days, seeing pre-primary (kindergarten) education centers in urban areas is common and in turn, children from age four to six have got the opportunity to join preschools and attend their pre-primary education before joining grade-1 at the age of seven. However, this does not mean that the expansion of pre-primary education in the rural parts of the country was not as such successful because until recent years pre-primary schools were not expanded at the desired level and the pace remained slower. But, following the reform in the education sector after the national reform, expanding pre-primary education becomes part and parcel of the education reform to ensure quality education.



Tolossa Terefe, Head of Southwest Shoa Zone Administration, Oromia State

Recently, a team of journalists from the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) had a chance to visit Southwest Shoa Zone of Oromia State and Dawro zone of the South West Ethiopia Peoples' State.

Administrators of the two zones told the journalists that improving quality education is among the priority tasks of the administrations. According to the administrators, expanding pre-primary education in the rural parts of the zones is the major task in the education sector.

Southwest Shoa Zone Administration Office Head, Tolossa Terefe said that various tasks are being underway to ensure quality education from pre-primary up to secondary education in the zone. Currently, over 309,000 students are attending their education, from pre-primary to secondary, in 450 schools located in the zone.

According to him, developing the standard of schools is part of the reform measures in the zone and the zone is hugely investing to improve the quality of education in the zone. As part of this effort and to improve the standard of the schools, the zone opened three special high schools.

"The zone has opened three special high schools with the capacity of accommodating 340 students each targeting to promote and recognize top scorer students of grade eight. These high schools, known as 'Efa Boru' have become operational since this Ethiopian academic year," he remarked.

In addition to the efforts to bring



Dawit Gebeyehu, Chief Administrator of Dawro Zone, Southwest Ethiopia's State

about quality education in primary and secondary schools, the zone intensifies expanding pre-primary education in the rural parts of the zone. In this regard, the zone is working to open one pre-primary school in each school in the zone, Tolossa added.

According to Tolossa, since last year, the zone is extensively engaged in expanding pre-primary (kindergarten) schools in the rural areas of the zone. Mentioning the initiative by State's President, Shimelis Abdissa to open one kindergarten across all schools in the rural part of Oromia state, Tolossa said that to get the initiative off the ground, South West Shoa Zone has started opening kindergartens in the rural schools.

"In urban areas, pre-primary school is common and children from age three to four have the chance to join kindergartens easily. But, kindergartens are rare, and almost unavailable in the rural parts until the recent initiative," the Head reiterated. Lack of access to pre-primary education in the areas forced rural children to start their formal education and join grade one without having any knowhow about education and the school environment. This, in turn, brings about undesirable impacts in the performance of the rural students and lowers their competitiveness with the urban students. The majority of the people reside in rural areas; and expanding pre-primary education in the rural parts of the country is key to promote

early education of children.

"Investing in pre-primary education and allowing all children to get access to pre-primary education means working at the grassroots level and cultivating tomorrow's generation," Tolossa noted. To realize the plan of opening pre-primary schools in all schools across the zone, in the last Ethiopian academic year, 221 new pre-primary (kindergarten) schools were built and started providing service in rural parts of the zone. "In this academic year, our plan was to open 94 new kindergarten schools in the remaining kebeles and so far we can realize the establishments of 85 schools," the Head pronounced.

Now, rural children have access to pre-primary education like children in urban areas. "This is one step forward achieved within a short period of time; and we will continue the efforts - expanding pre-primary schools."

Stating that the number of pre-primary schools in the zone has increased to 400 owing to the efforts, Tolossa highlighted the importance of further investment to curtail limitations faced in the sector.

By the same token, Dawro Zone of South West Ethiopia's State is also striving to improve quality education and improve the standards of schools across the zone. "Improving the standards of schools and enhancing education quality is a priority area of the zone," Dawro Zone Chief Administrator said.

Approached by EPA journalists, Zone's Chief Administrator, Dawit Gebeyehu stated that as part of the efforts to ensure quality education, efforts are underway in developing the skills of teachers, improving the standards of schools, expanding schools and pre-primary education in the zone.

With regard to pre-primary education, Dawit said that expanding kindergarten is crucial to ensure quality education as it helps to work on the base. As to him, though the expansion of kindergarten in the rural areas of the zone is at its early stage, various activities are underway to expand pre-primary education in the rural areas. The efforts are bringing meaningful developments in the rural parts of the zone though a lot remains to be done, he said.

Verbatim and Caption

Ethiopia calls AU to include Amharic as working language



Empowering indigenous African languages would help for the continent's progress. It would honor Africa's linguistic diversity and strengthen our collective identity as Africans. Ethiopia proposes the inclusion of Amharic as official language of the African Union. Having many millions of speakers, Amharic should be adopted as AU's official language. The adoption of Amharic as AU official language will strengthen the collective identity of AU member states.

Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie, Ethiopian Foreign Affairs Minister during the opening session of the 44th African Union Executive Council

AUC Chairperson calls for peaceful resolution of conflicts

Different African countries are unfortunately facing serious situations of armed conflicts. Sudan is in flames and in incredible devastation, Somalia is still under the Jihadist threat, the Democratic Republic Congo and Libya are divided and constantly exposed to instability meanwhile the Sahel is always exposed to the terrorist danger.

The resurgence of military coups, pre- and post-electoral violence, and humanitarian crises linked to war and the effects of Climate Change are all very serious sources of concern for Africa.

Leaders of conflict-ridden countries in the continent should strive for the peaceful resolution of conflicts for the sake of their people's wellbeing.

Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC) during the opening session of the 44th AU Executive Council



Verbatim and Caption

Celebrating, preserving Adwa victory



Ethiopians and all the black people should always celebrate and learn from the victory of Adwa that echoed across Africa, the Caribbean and the entire world. Adwa victory is a victory of all black people against colonialism and is celebrated far beyond Ethiopia by all the people who fought against oppression.

We have to preserve it well and pass it on to the next generation. Ethiopians have to learn from the unity and selfless sacrifice of our forefathers paid to protect Ethiopia's sovereignty. The current generation should draw essential lesson from victory of Adwa.

President Sahle-Work Zewdie, said during the inaugural ceremony of Adwa Victory Memorial last week



New generation should inherit assets of Adwa Victory: PM Abiy

Our forefathers had known on what issue they concur and beg to differ. They knew the difference between the government and the interests of the country. They had a full grasp of what that identifies government and state interest.

The new generation should inherit the positive assets of our forefathers that helped Ethiopia to secure its unity and sovereignty. Our forefathers understood the power of

unity and discernment. Inheriting this wisdom is crucial in nation-building process.

Harnessing the true spirit of the victory of Adwa by this generation would help to eradicate poverty, preserving dignity, ensure food security.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said inaugurating Adwa Memorial Museum in Addis Ababa



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The Vibrant Hub of Africa

Adwa Victory Memorial Museum: African victory alive to posterity

BY DIRRIBA TESHOME

Adwa Victory, Africa's pride victory, was honored in full glory adding new bright to Addis Ababa. The Adwa Victory Memorial Museum that last Sunday inaugurated in Ethiopia is belonged to all Africans as it commemorates African freedom victory, Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) said recently.

MoFA Minister Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie on last Wednesday's evening while hosting a state dinner for the participants of the 44th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of African Union (AU).

It was also learnt that before the dinner, the participants had visited the Adwa Victory Memorial Museum.

At the event, Amb. Taye said that Ethiopia's Adwa Victory Memorial Museum is at the disposal of all Africans as it stands to manifest the victory of Adwa that Africans achieved in the fight against colonization.

As to him, the resistance movements and the victory of Adwa played a pivotal role in promoting Pan-Africanism.

The Adwa victory was a historic triumph that ensured equality among human beings, he stressed.

"It is truly remarkable how this victory continues to inspire and unite African peoples all over the world. The Adwa Victory Memorial Museum belongs to all Africans; it belongs for all of us," Amb. Taye said.

The victory of Adwa is indeed a magnificent revival of the spirit of unity and an embodiment of patriotic leadership, celebrating and recalling Adwa, he noted.

The special monument is intended to understanding the past, remaking the present and shaping the future of Africa, he underscored.

The Adwa victory is an epoch defining moment in the African history, the FM said, adding the triumph of Ethiopian forces against the colonizer marked the first time an African country has successfully resisted foreign aggression.

