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Flagship dam's power generation units to see completion soon

• Entire project to be accomplished in 2025

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA-The construction of Abbay Dam's power generation units is going to be finalized in seven months, the Project Manager disclosed, adding that the entire project is set to be completed in 2025.

Abbay Dam Project Manager Kifle Horo (Eng.) mentioned that the civil work of the dam has been carried out without interruption and has reached 99 percent. The bridges that are being built across the dam and the entire construction of the hydroelectric power plant are scheduled to

be completed next year.

Kifle also said that the main part of the dam will contain 107 million cubic meters of concrete fill, adding that only one percent of this work is

See Flagship dam's ... Page 3

Telebirr transacts 1.9 trillion Birr over two-year

• To cover 50% of GDP transaction

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – Ethio telcom announced that it has managed to operate 1.9 trillion Birr transaction through telebirr digital platform since May, 2021.

In an exclusive interview with FBC, Ethio telecom Executive Officer Firehiwot Tamiru said that Telebirr mobile money has been playing a crucial role in ensuring financial services for inclusivity of the wider community and contributing to the realization of digital Ethiopia since it was launched in May 11, 2021.

Telebirr's role of ensuring the inclusivity and accessibility of financial services is not only limited to mobile money, but also reformed the overall financial sector landscape, she noted.

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Lawrence Freeman

Ethiopia's multiple port pursuit attests continental dev't, security: Analyst

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Ethiopia expanding off-grid projects to reach remote areas

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia is undertaking off-grid projects construction to provide electricity to communities located remotely from the national grid, the Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE) said.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, MoWE Minister Habatamultefa (PhD Eng.) stated that the construction of mini-grids of solar energy in Somali, Central Ethiopia, and Oromia states is progressing well.

The minister also said that Ethiopia's

immense potential for generating electricity from renewable sources including solar energy is largely untapped. Accordingly, the ministry is executing the construction of several off-grid projects considering the available resources and scarcity of energy.

The government is heavily investing in hydroelectric dams and several projects that would enable the country to diversify energy sources and generate electricity from wind, solar,

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Photo: Gebabo Gebrie

Habatamu Itefa (PhD Eng.)

Yesterday has already passed

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Ethiopia's impactful refugee handling experience

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If Ethiopia is going to have access to a port, then there must be have long term agreement, Lawrence Freeman explains why

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News



Mesfin Tadesse

Universities to teach environmental law to combat crimes

BY FIKADU BELAY

ADDIS ABABA—Ethiopia is working to teach environmental law at universities as a distinct field to prevent environmental crimes, Ethiopian Environmental Protection Authority (EEPA) disclosed.

EEPA Laws and Standards Desk Representative, Mesfin Tadesse told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the country has designed a curriculum to educate environmental law in universities as a stand-alone academic course aimed at preventing environmental crimes and establishing accountability.

The initiative helps to address the growing number of crimes against environmental resources, he said.

As to him, the universities should teach environmental law as a separate discipline in order to ensure accountability through strengthening resource mobilization and support the criminal investigation process.

He stated that in order to prevent environmental crimes and enhance environmental justice, EEPA encourages universities to provide dedicated education in environmental law, which possesses distinctive features.

According to Mesfin, police forces play a significant role in deterring environmental crimes and the Ethiopian Police University is giving training to this end which should be advanced to an academic course provided under a distinct field of study.

For the time being, the training covers environmental protection law in an effort to improve the information-gathering abilities of the force, he mentioned.

He believed that environmental security will be maintained once the police officers complete the training and perform in accordance with it.

The environmental crime protection education program at the Ethiopian Police University will ensure that environmental crimes are prosecuted justly, while strengthening police investigation and information management through education, he said.

Moreover, he remarked that the awareness of judges, prosecutors, and police officers regarding environmental issues is essential for understanding the progression from information gathering to the delivery of justice, thereby increasing accountability.

The Representative further stated that professionally trained human resources are crucial to preventing environmental crimes and ensuring environmental safety. Efforts are underway to produce skilled manpower in this field.

In this sense, authority plans are being made to offer the profession at an advanced level within government and private colleges.

MoTRI set to implement digital system for business community

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA—The Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration (MoTRI) said it has been working tirelessly to implement a digital system that will create an enabling environment for the business community.

MoTRI Licensing and Regulatory Lead Executive Jirata Namera told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that consolidated efforts are underway to execute a digital system that will provide seamless and credible service for the business community.

For the past three years, the MoTRI has been providing online service for the trade community that has enabled it to save the latter's time, energy, and cost. Accordingly, the Ministry attained 90 percent of the plan set to register and license trade documents in the online platform during the past six months of the current fiscal year.

The online system has enabled the business community to easily register and obtain trade permits and the Ministry introduced a 965

toll-free number for complaints. Besides, due attention has been given to addressing the business community's demand for all-in-one service, Jirata added.

Due to the desire to develop the online system, the MoTRI planned to launch an "Integrated Companies Operation System" that would deliver a holistic service for the business community. To this end, the ministry has been partnering with various stakeholders including the National ID Program, banks, and the Ethiopian Customs Commission.

"Such digitalization would be paramount to provide efficient and cost-effective service, identifying illegal actors in the trade value chain and curtailing malpractices."

He further highlighted that the Ministry is establishing a Modern Data Center to provide viable information for the business community and to advance the penetration of digitization in Ethiopia's trade system. "However, there is a lack of awareness among the business community towards the online service due to their long reliance on



Jirata Namera

the manual approach."

Accordingly, it is crucial to provide awareness-building programs to the business community to achieve the desired results from the digitization of the trading system, Jirata emphasized.



Ethiopians win third Huawei ICT competition in Tunisia

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

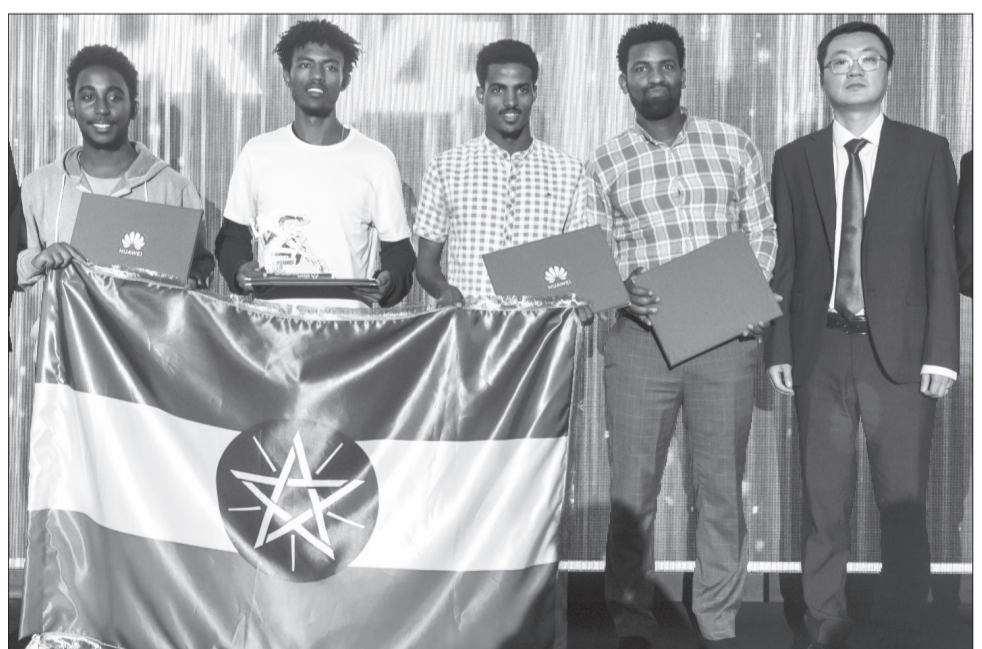
ADDIS ABABA—Ethiopian team won in the Huawei ICT competition global final held from March 5 to 8, 2024, in Tunisia, Huawei stated.

In the press release sent to *The Ethiopian Herald*, Ethiopian team with three students in a computing track won third place, following Morocco and Tunisia.

The students come from Ethiopia, Mali, Cameroon, Senegal, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Morocco competed in the contest.

The company awarded the students Huawei's latest mobile, while the rest of the six students were awarded Huawei tablets for their participation. The company also acknowledged the instructors for supporting their students. Of the three students appeared for competition, two are from Addis Ababa Science and Technology and one from Arbaminch Universities.

Huawei Public Relations Director, Liming Ye said that Huawei will continue providing students with a platform to compete healthily, exchange ideas, and enhance their ICT knowledge as well as practical skills, it would also increase their ability to innovate by using



new technologies and platforms.

The competition brought together 30 teams from nine countries across North, West, and Central Africa. Ethiopia was represented by nine students, divided into three teams, participating in three different categories: cloud track, computing track, and network track, the company added.

"All winning students will have the opportunity to participate in the final phase, which will take place in China in 2024 which will get over 20,000 students from 500 universities involved."

The Huawei ICT Competition is a competitive ICT talent exchange event designed for global college students.

News

Forum renews commitment to cooperate with Ethiopia

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA-The High Level Development Forum expressed commitment to establish a renewed partnership with Ethiopia.

The 2024 high-level development forum praised Ethiopia's leadership in implementing the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) and promoting an inclusive National Dialogue for lasting peace.

It has expressed commitment to support Ethiopia in its journey towards economic growth, prosperity thereby benefiting all its citizens.

Peace dividends need to be implemented inclusively through the CoHA, with meaningful involvement of women, youth and other marginalized groups like ethnic and religious minorities.



The communiqué underscored the importance of the Government of Ethiopia's efforts, with the support of the international community to fulfill its commitment to peace, social and economic development, human rights and prosperity. "We are committed to supporting the implementation of the reforms and the

adequate financing, which will be essential for restoring favorable macroeconomic conditions for the Ten-Year Development Plan and HGER as well as making an important contribution to sustaining peace," the communiqué stated.

The communiqué urged the need for humanitarian assistance to prevent a catastrophe and calls for sustained financial flows. Participants stated that transparent, accountable, and protected aid delivery to vulnerable groups is quite important. They also appreciate Ethiopia's commitment to host refugees and address internal displacement requests.

Furthermore, Participants acknowledged the challenges posed by climate change, conflict, COVID-19, and global economic downturn and pledge support for Ethiopia's efforts to ensure climate resilience and sustainable development.

Ethiopia's multiple port pursuit attests continental dev't, security: Analyst

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia's quest for a multi-port access is a feasible solution to ensure continental economic development and security issues, the renowned political economic analyst said.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Political Economic Analyst for Africa Lawrence Freeman said that Ethiopia, with the largest economy in East Africa, needs multiple port access to facilitate and manage the growing trade and investment in the continent.

The analyst has remarked that Ethiopia has also a great potential for growth that benefit all the countries in the region through trade expansion.

As far as sustainable economic growth is concerned, the countries in the region should strengthen their joint forces without the intervention of external entities. Here, more significantly, infrastructure development needs to be given priority to make the port more preferable and efficient, he pinpointed.

Ethiopia's long term access to multiple ports would have a paramount importance on realizing growth of the region and all

African nations as well. In the same note, it is fundamental to make and sustain smooth investment chain across the region, he noted.

"It is, therefore, advisable to table continental and regional issues to AU, IGAD and other platforms that help amplify scopes of regional shared future and improve the lives of Africans," he commented.

Praising the Premier's frequent visit to neighboring countries, the Analyst said that this is a testament for the country's unwavering commitment of ensuring common interest and the continental thriving future by themselves.

Mentioning Ethiopia's immense military contribution to Somalia, he emphasized that the port diversification would be a viable solution to ensure economic growth in the entire neighbors.

Moreover, he said, "If the Ethiopia gets room in the water way (Red Sea), it would be an additional importance to ensure security in area."

He urged all the leaders in the continent to hold discussions in the region to play their role and unleash their potentials that help promote stable regional economic development.

Ethiopia expanding off-grid...

and geothermal sources are on the pipeline. "We are now expanding electricity generation projects, particularly on solar energy to reach communities in remote rural areas."

According to him, a legal framework that aimed at expanding renewable energy has also been endorsed; paving the way for the private companies to be engaged in the construction of geothermal and solar power plants. "The implementation of this public-private partnership model is getting much better results than ever."

As the manifestation of the above, the United

Arab Emirates renewable energy companies including Amea Power and Masdar have signed Memorandums of Understanding to build solar energy projects in Ethiopia. "We have held several discussions with the two firms since the MoUs signing and the deliberations are believed to pave the way for them to commence construction soon."

Habtamu further indicated that a solar mini-grid project, having the capacity to benefit 900 households, is near completion in Somali State Warder District. Likely, other solar-based off-grid projects in Somali, Central Ethiopia, and Oromia states are under construction.

"Also, we are integrating schools in rural areas into the off-grid projects. The demand for electricity in schools is not the same as in other institutions as the former need the power for their computer lessons and to supply water for students. Having witnessed the outcomes of the previously completed electricity projects, we are motivated to expand the activity."

For the implementation of the off-grid projects, the MoWE has been collaborating with the World Bank, African Development Bank, European Union and some other international organizations, it was learned.

Flagship dam's power...

left. The electro-mechanical works of the dam, especially the installation of the turbine and generator, are 78 percent complete.

Recalling the installation of turbine units that can produce 375MW of electricity, he indicated the remaining power generation turbines will be installed in the coming months. "Consolidated efforts are being made to complete the dam, which is the pride of all Ethiopians, by 2025."

The Project Manager further highlighted that the construction of the dam's water pipe

structure has reached more than 85 percent while the overall project has reached 95 percent.

"The dam's bestowing of the Ethiopian Quality Award Organization recognition gives moral for employees that have been participating in the construction process and for all parties who support the iconic project in various means."

He pointed out that the award has given recognition to employees who are participating in the construction of the dam, the security

forces and the citizens who are supporting the dam financially, professionally and in other means.

Ethiopian Electric Power has launched a website called www.mygerd.com that allows people to easily make contributions to the Abbay Dam.

The foundation stone of the Abbay Dam was laid on April 2, 2011 and it is expected that the 13th anniversary of the construction will be celebrated with colorful ceremonies.

Telebirr transacts ...

In this regard, the company registered a remarkable achievement, she said, adding that the company is transacting an average of five billion Birr in a daily basis.

She also mentioned that some 4.1 million customers accessed 9.5 billion Birr loan via the platform as it has registered nearly 43 million subscribers in almost three years' duration.

Ethio telecom was chosen to share its best practice and experiences for other countries at the world telecom congress in Barcelona, Spain, Firehiwot said, noting that the recognition and awards that the company received are part of the achievement of telebirr in a short period of time.

The Officer further said that it has a vision to expand to cover the transaction of 50% share of country's GDP via telebirr to realize digital economy.

The company has been working to keep quality of service delivery, she stressed.

In May 11, 2021, Ethio telecom launched its mobile money service under the brand Telebirr aimed at ensuring inclusivity of the financially excluded and underserved segment of the society, and bridge the gap in the country's digitalization efforts by getting a license from the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE).

Opinion

Bold stride for making an attractive 'New Flower'

BY MENGESHA AMARE

New flower—Addis Ababa—in local language (Amharic)—needs to be given a boost to and well renewed to act and look as its name bespeaks. Situated at the heart of the nation, Ethiopia, Addis Ababa has been rendering service being African diplomatic, political as well as economic hub especially since the inception of the African Union (AU). This central location together with being the headquarter of AU and UN-ECA has provided the city with a significant advantage in serving as Africa's diplomatic capital and in attracting millions of visitors that come for summits and other purposes of visiting sites.

No doubt, Addis Ababa is promptly becoming a focal point of international organizations, be they are regional, continental or global ones, and a number of international organizations have located in the city. Following the rapid state of being preferred by the aforesaid entities, the municipal government has made a major stride to change the characteristics of the city through massive infrastructure investment and engaging in major revitalization programs.

Such a bold stride needs to be encouraged and well acknowledged as the municipal government has considered situations and committed to manage city's growth and development with a view to making it a sustainable as well as standard metropolitan city.

Unequivocally, cities have to be made as neat and charming as possible so long as cities are being the epicenter of human activity and the most important physical creations ever built by human beings. The question however is in what way and how can these very means and sources of happiness be attractive and quite appealing.

Yes, it is recurrently stated and even many have elucidated that cities' attractiveness can be represented as their profitability or objective scale related to quality of life, job opportunities and apposite lifestyle.

It is well recognized that there are a number of nations whose cities are categorized under metropolitan level in many parts of the world, indeed! Yes, cities offer all types of personal and family development opportunities. They also provided citizens with better paid jobs and education opportunities, comprehensive healthcare services and other related aspects that make cities modern. Addis Ababa is not exceptional in this regard, in fact.

If this is so, all walks of life across the nation in general and in towns and cities in particular, especially referring to the capital, have to move in unison to make cities and towns neat, balanced, catchy and mesmerizing, too. True, citizens have to balance the preservation of their

identity, history and culture with strong investment in the future, in innovation and in various viable projects to make cities much more attractive.

Urban security, the talent of the city, tolerance, reduced poverty levels or the deployment of telecommunication networks can be well capitalized as they are the most indicators of urban magnetism.

A number of parameters have to be focused on to make the city, Addis Ababa, much more attractive and diplomatic hub for entire Africa. For instance, public transport punctuality and frequency, good connections with communication, transportation means such as airports and stations, and the quality of their museums, gastronomy, and cleanliness are of paramount importance in making the city alluring.

If for example, Addis has been considered as an attractive city in the nation, it is not because of how clean its streets are and how skyrocketing its buildings are, but because it is the very seat of African Union, mother organization of all African states, reputed international organizations, embassies, unions, you name it.

This indicates that a lot reminds to be done to make the city as appealing as its name bespeaks. Besides, there is a culture of preservation and economic resources that guarantee the correct maintenance of the city, also facilitated by municipal revenues obtained from the city's economic appeal.

It is quite obvious that the attractiveness of a city has to be the sum of concepts, unity, sense of belongingness, combined effort, complex relationship of many ingredients and so forth. Ethiopia, a land of captivating landscapes, rich history, untapped natural resource, home to a range of tangible and intangible heritages, culinary excellence, is highly expected to make its cities and towns at every corner competitive ones.

Ethiopia should focus on its iconic cities such as Addis Ababa as well as tourist attraction sites across the nation to make them unique charm, beckon visitors to experience and enjoy having sweet life. All citizens have to delve into the timeless beauty of each city, tourist destination, lodge and others so as to give insights into these tourists' magnets.

For instance, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed recently launched the construction of city projects aiming at making the capital city a tourist destination and enhancing the well-being of city dwellers.

Beautifying Sheger project comes at the forefront in this regard. It is a project so as to uplift the image of Addis Ababa, a seat of the African Union as well as various international organizations, and its environs to make it fit for tourism and

recreations.

True, the Sheger project is the cleanup and beautification of Addis' rivers' sides. The project runs along the rivers of Addis Ababa, developing green spaces starting from Entoto to Akaki alongside the 56km river streams until they reach Akaki wastewater treatment plant. The project is to befit the name New Flower. The project, therefore, aims at making the capital city a tourist destination and enhancing the well-being of city dwellers by mitigating river flooding and through the creation of public spaces and parks, bicycle paths and walkways along the riverside.

The project is part of the comprehensive works that the government is undertaking to foster tourism and beautifying the capital. The Entoto Park project which comprises various indoor and outdoor facilities including a library, sport centers, entertainment, restaurants and coffee shops, an artificial lake and fountains walkways, bike, scooter, and cart routes is also playing a paramount role in making Addis Ababa beguiling.

As this writer leant following the recent visit to Entoto National Park, the majority of the facilities were constructed using local materials as they have been beautifully blended with the natural environment of the park. Some exciting activities in the Park include a Paintball arena, outdoor archery, a horse-riding ranch for both adults and children, and a large outdoor amphitheatre that will be used for concerts, theatres, and live music.

Other sites that can be seen on foot in the natural environment of Entoto have included panoramic views of Addis Ababa, Entoto St. Mary Church and so on. As leant from studies the new park is also a convenient place to birdwatchers with some 200 bird species registered in the mixed habitats of forest woodland, rock sloop cliffs and marshes.

The very important thing that needs to be taken into account in this regard is the successful completion of the two projects have encouraged and will definitely serve as a benchmark for other projects to be replicated in other parts of the country that are the main sites for tourism. Of course, the Gorgora, Wonchi and Koysa projects are the pioneer national projects whose experiences and expertise need to be well triplicate.

Without a shadow of doubt, it is often difficult to get a destination with a mix of nature, modernity, adventure, serenity and preservation of cultural heritage. However, Addis offers these and more. As societies evolve, there have been conscious efforts to move with trends and inculcate some intricacies to appeal to the technology-driven generation whilst paying less attention to nature.

No doubt, Ethiopia is making consistent efforts to promote its inbound tourism by ensuring ease of travel through its quick-to-process visa on arrival, partnership with its major airline, The Ethiopian.

Addis Ababa is the city that encapsulates the very spirit of this sweet way of living though a lot remains to be done. Ethiopia, known as the 'cradle of mankind,' boasts a cultural legacy that has shaped the world.

Addis, Ethiopia's cosmopolitan metropolis needs to be made smart one to make it a shining city more than ever before to easily meet Ethiopia's forward-thinking spirit, renowned globally as a hub for fashion, design, and innovation. This vibrant city seamlessly marries tradition with cutting-edge creativity, offering a multifaceted experience that is as chic as it is culturally rich.

The balance between big boulevards and small streets in Addis Ababa needs to be well renowned and made appealing as it is of paramount importance in making the city preferable one. This all can be made real when all citizens are committed and cooperative enough to make their surrounding neat as the cumulative effort of every drop of sanitation would absolutely give a big picture and make the capital neat and alluring to live.

Addis Ababa has now been undergoing a major transformation particularly over the last three or four years despite reservations along that line for a number of citizens are complaining about their being displaced. Even some are heard of saying that the demographic as well as infrastructure changes are unprecedented in its history.

However, time would judge and everyone might change their mind and retell us about their complaints when all projects for Addis beautification will be made operational in full swing. No one knows. From a small town of less than half a million people in the early 1960s, the capital is now home to over 4 million inhabitants. As it is also the seat of major international organizations including AU and UN-ECA and others its beauty has to be made much more charming and lasting one.

As the city aspires to be a major international and/or diplomatic capital, the government, city administration, development partners, companies and factories which are looking for Addis Ababa's competitiveness have to realize this very quality. In sum, the bold stride towards making New Flower attractive and fitting needs to be collaboratively reinvigorated.

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

Editorial

Opinion

Ethiopia's commitment to CoHA's implementation requires practical support

The government of Ethiopia has shown great commitment towards implementing the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) officially known as the 2022 Pretoria Agreement. Its effort, indeed, has not gone without recognition as some concerned bodies welcomed the leadership demonstrated by the Ethiopian Government. Among these is the Development Partners Group.

The 2024 High Level Development Forum meeting took place in Addis Ababa on March 14 2024, co-hosted by the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Development Partners Group - currently co-chaired by the United Kingdom and the United Nations - with the participation of officials from federal ministries and agencies, Ethiopian Regional States, Ambassadors, Heads of Development Cooperation Agencies, as well as representatives from international organizations, the Private Sector and civil society organizations.

The meeting took place at a crucial time for the country as it embarks on the path to stability, recovery, reconstruction, and sustainable development after two years of conflict in the northern part of the country and a number of other internal and external shocks.

The forum welcomed the leadership demonstrated by the Ethiopian Government working with other stakeholders in implementing the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) as well as enabling further progress towards an inclusive National Dialogue for a lasting peace. It also reaffirmed the strong commitment by all Parties to supporting Ethiopia's efforts towards economic recovery, growth, and prosperity to the benefit of all Ethiopians.

As it incorporates myriads of problems, implementation of the CoHA is not as easy task for the government. It needs to achieve lasting peace based on delivering a peace dividend quickly for conflict-affected populations through recovery and reconstruction support, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of ex-combatants, support to victims of sexual violence, ensuring transitional justice in line with international standards, and implementation of durable solutions for Internally Displaced People (IDPs).

Millions of Ethiopians are still in desperate need of humanitarian aid and protection. An estimated 9 million people across Ethiopia's conflict-stricken regions of Tigray, Afar and Amhara lack access to adequate food.

Besides, Ethiopia hosts large amount of refugees from neighboring countries. According to the UN Refugee Agency, in July 2023, there are more than 930,000 refugees and asylum seekers residing in Ethiopia. A majority of the displaced people originate from South Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea.

Addressing the problems of these people requires Ethiopia much money, human resource, technology and good leadership. The whole process of CoHA implementation needs more than 20 billion USD in rough calculation. Thus, in order to carry out its responsibilities, Ethiopia needs meaningful support from concerned entities.

Commendably, the Development Partners Group has shown interest to stand by the Ethiopian government in its effort to tackle the problem. They stated in their communiqué, "We recognize that the protection and promotion of human rights and respect for the Rule of Law is crucial for sustainable peace and development in Ethiopia and welcome the Government of Ethiopia's commitment to continue making progress on human rights, including through the development of a transitional justice policy." This is encouraging, indeed.

The commitment the Development Partners Group has shown to support Ethiopia's effort should gain attention of the rest of the world. The international community urges the Ethiopian government to implement the Pretoria Agreement time and again which is welcomed by Ethiopia. Apart from posing verbal pressure, the international community should act accordingly in stretching supportive hand for the complete implementation of CoHA.

Pragmatic actions that the international community would take towards Ethiopia's effort; invigorate the government to keep up its commitment in this regard. Thus, the Development Partners Group should keep its pledge and the remaining concerned global community ought to show real partnership.

Digital political fundraising as a tool for heinous banditry on Ethiopia

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Fundraising for political purposes is no strange stuff in Ethiopia. Over the last 50 years, all those who claimed to be liberation movements have used some version of political fundraising to run their movements and buy arms for what they have termed as struggle for self-determination, democracy and independence. Even in the pre-digital technology era, political fund raising campaigns and meetings have been used to raise money to challenge the status quo in Ethiopia.

The writer fully recognizes and appreciates online fundraising schemes for all kinds of philanthropic fundraising for organizations like Macedonia and economic development purpose and fundraising for drought affected citizens. IDPs and victims of other forms of natural calamities like swarms of locust. Public health related digital donations etc. The national flagship project well known as GERD has been partially been funded by online fundraising and other forms of willful donations for HIV and AIDS, COVID-19 campaigns and construction of various ecotourism projects in connection with campaigns on Dine for the Nation, Dine for Sheger and Dine for the Generation.

Online fundraising for political purposes has become increasingly common in Ethiopia and overseas, especially with the growth of digital platforms and social media outlets.

Political campaigns often leverage various online platforms to solicit donations, including campaign websites, crowdfunding platforms (e.g., GoFundMe, Kickstarter), and dedicated fundraising tools (e.g., ActBlue for Democrats in the United States).

Campaigns use email marketing strategies to reach out to supporters, share their message, and solicit donations. Personalized and targeted email campaigns can be effective in engaging donors and driving contributions.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram offer powerful advertising tools for political campaigns to target specific demographics, amplify their message, and drive traffic to donation pages.

Campaigns can empower supporters to become fundraisers themselves by setting up peer-to-peer fundraising pages and encouraging their networks to donate on their behalf. This approach can expand the campaign's reach and mobilize grassroots support.

Political fundraising is subject to regulatory requirements and disclosure rules, depending on the jurisdiction. Campaigns must ensure transparency in their fundraising efforts, accurately report donations, and comply with legal and regulatory obligations related to campaign finance.

However, Ethiopians in the diaspora who deliberately ignite conflicts in the country use digital fund raising not only to pocket the funds but also transfer money to wage discord, ethnic conflicts and internal war in Ethiopia craving for political power with no mandate of representation. They seem to be free from any regulatory arrangements.

Building relationships with donors is crucial for sustaining fundraising efforts over time. Campaigns should communicate with donors regularly, express gratitude for their contributions, and keep them informed about the campaign's progress and impact.

Effective fundraising appeals often rely on compelling storytelling and persuasive messaging to resonate with donors' values and motivations. Campaigns should craft messages that highlight their candidate's vision, accomplishments, and policy priorities to inspire support and donations.

Campaigns use data analytics and performance metrics to track fundraising activities, measure donor engagement, and optimize their fundraising strategies. Analyzing donor behavior and campaign performance can help identify opportunities for improvement and refinement.

Protecting donor information and ensuring the security of online transactions are paramount

concerns for political campaigns. Campaigns should implement robust security measures, adhere to data protection regulations, and prioritize the privacy and confidentiality of donor data.

Overall, online fundraising offers political campaigns a powerful and efficient means of mobilizing financial support, expanding their donor base, and driving grassroots engagement. By leveraging digital tools and strategies effectively, campaigns can enhance their fundraising capabilities and advance their electoral objectives.

The political beggary for running hooliganism, looting of public and private property, confiscation of fertilizers meant for poor farmers, blocking roads at gun point, killing public figures and conducting bloodletting skirmishes is all geared up to a proxy war on Ethiopia to meet the interests of third parties who wish to see weak, unstable and balkanized Ethiopia.

Online social media political fundraising to dismember Ethiopia to create ethnocentric principalities does benefit those who work for the industry of lies on it. Political online fundraising could be a potential threat to the economic insecurity of the country.

Although there is no concrete evidence to be sighted, the author believes that online financial insecurity in Ethiopia, like in many other countries, can stem from various factors related to digital finance, cybersecurity, and economic vulnerability and political fundraising.

A significant portion of Ethiopia's population lacks access to formal banking services, including online banking platforms. This limits their ability to engage in secure online transactions and exposes them to risks associated with informal financial practices.

As digital financial services and online transactions become more prevalent, the risk of cybersecurity threats such as hacking, phishing, and identity theft increases. Individuals and businesses may fall victim to cybercrimes if they do not have adequate safeguards and awareness of online security best practices.

Ethiopia is in the process of expanding its digital payment infrastructure to promote financial inclusion and modernize its economy. However, challenges related to infrastructure development, interoperability, and regulatory frameworks may hinder the adoption of secure digital payment solutions.

The collection and storage of personal and financial data by financial institutions and online service providers raise concerns about data privacy and protection. Inadequate data security measures and regulatory oversight could expose individuals' sensitive information to unauthorized access and misuse.

Economic instability, poverty, and unemployment can exacerbate online financial insecurity by limiting individuals' financial resources and increasing their susceptibility to fraudulent schemes and predatory lending practices.

Limited awareness and understanding of online financial services, digital payment technologies, and cybersecurity risks among the population contribute to online financial insecurity. Improving financial literacy through education and training programs can empower individuals to make informed decisions and protect themselves from financial exploitation.

Ethiopia's regulatory environment for digital finance and online transactions may require enhancements to ensure consumer protection, enforce cybersecurity standards, and foster innovation while mitigating risks associated with financial insecurity and fraud.

Addressing threats from political online fund raising and financial insecurity in Ethiopia requires a multi-faceted approach that involves strengthening digital infrastructure, enhancing cybersecurity measures, promoting financial literacy, and implementing robust regulatory frameworks to safeguard individuals' financial well-being in the digital age. Collaboration between government agencies, financial institutions, technology providers, and civil society organizations is essential to address these challenges effectively and promote inclusive and secure digital financial ecosystems.

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



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Art & Culture

Yesterday has already passed

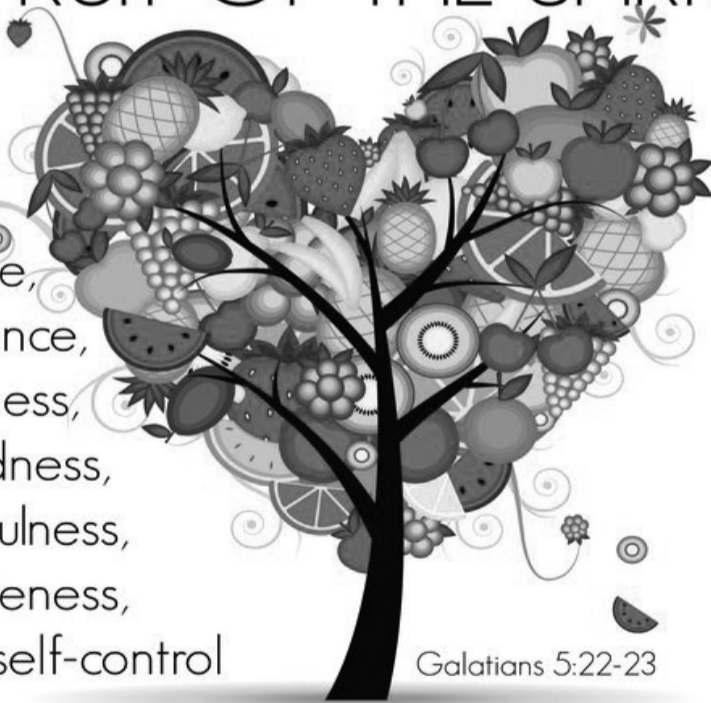
BY TSION YEHUALA

Don't give up on your dreams
 Don't worry about silly things
 Cause life doesn't always go perfectly
 It always needs some kind of trying
 U don't have to let go easily
 U have to try your best hardly
 Cause it doesn't matter how slowly u walk
 As long as u don't stop totally
 But don't try to walk backward
 And regret what u've done in the past
 Cause yesterday has already passed
 But tomorrow is a new day
 U'll see it in a new light
 So don't worry about your past life
 Cause there's nothing u could do
 To change it right now
 U can only take a lesson from it
 And make your future bright
 U know nobody's life is perfect
 Everybody makes there own mistake
 But u just gotta get over it
 Cause u can never change it.
 TSION YEHUALA



FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

love,
 joy,
 peace,
 patience,
 kindness,
 goodness,
 faithfulness,
 gentleness,
 and self-control



Galatians 5:22-23

God of fruit seeds

BY ALEM KIDANE

I know that there's a God
 We have met in solid form.
 In the early morning he was a peach
 He was an orange in the afternoon
 But he is full of surprises
 For he was in the evening, an avocado.
 Yesterday he approached me
 From the hands of a gentle friend to mine
 In the form of a kiwi
 I am not certain of tomorrow
 But no doubt he will be a melon
 Or a ripe papaya.
 There is a good God
 If you could only savor fruits
 You will see that he means well.

Like a rose

BY TAPIWA INDIVIDUALIST

Beautiful on touch, sight and scent,
 yet can pierce your skin and bleed
 you out.
 That is love, the beauty of it is worth
 the pain,
 Just like a bittersweet chocolate,
 sweet, yet bitter, but you just can't
 stop.

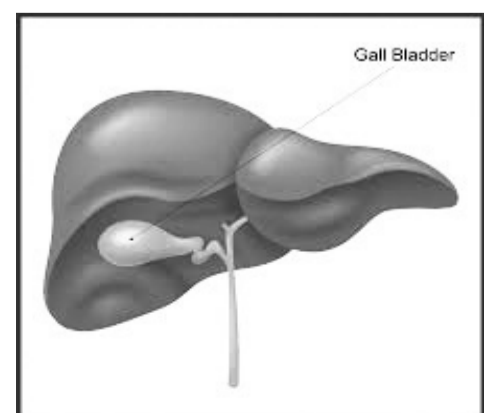


Is Capable to mar

BY ALEM HAILU G/KRISTOS

With your sweet lips,
 On which oft
 I yearn to plant a kiss,
 Slander me not please!

My lodestar
 You must know
 A drop of gal
 The wellspring of honey
 Is capable to mar!



Law & Politics

Ethiopia's impactful refugee handling experience

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

The refugee crisis across the globe has become one of the pressing issues that require the involvement all. For so many reasons, especially Africans move to different countries. On the other side, those refugees have been facing multiple plights.

There are different reasons that push people out of their home. Seeking a better life, war, feeling internal conflicts and natural disasters are some of the major causes for the influx. Though the people are fleeing their country to save their lives or find a better life, the nations that host refugees has also faced a number of challenges. Providing humanitarian assistance, facilitating the infrastructure, treating them as human being and include them in their systems are some of the responsibilities from the recipient nation.

In the Ethiopian context, the people and the government have done a lot to make the country a home of refugees. Yet, the nation has its own flaws with internally displaced people and internal unrest, Ethiopia still opens its hands for refugees from different directions. Previously, while visiting Ethiopia, UNHCR High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi said, "The registered refugees in Ethiopia are nearly one million. With country's own challenges, it is a big burden for Ethiopia."

Ethiopia, in the present climate, has been home to many refugees including Sudanese due to the war in Sudan and many other refugees from its neighboring nations. It is the fact that the Sudan crisis has caused enormous problems up on its people and neighboring nations like Ethiopia.

"Ethiopia has a good refugee policy," adding that in old days refugee came and you created everything for them, but it could not be sustainable. However, Ethiopia says let refugees come and try to see how we can include them in our system. "Ethiopia is doing it, but it needs help because more people demand services. The international community must help Ethiopia," the commissioner stated.

The government of Ethiopia, as always been, is treating the refugees as human beings and do everything to make them feel at home. The government has established different institutions that mainly focus on refugees and returnees. Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS) could be the textbook example. The nation has also tries what no other nation tried it before which is incorporating refugees by providing basic needs and identification cards.

Even recently, the government of Ethiopia has launched an identification (ID) system



for refugees that is going to help them access to national services they need. The Government of Ethiopia, through its Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS) in partnership with National ID Program (NIDP) and UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency launched an initiative to include refugees and *asylum* seekers into the Ethiopian Digital ID system.

To achieve the objective of facilitating refugees' access to basic services, according to the press release from the responsible stakeholders, the ID system for refugee's initiative – currently in its pilot stage – is being rolled out in Addis Ababa with the issuance of digital refugee ID cards that feature a unique identification number called "Fayda". Using biometric technology, the "Fayda" number issued by the National ID Program of Ethiopia (NIDP), which will be printed on the refugee ID cards, will help in preventing double registration and duplicate ID cards issuance to the refugees.

"Issuing digital IDs to refugees is a huge step that demonstrates that the Ethiopian Government is committed to include refugees in its national systems. This initiative is in line with two of our bold commitments announced during the Global Refugee Forum in 2023: including refugees into national systems and enhancing access to documentation.

Teyiba Hassen, Director General of Ethiopia's Refugees and Returnees Service said, "These IDs will grant refugees access to government-directed services." Accordingly, Yodahe Zemichael, Executive Director at the National ID Program to his part said, "In a world where identity is the key to

The government of Ethiopia, as always been, is treating the refugees as human beings and do everything to make them feel at home

access, Fayda Digital ID for refugees is not just an ID; it is a gateway to dignity, enabling access to essential services, legal recognition, and opportunities to be integrated into host communities. Let's build systems that recognize everyone, ensuring that no one is left behind."

The press release also discussed the activities that refugees can do with their new ID. It stated that this new refugee ID (with Fayda number) will allow refugees to access key services like obtaining a SIM card, healthcare or school enrolment and will also help them improve their access to financial services, providing refugees with the opportunity to open bank accounts and engage in financial transactions. Refugee entrepreneurs can also formally register their businesses, contributing to the local economy.

"This is an exciting development and demonstrates how Ethiopia is bringing to life the Global Compact on Refugees, which aims to support long term solutions for refugees no matter where they are and UNHCR hopes this will be emulated by other countries across the continent," said Andrew Mbogori, UNHCR's Representative in Ethiopia Entitled the "PING project (PRIMES Interoperability Gateway), this initiative has been in the works for close to a year. It is also to be recalled that RRS, UNHCR and NIPD had signed a tripartite data sharing agreement to make sure both refugee and national ID databases can communicate, ensuring that the data protection rights of refugees and asylum seekers are respected.

This is the first time in East Africa, and one of the first times globally, that the PING project is being implemented, making Ethiopia a pioneer in the inclusion of refugees in its national systems. This initiative is also in line with Ethiopia's pledge to include 814,000 refugees into the National ID system during the 2023 Global Refugee Forum, added the press release.

In addition, although the Fayda ID will be rolled out on an opt-in basis, the goal is to scale this up to the 77,000 refugees living in Addis Ababa before availing it to nearly 1 million refugees - mainly from South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, and Sudan - living across Ethiopia - the third largest refugee-hosting country in Africa. This initiative is part of the World Bank's Identification for Development (ID4D) project that aims to improve the inclusivity, functionality and governance of national ID and civil registration systems.



If Ethiopia is going to have access to a port, then there must be long term agreement, Lawrence Freeman explains why

BY ZEKARIAS WOLDEMARIAM

With around 120 million people, Ethiopia is said to be the most populous land locked country in the world. Since the separation of Eritrea with a declaration of independence in 1991, Ethiopia has been using the Port of Djibouti for about 95 % of its import export trade.

But with the rapid growth of its economy its import export trade has also grown exponentially calling for the increase of the number of ports, upgrading of the capacity of the ports as well as securing its right to access sea outlet.

"If Ethiopia is going to make investments, which they have to do in infrastructure to make the poor profitable and efficient, then they need to have a long term lease agreement." Says Lawrence Freeman, an American political economic analyst for Africa (www.lawrencefreemanafricaandtheworld.com).

In his brief stay with The Ethiopian Herald, Freeman has reflected his insight about how vital for Ethiopia is having a sea access with a guarantee of long term agreement, the need to access multiple ports to accommodate its rapidly growing economy and respond to the needs of its large population, as well as the benefits other countries of the region can secure from the Ethiopia – Somaliland Port access deal and the role of the regional countries. Enjoy reading!

It has been two months since Ethiopia and Somaliland signed the MoU for a port access. How do you see the progress of the agreement and what has been unfolding around the issue so far?

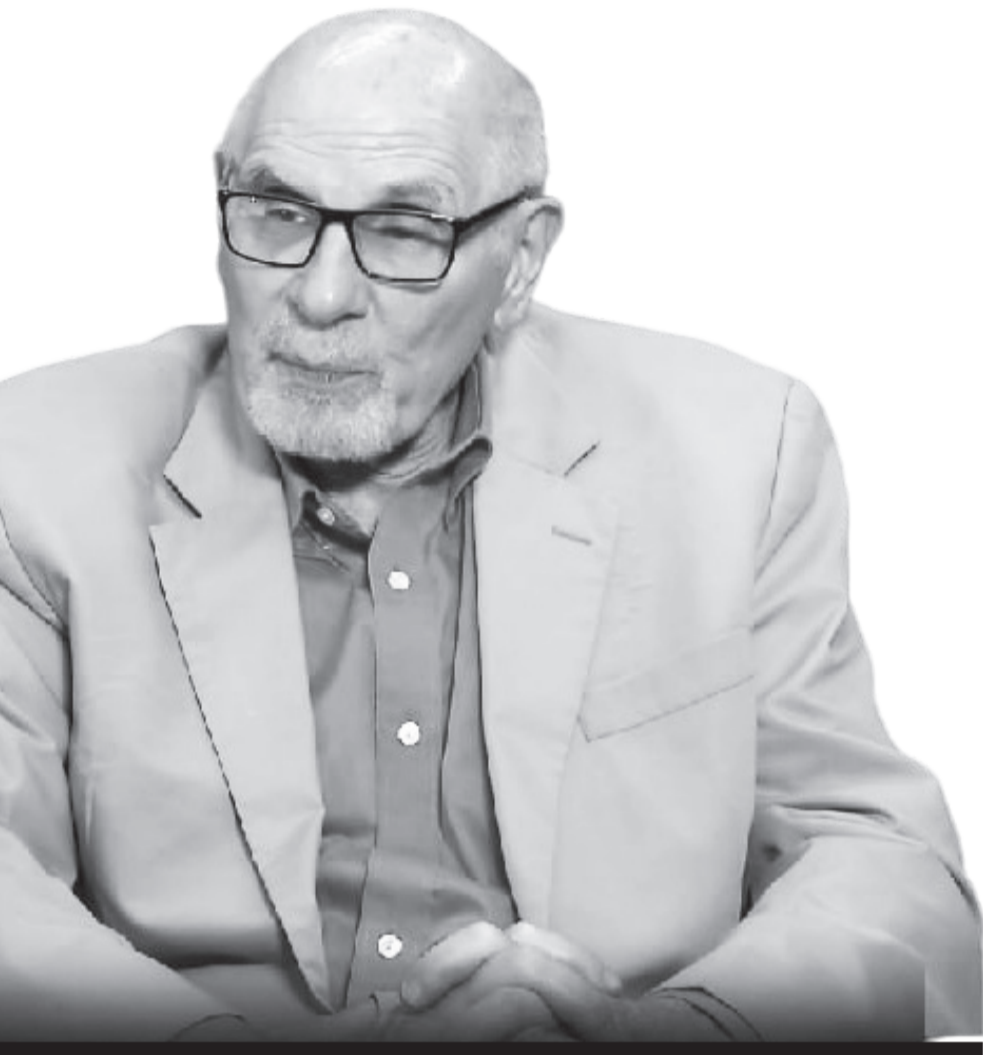
There appears to still be concern by Somalia about this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). which no one is I haven't seen the actual complete agreement. There was also a report in the news that in the meeting that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed had with the president of Kenya, as a softening of the Prime Minister's position.

However, much of the discussion is just poorly informed, and not helpful to the Horn of Africa to any of the nations in the Horn of Africa: Somalia, Somaliland, Djibouti, Kenya, Ethiopia. The problem is the countries are reacting in a very less than informed manner. If they understood physical economic growth, they would understand that Ethiopia needs multiple port access for growing economy, number one. Number two, Ethiopia is the largest economy in East Africa and has great deal of potential for growth. Number three, this will benefit all the countries in the region because they will benefit from the expansion of trade and commerce. Number four, if Ethiopia is going to have access to a port, then they need to have long term agreement. It can't be a one year two year; we'll do it when we want. It can't be capricious. If Ethiopia is going to make investments, which they have to do in infrastructure to make the poor profitable and efficient, then they need to have a long term lease agreement. Otherwise, they will not make the investments; nobody would. And number five, the reactions of many of the countries and leaders in the region represent a legacy of the colonial mentality of who owned what

going back many, many years, or decades. And they represent what I would say ignorance in physical economics and are dominated by old grudges, rage and anger, all of which is inappropriate at this time. If you want to see Africa grow, if you want to see the region grow, if you want to see all the nations of the Horn of Africa develop and grow, then it's ABCs. Very easy for me to see the purpose of having long term access to multiple ports. The argument for an access long term access to port is valid. And we should put aside all his other commentary and focus on what will help improve the lives of Africans living in that region.

How do you think could diplomatic approach help reach consensus among the countries that signed the MoU and others?

Well, the fact of the matter is if the Somali government was more thoughtful, the eloquent solution would be simply to say we consider Somaliland part of Somalia, if Somalia governments is, is looking to the future, they would say okay, Somaliland is part of Somalia. And therefore we accept the agreement, because it's an agreement between Ethiopia and land considered part of Somalia. So we will benefit Somalia, and will benefit our neighbors. That would be the most thoughtful, eloquent solution in Somalia to say 'we agree that this will be helpful to all our people.' Now that that eloquent solution is, is not being pursued by Somalia and Somalia, has made all kinds of threatening statements, which are really, in my view, kind of silly to think that Somalia is going to go to war with Ethiopia is silly, but it also is dangerous. And Ethiopia has been defending Somalia



If Ethiopia is going to make investments, which they have to do in infrastructure to make the poor profitable and efficient, then they need to have a long term lease agreement

with its treasure and blood with troops in Somalia, going back to the early 2006, and they're still there. So the idea that you would be able to mobilise a war against Ethiopia, it's just it's, it's silly, but dangerous, then you have other countries coming in, and aligning themselves, for

and against Ethiopian for and against the Somali, this is also dangerous, they should keep the nose out of the Horn of Africa, they should study physical economics, they should listen and

continued to page 9

continued from page 8

If Ethiopia is going to have...

understand that this is beneficial to all the nations now I don't know where the MOU stands two months, over two months after it was initially signed. But my advice was, we should go ahead with it. And this will help all of the nations in there for all of the people in the nations. And we have to get away from anger, and historical rage, and historical pettiness and look to the future. What kind of economy are we going to have? What kind of economic growth are we going to have in the Horn of Africa and eastern Africa? That depends on the economy of Ethiopia.

What do you think can leaders of the region including Ethiopia, Somaliland and Somalia can do to reach a win win solution?

I think that the leaders of sovereign nations should be able to sit down and discuss calmly, without anger. Without ancient rhetoric, they should sit down and discuss how we can benefit all the people of our nation. Now, the memory I don't know where the memorandum of understanding is, at this point, because of it's been a long it's been 10 weeks since it was signed. But I would think this pursuit is a viable alternative to Ethiopia having access to this waterway, the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Indian Ocean ... etc. And, there could be other ports that could be pursued. The main thing, from my standpoint as a physical economist is Ethiopia should have a modern port. And, without a long term agreement, they're not going to make the investment in a modern board, nobody would. And Somalia should not call this annexing their land. It's not annexing any part of Somalia. They're making an agreement. It's not annexation. Now, I believe, personally, that there outside forces that are manipulating the situation, because there were forces that don't want to see a strong, independent sovereign Ethiopia. And these outside forces are trying to weaken Ethiopia, just like they did in the war with Northern Ethiopia.

What kind of role do you think Ethiopia would play in the peace and security of the red sea region if it sets up naval force?

Actually, in Ethiopia, he's also getting, I believe, several, maybe 12 miles of area land along the water way. That's good. Because the whole Red Sea area is insecure, as we've seen with these recent attacks. If you have another Navy, that helps you provide more security. So it's not a bad thing is a good thing. And I believe, it is manipulated by geopolitical forces, who don't want to see peace, who don't want to see prosperity in the Horn of Africa. But a port in a navy military base, could help the situation in the Red Sea, I don't see it as a negative, it could be a positive.

Many countries from diverse corners of the world show interest in the red



sea region. As a result they may show concern on the new development like Ethiopia and Somaliland MoU. But is there any way they can also contribute in settling the issue smoothly?

I think you see some countries trying to help the situation. The visit of the Prime Minister [Abiy Ahmed] to Kenya probably was a positive diplomatic trip, and it may improve the situation. I think it's reasonable for countries in that region, have discussions with Ethiopia, have discussions with Somalia, and other countries in the Horn of Africa. That's how problems should be solved. They should be solved by African nations, Sub Saharan African nations involved in that region, who keep care about the future standard of living of their citizens. And among them, there should be discussion, I'm sure there are many private discussions going on among people in the African Union, and IGAD and other platforms for African nations. And that should be going on and they should be the ones to resolve this. There is absolutely no reason for conflict, none zero. And anybody who's talking about that is being foolish, and also hurting the wrong people by even promoting a discussion of war. This can be resolved by leaders of nations calmly talking among themselves.

Prior to the signing of the MoU between Ethiopia and Somaliland many countries from different corners of the world have come all the way to Somaliland and leased the port there. Why do you think does it cause so much uproar when Somaliland signed similar agreement with Ethiopia?

That gives you a clue as to the fact that somebody wants conflict, because as you pointed out, other countries think the UAE and the international port company have had agreements in Somaliland. So as you pointed out, this is not the first time and therefore, why now, if you get this stupid talk about war. So that's a clue. That tells me that somebody wants conflict, that somebody doesn't want good negotiations between Ethiopia and Somalia. Some geopolitical force, doesn't want Ethiopia to become a dominant growing economic power in East Africa. These are clues to people like me, who understand the way the world operates. And since the beginning of the Prime Minister's taking the position as prime minister in 2018, there have been one after another attacks on Ethiopia that are trying to prevent Ethiopia from fully developing, and other people who forces who are also using the internal situation Ethiopia, where you have this ethnic nationalism, which is an attack on the nation state, and its attack on Ethiopian citizenship, and that ethnic nationalism is also being supported by outside forces. So I have seen Ethiopia, in being a victim of many different operations over the last six years now, it's quite possible that the government could handle this situation better. If I were advising them, I would tell them things to do that could help. But their pursuit of economic growth for their country is ripe. And it's to the benefit of all the nations in the region. In fact, implicitly it's a benefit for the entire continent of Africa.

What do you think would be the way forward the MoU signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland?

I think the best way to handle it is to handle it through private, nonpublic discussions with the leaders of the countries in the region. I mean, you could have a conference. And you could have a conference that discusses economic growth for all the country of the Horn of Africa, and the importance of important developments, and present information on how the country would grow with another port, with advanced Infrastructure Transportation to that port. We certainly reduce the cost of what Ethiopia is paying now, which is a billion and a half dollars. Not Birr, but dollars are the hard currencies. Ethiopia is using up a large section of its foreign exchange to maintain operations in Djibouti. And I think there's a lot of people meddling in. And I would have the leaders of the region meet on their own and discuss from a thoughtful standpoint from my standpoint of economic growth, what the potentials and reason the necessity of Ethiopia having a port.

Society

Digital health technology for better health outcomes

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Over the course of the past half century, digital technology is impacting the lives of the global community in various forms. It has transformed the lives of people for the better. Aside from changing how people interact with one another, it has enabled them to have increased access to information from any part of the nation or around the globe in a fraction of seconds; allows them to get improved quality services and get products so easily, to run businesses and gain many more similar benefits.

Thanks to the advancements of digital technology, these days, various institutions are digitizing their services to diminish the bureaucratic way of their activities; and smooth customers' service delivery and consumers are utilizing numerous platforms to receive swift, quality services. And, this kind of service provision seems possible only in the advent of digital technology.

Services in the public and private institutions are becoming a click away; the cell phone devices in the hands of individuals are serving as a significant instrument facilitating increased access and expediting digital services.

It is now thinking life and business without using digital technology is becoming impossible. The technology has brought a significant role in ensuring and enhancing businesses competitiveness, making businesses more efficient and profitable.

Ethiopia has also been undertaking a range of activities in a bid to benefit from the advancement of digital technologies and improve efficiency thereby accelerating economic growth through enhancing the use of digital technologies in every sector.

The health sector is one of the major institutes that are engaged in digitizing their services with a target to build reliable data transfer and health outcomes through improved computer assisted approach.

Oromia State Health Bureau Plan and Budget Directorate Director Lemmesa Taddese in an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopia Herald* said that providing digital health service and medical technology are becoming two sides of the same coin. The State's Health Bureau, while realizing digital health services, has faced several challenges and also recorded remarkable outcomes.

The State is investing hugely on availing digital technology infrastructure and



producing skilled human power in a bid to create enabling systems for digital technology to flourish and ensure digital service. The Bureau finds providing digital health service has a significant role in improving data and service quality in the hinterlands and in urban parts of the State.

Responding to the effort made Lemmesa said that the Bureau is working to provide digital service to the community through various platforms. For instance, the Bureau offered a platform named Electronic Community Health Information System at health posts.

This platform is mostly used by the health extension workers at the health post to register customers as per the type of the services they are given. For instance if a pregnant woman is in attendance, the device will alert her when it will be the next vaccination schedule.

The platform is also assisting health extension workers serving as job guides helping in providing quality health services.

At the hospitals and zonal offices, the Bureau offered to utilize a digital health information system named District Information System-2. The portal is used

to report performance to federal health and generate data that could help in passing decisions.

As of now, over three thousand four hundred health posts have started practicing the service and all woredas located in Oromia State are connected through the web and they are exchanging data.

According to him, though the Bureau has made considerable steps towards applying digital health services, improving and upgrading accessibility to the next step is the plan that the Bureau will embark on in time to come.

Availing digital services to the community at the grass-roots level has a significant role in increasing the satisfaction of customers. In this regard, the Bureau is working round the clock because its effect transcends to other sectors impacting and fostering social development, paving ways to realizing productivity in addition to having the comprehensive data of clients that could be accessed easily.

A new project is underway at Adama Hospital that promotes paperless work starting from the admission of the patient to the point they checkout. The project is moving in the right direction and



Lemmesa Taddese, Plan and Budget Directorate Director of Oromia State Health Bureau

stakeholders are supporting it.

According to him, private health facilities are implementing digital service platforms. In Oromia State, there are about seven thousand private health facilities operating like primary and medium clinics. A number of private hospitals, special clinics as well as pharmacies are providing services to the community.

The Bureau has been encouraging the private health sector to join health digital service because it is vital in building comprehensive health data of the societies that can be accessed at any time.

Most of the private health facilities are exercising District Information System-2 which allows decoding information to the right institution. "We believe that digitizing the health service is creating opportunities to offer reliable and efficient services that could meet the satisfactions of customers. Moreover, it lets us provide service in a more time saving and comfortable fashion," he added.

He finally said that providing paperless service at health facilities is becoming a new normal though there are a number of gaps that need the attention of pertinent stakeholders.

While talking about the challenge the Bureau encountered regarding effectively realizing digital technology in health institutions, mainly in remote areas, the Director said that the power outage and poor connectivity and absence of adequate telecom infrastructure in some areas are the major challenges that they face to provide digital health service successfully.

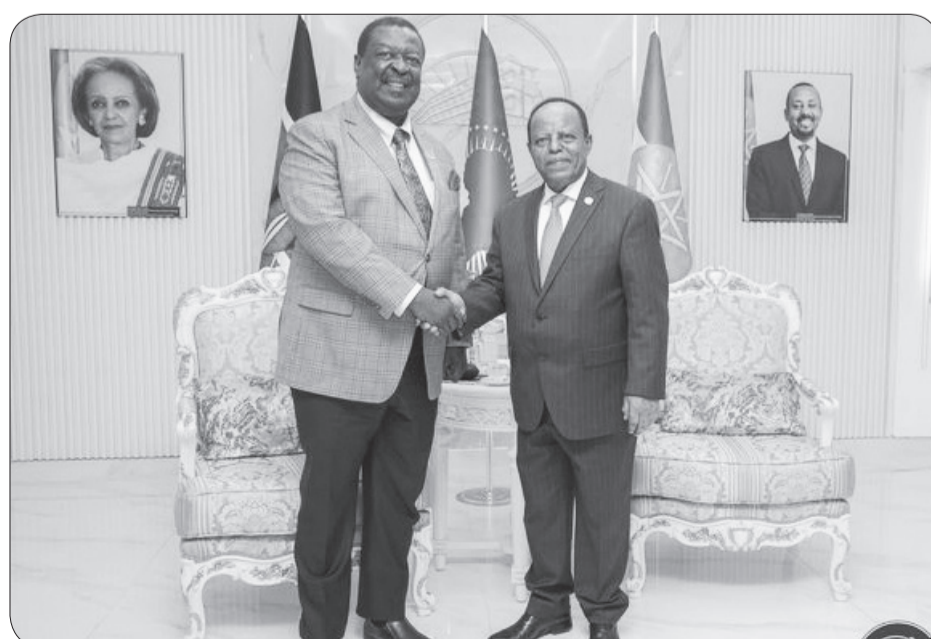
To ensure productive digital health services and make the set goal a success, the Bureau is working along with pertinent stakeholders like Ethio-Telecom, The Information Network Security Administration (INSA). He also called on stakeholders to strengthen efforts and act unwaveringly to expand the services.

Verbatim and Caption



Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie, Minister of Foreign Affairs, received and discussed with Robert Oliphant, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada.

Foreign Minister, Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie received the Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs of Kenya, Dr Musalia Mudavadi, at his office today. The two discussed bilateral and regional issues of common interest.



International

Is water provision in drought-hit Zambia climate 'loss and damage' or adaptation?

At international climate talks, developing countries are trying to draw a clear line between expected new funding to help them deal with the worsening "loss and damage" caused by climate change and existing finance for measures to adapt to more extreme weather and rising seas. But in drought-hit Zambia, that distinction is proving hard to make.

Climate-vulnerable nations want wealthy governments to provide additional money to repair and reduce loss and damage via a new fund set up at the Cop28 UN climate summit late last year, but fear that money could be diverted from budgets already earmarked for adaptation.

The lack of a globally agreed definition of what constitutes loss and damage will likely make hard to know whether that is happening – and there is already considerable confusion on the ground.

In a week-long trip around Zambia, Climate Home spoke about the issue with maize farmers in their dried-up fields, besuited bankers in air-conditioned offices, and the minister for green economy and environment around a polished boardroom table.

Asked what they wanted from the UN loss and damage fund, all mentioned one thing first: support for water supplies in the form of irrigation or rainwater collection, to lessen farmers' reliance on increasingly scarce rainfall.

At the end of February, the president declared the severe drought affecting much of the country as a national emergency, blaming the El Niño weather phenomenon and climate change. He noted that the drought had destroyed nearly half the maize crop and was expected to continue.

Reliance on rain

"The drought has hit us very bad," said farmer Benson Chipungu at his house in Chongwe, a meagre batch of corn drying behind him during a rare and brief bout of rain. "The fields are a sorry sight."

He said he had not followed developments at Cop28 closely, but added "if I was able to access [the loss and damage fund] then irrigation systems is the major thing".

Clara Shangabile and Gertrude Nangombe, also maize farmers and members of the Katoba youth climate champions group, tuned into Cop28 on a TV at their local secondary school.

Like many corn producers Climate Home spoke to, they want help to move into what they call "gardening", which means growing high-value crops that don't need much land, like tomatoes, kale, green beans and peppers. While vegetables require more water per square metre, they use less overall because a smaller sized plot yields the same amount of money as growing corn.

Zambia's green economy and environment



minister, Collins Nzovu, who chaired the African Group of nations at Cop28, said the new loss and damage fund – whose arrangements are still being put in place and is unlikely to start disbursing money until 2025 – should contribute to expanding water harvesting and dams. "Food security won't be guaranteed until we can grow our own crops," he said.

Asked if these activities fall under adaptation or loss and damage, he told Climate Home: "they are one". "We are being forced to adapt because of the change in climate," he said. "I shouldn't be building any dams if the weather pattern was the same as it was 50 years ago. But now we need that – it's loss and damage."

Blurred boundaries

Climate Home asked watchers of loss and damage talks in the UN climate process – including government negotiators and campaigners – whether irrigation should be classified as adaptation or loss and damage. Their answers were varied and nuanced.

Veteran campaigner Harjeet Singh said large-scale infrastructure projects like dams are adaptation, but community-based irrigation can be a response to loss and damage. He said it was tough to distinguish clearly between the two at the local level "due to frequent overlaps".

Adao Soares Barbosa, who is a board member for the UN loss and damage fund and a finance negotiator for the Least Developed Countries group to which Zambia belongs, said rainwater harvesting and irrigation are generally viewed as adaptation, but if they are put in place to deal with loss of water induced by climate change, then they fall under loss and damage.

Zoha Shawoo, from the Stockholm Environment Institute, said it is "not very useful to draw strict boundaries" as the two types of activity are "super-blurred on the ground". Ideally, she said, medium-term loss and damage funding for things like relocation of communities or financial compensation for lost crops would build on emergency humanitarian aid such as food parcels.

Support to help families struggling with drought migrate to other places would be useful in Katoba. Shangabile and Nangombe said many of their friends had moved to Lusaka to work as maids. Both are open to the idea of following them, but Nangombe worries about not being her own boss.

"If you break a cup or something, you're fired," she said through a translator, adding "the best is to identify something you can do as a person within the same community" – such as diversifying into vegetable production.

Mattias Soderberg, from humanitarian agency DanChurchAid, said helping these women settle into their new lives is the kind of thing the new loss and damage fund should be used for. His organisation, for example, has enabled Kenyan herders displaced by drought to learn to fish.

Board to decide

Zambians are also wondering who will be able to access the fund. In Katoba, Catholic Relief Services project officer Harrison Zimba said the community is setting up a cooperative to access grants and loans as a group, and hopes they will be able to get money from the loss and damage fund.

In Lusaka's central business district, Cheyo Mwenechanya, head of agriculture at commercial bank Zanaco, told Climate Home his organisation also plans to tap the fund, probably working with government.

He would like to channel the money into irrigation.

One certainty is that Zambia, as a member of the UN's Least Developed Countries (LDC) group, will be eligible.

Wealthy governments have tried to restrict loss and damage funding to countries judged to be "particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change", as stated in the decision on operationalising the new fund approved at Cop28.

It is unclear how that will be defined in practice – but if recipients are limited to LDCs and small island developing states, then Zambia's southern neighbours Zimbabwe and South Africa, which are suffering from the same drought, would not qualify.

These matters will be decided by the fund's board. After a three-month delay caused mainly by rich nations squabbling over which of them should get seats, the board is now expected to hold its first meeting by the end of April – around the same time Zambia will be counting its paltry harvest.

The fund will need not just to agree on its rules, but also find new money – and sources of funding are likely to be scarce. The cost of loss and damage for developing countries is projected to reach \$290 billion–\$580 billion in 2030, according to a 2018 estimate. But wealthy governments pledged only around \$0.7 billion at Cop28 in a first round of pledges, with the US offering no more than \$17.5 million.

In Zambia, Minister Nzovu described those pledges as "exciting" but said "we need billions, trillions if we are going to develop our economies". "Those who pollute more – the developed world, the Americans, must get out their cheques and pay for these losses and damages."

Source: Climate home news

Verbatim and Caption

A week in Ethiopia



President Sahle-Work Zewde received letters of credential of eleven newly-appointed ambassadors to Ethiopia, at the Office of the President. On the occasion, President Sahle-Work reaffirmed Ethiopia's support to the ambassadors during their mission in Ethiopia.

The Executive Director of the Institute for Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia Jafar Bedru received and discussed with UNDP Resident Representative in Ethiopia, Samuel Gbaydee Doe on possible areas of collaboration between the institute and UNDP.

