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Women's Nat'l Dialogue partake ushers peaceful, egalitarian country



BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA-Women's participation in the National Dialogue will help build a country with lasting peace and equality, the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) said, calling them to put their mark in the process.

ENDC Commissioner BlenGebremedhin told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that efforts are being made to hold an inclusive National Dialogue that will help to achieve national unity and lasting peace by resolving differences and disagreements that have been ravaging the country for centuries.

According to her, the participation of women in the National Dialogue, which is believed to address age-old and contentious problems, at various levels starting from the position of commissioner, will help

to build a country with lasting peace and equality. The commissioner also said that women are the primary victims of problems that arise at different times and places. "As half of Ethiopia's population is

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Ethiopia to expand energy, aviation support to neighbors

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA – The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) announced that Ethiopia would expand energy supply and aviation support to neighboring and other East African countries.

In the biweekly press briefing held

See Ethiopia to expand ... page 3

Local firm, AXIS Capital settle to lead Ethiopia's capital market

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – Meheretab Leul and Associates (MLA) Law Office and AXIS Capital made a partnership agreement yesterday to spearhead the development of Ethiopia's capital market.

Speaking at the occasion, MLA's Managing Partner Mehrteab Leul said, "As Ethiopia positions itself as among the fastest growing economies in Africa, the establishment of the capital market is a transformative step forward. Our collaboration with Axis Capital is set to revolutionize the

way businesses access capital and propel Ethiopia's growth trajectory. We are excited to lead this venture."

According to Mehrteab, the two parties are committed to bridging the gaps by integrating local knowledge with international expertise to realize the capital market in Ethiopia.

AXIS Co-Founder Mark Duffy for his part said that the MLS' unique offering that combines local and international expertise and their direct experience in the Ethiopian business environment will serve as a crucial differentiator in the market.

See Local firm, AXIS ... page 3

Ethiopia in forefront in ensuring women's equal role in army

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA–Ethiopia is among the most successful countries in the world by involving women in the army at different levels and giving them equal deployment with men, a high-ranking officer said.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency, Ministry of Defense Women and Social Affairs Directorate Director Brigadier General Huluagersesh Deres stated that the country has taken bold steps to ensure women's equal participation in the army including in the leadership positions.



BG Huluagersesh Deres

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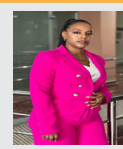
Empowering women to realize nation's socio-economic growth

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Turning challenges as a female artist as inspirations (Carrying modern painting across the board)

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"Successful women have an aura that says I belong in this seat"

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Ethiopia's sea aspiration justifiable: *Journalist*

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopia's quest to sea access need to be ensured given the fact that many countries far away from the Red Sea have already established military bases in the strategic region, according to a noted journalist.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Kings of Blue Nile Channel Director Ustaz Jemal Bashir mentioned that different countries that are far from the region have maintained military bases in the Red Sea. "Accordingly, the effort and interest of Ethiopia, which is the nearest landlocked country to the Red Sea, need to secure its share."

While Ethiopia remains the leading actor in ensuring peace and stability in the Horn of Africa, it is unfair to oppose its interest to have a sovereign access to the sea. Those who are against the interest of Ethiopia have hidden agenda to destabilize the region, he emphasized.

According to Ustaz Jemal, Ethiopia needs to take the diplomatic and legal path to get access to the sea while he called on all segments of the society to discharge their responsibility to this end. "Ethiopians could showcase the height of their country just like they did in Abbay Dam and other mega projects."

Besides creating linkage with the outside world, Ethiopia's direct access to the sea enables it to save a huge amount of foreign currency that the country has incurred for port rent, he remarked.



U.S. commits to build Ethiopian women entrepreneurs' capacity

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- The United States has expressed its commitment to offer worldwide networking opportunities and training to Ethiopian women entrepreneurs that are aimed at enhancing their entrepreneurial capacities.

In a statement sent to *The Ethiopian Herald*, the U.S. Embassy in Ethiopia has pledged to give capacity-building training and global networking opportunities for Ethiopian women entrepreneurs to assist them in expanding their businesses.

Recently, the U.S. Embassy launched the 4th Academy of Women Entrepreneurs (AWE) in Ethiopia. The AWE program will provide aspiring women entrepreneurs with targeted capacity-building training

to enhance their businesses.

"Empowering women in the economy and closing gender gaps in the world of work are key to achieving sustainable development. Financial resources have limitations while conflicts hurt the Ethiopian economy; this kind of network is the solution," said the U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia Ervin Massinga, during the launching program.

The fourth-year project by AWE aims to provide capacity-building and global networking to 250 Ethiopian women. The program will be implemented by the Center for Accelerated Women's Economic Empowerment (CAWEE).

Ambassador Massinga participated in a roundtable discussion on International Women's Month, involving representatives from AWE, U.S

Development Fund, and women exporters to celebrate successes and challenges in establishing export-oriented enterprises and strengthening the AWE Ethiopia Chapter. The Ambassador encouraged these pioneering entrepreneurs to work together to enter the global market, despite the challenges.

In addition, Ambassador Massinga visited an exhibition of products and services provided by thirty women-led small and medium enterprises.

The statement further stated that the AWE program, facilitated by the U.S. government's Dream Builder online course, has trained 338 women entrepreneurs since 2020, many of whom have established successful small and medium enterprises.

BDU expresses readiness to commence digital education

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - Bahir Dar University (BDU) said it is finalizing preparations to commence digital education.

As to the University, the training being provided for about 300 instructors and 600 staffers to make them ready to continue teaching their students online is at the final stage.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, BDU Academic Vice President Prof. Esseye Kebede said that the digital platform helps to get international expertise as well as recruit qualified students.

"In the era of digital world, facilitating and creating digital diplomacy and foster-

ing education through digitalizing education would enable the nation to go steps forward and to run activities at ease. The university has been providing online education since the outbreak of Covid 19," he added.

As to him, University's effort to get Sudanese students graduated in PhD and master levels after following their studies online indicates its success in digital education.

The two courses that will be offered in digital education are emerging technology and mathematics for natural science and the university has finalized preparations to commence it before long, he stated.

"To make all this effective, we are preparing digital content for eight departments.

Besides, online learning is a must as it would create good platform to all students at home and foreign citizens can also learn through this platform," he said.

As to him, BDU is working in partnership with 300 institutions throughout the world including universities and spreading its links.

The university currently is adjusting academics, administration, finance and human resources in the university to achieve to operate autonomously, he expressed.

It is to be recalled that the Ministry of Education in partnership with MasterCard Foundation, Arizona State University Shayashone PLC. established digital multimedia studio for five public universities recently.

News

Ethiopia makes strides in formalizing overseas labor pacts: Minister

ADDIS ABABA- Labor and Skills Minister Muferiat Kamil highlighted the progress of the current Ethiopian endeavors on the labor migration that have been promoting formal channels for sending workers abroad.

Approached by ENA, Muferiat shed light on the nation's remarkable record in transitioning from informal to formal channels in order to send workers abroad.

The Government of Ethiopia is implementing multiple initiatives towards improving labor migration governance and skills in the country by developing clear national policy frameworks, legal instruments as well as signing international labor treaties, it was indicated.

Through formalized training, certification and advocacy for fair wages, the country is modernizing its overseas labor migration and developing a globally competitive workforce in addition to addressing local employment needs. These endeavors have recently resulted in shifting the previous informal way of the labor migration practice to send workers to Gulf countries and other parts of the world, the minister pointed out.

She said, "There was a practice of going through the informal way in previous times without enough investment on training workers. That traditional and conventional way of sending our citizens especially, to the Horn of Africa region, has left its own legacy."

However, Muferiat emphasized that the current Ethiopia's approach on labor migrants that has been supported by multiple initiatives, is markedly different.

"There is now a huge investment from our side to send our citizens (workers) after providing them training. They are no longer going there from scratch. They will get trained, certified, and we're sure they will deliver better results."

She further underscored that this substantial investment in skills development is paramount to Ethiopian workers for having enhanced



Muferiat Kamil

capabilities in the global labor market.

Noting there was no such investment for the labor migrants previously, Muferiat indicated the current initiative is helping to identify their skills and where the demand lies.

To this end, Muferiat revealed training initiatives including the continuous market assessments information, and other relevant competencies. "We'll train them as per market demands, equipping them with required skills at the destination countries."

Muferiat also stressed the need for engaging in collective bargaining in the region, adding that "if we can negotiate as a bloc, we can secure a better position for our citizens in the Horn African region to receive appropriate payment for their services."

Highlighting the ongoing success of various programs in Ethiopia, the minister disclosed about 181,000 skilled individuals have been sent overseas over the past six months. This figure has exceeded 50,000 workers compared to the same period last year.

"There is a notable shift not just in numbers but in quality too. Our new agreements include sending skilled, semi-skilled workers like engineers, nurses, architects, and agriculturalists - not just domestic workers," Muferiat revealed.

Acknowledging persistent high domestic employment demands, over 1.4 million local job opportunities have been created, the minister pointed out.

Ethiopia to expand energy, aviation...

yesterday, MoFA Spokesperson, Ambassador Meles Alem (PhD) said that Ethiopia would expand energy supply and aviation support to neighboring and other East African countries in an exchange of diplomatic cooperation.

According to him, almost all neighboring countries lack energy and aviation services which Ethiopia has better experience in both sectors.

Kenya has a 25 years contract to buy electric power from Ethiopia, he said, adding that leaders of the two countries have agreed to make further cooperation.

As a country striving to become the powerhouse of the region, he noted that Ethiopia has been exporting power to Sudan, Djibouti, and South Sudan.

Tanzania, like any other east African country, has a huge demand of energy in which Ethiopia is capable of supplying, according to the Spokesperson.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD), during his recent visit to Tanzania, has discussed the possibility his nation could provide power to the former. So, an agreement is expected to be reached soon, Ambassador Meles expressed.

"Ethiopia has huge potential in the energy and aviation sectors. The visit of the Prime Minister to Kenya and Tanzania [a week ago] was to make deals on energy and aviation arenas."

The spokesperson further said that Ethiopia, having senior experts on the construction of dams, will support Tanzania to build dams on the Nile River if asked for support.

The political stance of the two on the equitable share of the Nile waters is identical.

Ethiopia has a long-term plan of reaching Eastern and Southern Africa countries with electricity, Ambassador Meles remarked.

Women's Nat'l Dialogue ...

women, they should participate freely and independently in the National Dialogue to achieve the effort to ensure a strong and legitimate government."

Noting women's participation in the National Dialogue has a large share, Blen stressed that women should participate as an executive and commissioner, discuss it, compile and formulate an agenda, identify participants and collaborators, and participate in the consultation process and other activities.

"Women should play a leading role to achieve the success of the National Dialogue, which aims to achieve national unity and lasting peace by resolving differences and disagreements that have been brewing for centuries."

According to Commissioner Blen, women will speak out in their homes, offices and various forums for lasting peace in the country. Accordingly, women's participation in the dialogue process, which involves many national issues, will give them the opportunity to put into practice sustainable solutions

for peace that they are advocating for.

Women have also multifaceted participation in the National Dialogue as members of teachers' union, farmers, district administration, farmers, civic associations, political parties and other sections of the society.

"Making women participate in leadership positions and other meticulous jobs is not a quota but a skill. When plans and decisions are prepared and implemented for the unity, development, prosperity and other aspects of the country, it should be gender oriented."

In order to realize Ethiopia that its people wish, it is crucial for ensuring gender equality and making women participate in major national issues including the National Dialogue.

Also, women should actively participate in the National Dialogue process at all levels and work for its success so that Ethiopia can maintain its lasting peace and achieve comprehensive development, the commissioner remarked.

Local firm, AXIS Capital

Duffy further highlighted that the centerpiece of the two sides' partnership is the establishment of the Ethiopian Securities Exchange (ESX), Ethiopia's inaugural securities exchange. Conceived as a public-private partnership, the ESX is dedicated to creating a modern and reliable trading environment for securities, poised to become a cornerstone in the evolution of Ethiopia's capital market ecosystem.

"Similarly, this unique collaboration

sets itself apart by providing access to a network of international experts, delivering high-caliber corporate finance, capital markets, legal, forensic accounting, and communications services.

Aimed at preparing Ethiopian and international investors for the upcoming opportunities in the local capital market, this initiative marks a significant milestone in the country's economic landscape, he remarked.

Ethiopia in forefront...

Ethiopia's lasting peace is ensured by the vital participation of women and it is

appropriate to pave the way for women to participate in various national issues including peace enforcement missions. "Empowering women is empowering society and the ministry is involving women on peacekeeping missions and giving them equal deployment to men."

Noting the celebration of the International Women's Day (March 8) by the ministry under the theme "We will ensure peace through women's struggle," BG Huluagersesh noted that the idea is promoting equality and the day was marked in honoring brave comrades who have made sacrifices.

The day also recognized women comrades who are engaged in the frontline of peace enforcement missions and who have made an equal and more heroic history than men.

According to her, the army means a guard for the country. Female army members are also strong members who are full of commitment and dedication to sacrifice their lives for Ethiopia.

"Therefore, to make women competent and more involved, they should develop themselves through training and education and be the leading influencers."

If Ethiopia's peace is ensured, it has a great advantage as an institution, especially in terms of women army members to empower themselves and build a modern army. "This year's motto is also a reflection of this idea."

BG Huluagersesh said that the sacrifices and responsibilities that are being paid to ensure the sovereignty and peace of the country are being carried out together with male comrades.

Women have many cultural and societal pressures and they could support each other in the spirit of sisterhood and diligence to achieve the goals they believe in. "When women are united, we have great potential. In order to utilize the potential, increasing women's participation is crucial. To this end, Ethiopian women should stand together for peace and development."

Opinion

Special Edition

Ethiopian women march to greater heights in the spirit of March 8

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Over the last five years of the inception of the national reform program of Ethiopia, the government has accomplished far reaching socio-economic and political achievements in enabling women to contribute their part in the development programs of the nation. There are several indicators that show that women in Ethiopia are aspiring higher.

Ethiopian women are already shining in the aviation industry as the nation now has more than twenty highly qualified pilots some of whom have grown to the level of test pilots. It is now common to see women engineers in the development of infrastructure facilities across the country.

Ethiopia has produced numerous women achievers who have made significant contributions in various fields, including politics, literature, arts, science, and social activism. Here are some notable Ethiopian women achievers:

President Sahlework Zewdie made history in 2018 by becoming Ethiopia's first female president, serving as a symbol of progress for women's representation in political leadership.

Birtukan Mideksa is a prominent Ethiopian politician and former judge. She was the first woman to chair Ethiopia's electoral board and has been a vocal advocate for democracy and human rights.

Maaza Mengiste is an acclaimed Ethiopian-American author known for her novels "Beneath the Lion's Gaze" and "The Shadow King," which explore themes of war, identity, and resilience.

Aster Aweke is a legendary Ethiopian singer known for her powerful voice worldwide and influential contributions to Ethiopian music. She has captivated audiences with her distinctive style and cultural impact.

Professor Hirut Woldemariam was a prominent Ethiopian women's rights activist who played a pivotal role in advocating for women's rights, education, and empowerment during the early 20th century.

Yordanos Shiferaw is a leading Ethiopian scientist and researcher known for her work in agricultural biotechnology and plant genetics. She has contributed to advancements in crop breeding and food security in Ethiopia and beyond.

Tigist Mekonnen is a trailblazing Ethiopian pilot who made history as the country's first female captain of a commercial airline. She has inspired women and girls to pursue careers in aviation and break gender barriers in traditionally male-dominated fields.

Hiwot Teffera is an Ethiopian entrepreneur and founder of the Yellow Movement, a youth-led initiative aimed at raising awareness and combating gender-based violence and discrimination in Ethiopia.

These women represent a diverse range of talents, achievements, and contributions to Ethiopian society and the world. Their resilience, leadership, and commitment to excellence serve as inspirations for future generations of women and girls in Ethiopia and beyond.

Top of Form During the last five years, women doctors and specialists on various medical fields numbering more than 1000 are serving their nation. Their number is growing by years. Ethiopia has more than 5 female military generals.

As the nation celebrates March 8, thousands of women have now assumed higher managerial and decision making positions in line with the government's policy of gender parity.

The increasing number of women judges and lawyers and attorneys has helped to improve the delivery of justice to the nation's women and other sections of the Ethiopian society.

Women role in the education of Ethiopia remains progressive over time. Over the last 20 years, the federal government has exerted greater effort to comfort equitable opportunities for females in public education.

According to World Data Atlas analysis in 2015, women enrollment in primary and secondary education was increased to 48.5% from 45.2% in 1992, growing at annual rate of 0.42%. Every year 30 million persons participate in watershed management and conservation schemes across the country of which more than 15 million are women. Women have the right to protection by the state from harmful customs and practices that press them or cause bodily or mental harm.

Ethiopian women are entitled to remedial and affirmative measures to enable them to compete and participate on the basis of equality with men in political, economic and social life.

The reform in Ethiopia is so comprehensive that it has already gained international recognition and acceptance but ultimately the bottom line is the extent to which it could help to improve the livelihoods of women whether married singles or widowed.

Of special importance is the change of attitude that we all have about women in this country. Concerns about women's empowerment through education and promotion of technologies that ease their life are critical for uplifting women. In this regard, support for disabled women and women headed families need to be one of the top priorities in the government reform and development programs.

The improvement in the quality of life for women is an important indicator for social development in Ethiopia.

Women in Ethiopia have shown remarkable achievements showing their ability to serve

at all levels of government and civil society activities by thrashing the traditional and customary stereotypes that they had to face.

For Ethiopian women what matters is not that their participation in all aspects of public life is ensured but they also need to own their destiny. It is not a matter of participation but owning them as the most important segment of the Ethiopian society. It is to be stressed that women's question in Ethiopia is a human question primarily because what affects them equally affects the entire Ethiopian society irrespective ethnic, age, religious affiliation or gender difference.

Over the past years, national election has been looming women's participation in the entire system and their rightful power of competing for seats in the parliament as a litmus paper that would test the nature of the democratic process in the country.

Women achievers have already surfaced up in every aspect of socio-economic and political life in this country. They need to speak for peace as lack of peace primarily affects them and their children. This year's celebration of March 8 needs to be crowned with heralding the achievements of women at all levels.

The issue of the sociopolitical and economic rights of women is directly related to the measures to be taken to further promote the reform program of the country. In this regard there are several gender based challenges that the nation needs to resolve.

Across the world, women perform 66% of the world's work and produce 50% of the food, yet earn only 10% of the income and own 1% of the property. Even though women in Ethiopia take part in productive-, domestic-and community-related activities, they rarely participate in marketing and controlling the benefits. High adult women illiteracy, lack of control for productive assets, limited access to family planning services, low reproductive health, and limited access to information and lack of gender professionals severely limit women's empowerment and gender equality.

The persistence of patriarchal thinking and confirmation of women keeps them in a vulnerable position. The presence of large family within a roof together with considering reproductive activities for female prevents women to be competitive. Early marriage of girls, frequent pregnancy, breast-feeding and sexual violence also challenges gender equality.

In Ethiopia, approximately 27 million people are living in poverty. Given the lack of access and control over resources and many discriminatory traditional customs, women comprise a majority of those living in absolute poverty. Gender differentials persist at all levels, as reflected by social indicators, 75% of women are illiterate. Even though primary education is being promoted, early marriage of girls reduces their chance of having access to higher

education (75% of Ethiopian girls marry before the age of 17 and approximately 13% between the ages of 17 and 21 years). The rate of girl student dropouts is much higher than boys and girls are often responsible for many chores which may interfere with their schooling.

The prevalent attitudinal and conceptual problem on gender-related concepts, less accessibility of policy documents in lower level practitioners and reluctant of male practitioners for gender-related policy enforcement are considered as the major persistent problems. Therefore, awareness-raising programs should not only be limited to women, but also male should be educated. Education should not be limited to the new generation, but also be accessible for adult members of the society.

The role that women could play in the entire social development of the country demands continuous awareness creation programs not only for men but also for women as well. In rural Ethiopia and to a certain degree in the urban settings of the country, women are not fully aware of their constitutional and legal rights. The Ethiopian Government has been making every possible effort to mainstream gender issues in all social programs and activities that are accomplished at federal and regional levels.

It must be stressed that the participation of Ethiopian women in every aspect of socio-economic and political development of the country will help to add value not only for a better quality of life for women but also for the entire society. Women manage every sphere of family life and the brunt of family responsibility primarily rests on women who are to be encouraged to climb up to the social ladder in a more respectful and dignified manner.

It is important to devise new policies and strategies that directly target women, particularly in the rural areas of the country. This is clearly indicated in this year's March 8 theme which emphasizes on the importance of investing on women.

Women living with HIV virus need to be uplifted through occupational therapy of higher quality. Women who are in correctional centers need to be empowered so that they can mix with the society after they complete their prison terms. Special programs should be designed for women workers. Rape of girl children should be stopped and no women should be left out of any social activity in Ethiopia. We need to march with our wives, girl children, young women to their empowerment as we all celebrate March 8, the International Women's Day.

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

Editorial

Special Edition

Opinion

Gender equality needs more action and less rhetoric!

Today, International Women's Day (March 8) is being marked around the world under the theme 'Invest in women: Accelerate progress.' Ethiopia is also observing the day with various women centered programs. Besides celebrating women, the day however sends a subtle signal to the world that the issue of gender equality needs unending work rather than a onetime campaign. Past movements and advocacy works have brought a greater shift in terms of empowering women. In various areas, now women are increasingly becoming an equal actor and decisive player. There is also solid evidence that women can make a big difference and change societies. The world has also come to know that women do not necessarily need affirmative action, they only demand equal chance. Above all, for women to unlock their nature-gifted potentials, curbing the prejudices directed against them is obligatory.

In spite of the mammoth progress over the last years, gender equality is still a pressing matter particularly in developing countries like Ethiopia. Equal representation of women is still at nascent stage particularly male dominated areas like politics and leadership. The last few years have seen cautious optimism with regard to women participation with many women taking up the upper echelon of government leaderships like the presidency. However, sometimes gender equality is a tricky issue, usually topping agendas during women's days or other campaign-like events. However, narrowing down gender equality needs more action and less rhetoric.

Gender inequality proves to be the major bottleneck to sustain inclusive growth. That is why advocates of gender equality are calling for concrete actions urging holistic policy interventions. Inequality is wide in increasingly patriarchal society where women are forced to do domestic chores. The negative attitude towards women has stymied national efforts in narrowing down the gap between women and men. And, mainstreaming gender equality in all sectors requires continuous work to sustain progress and prevent backsliding.

As witnessed in many frontiers, Ethiopian women have defied expectations and broken barriers to reach at the height of their success. Yet, women have faced marginalization from their economic, social, and political rights due to entrenched cultural, societal, and religious stereotypes, as well as discriminatory laws. Despite their substantial contributions to the overall development of countries, their efforts have often gone unnoticed or underappreciated. This has led to a lack of opportunities and representation for women in various spheres of life.

Women can reach the zenith of their careers and professions. However, this dream eludes many African women not just because they are incapable but because of the long-enduring negative norms directed against them. Only courageous and self-made women were able to turn their ambitions to actions.

The issue of gender equality should never be left to women only. It is the responsibility of all to create a world for all to all. From the late UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher nicknamed the Iron Lady to mother India and from Empress Taytu Butul (wife of Menelik II) to the Olympic champion Derartu Tulu many women have exceeded expectations and left an indelible mark on the world stage. And, there are also heroines of today who shined against all odds. If the world can create leveled ground, the sky's the limit for women.

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Of special importance is the change of attitude that we all have about women in this country. Concerns about women's empowerment through education and promotion of technologies that ease their life is critical for uplifting women. In this regard, support for disabled women and women headed families need to be one of the top priorities in the government reform and development programs.

The improvement in the quality of life for women is an important indicator for social development in Ethiopia.

Women in Ethiopia have shown remarkable achievements showing their ability to serve at all levels of government and civil society activities by thrashing the traditional and customary stereotypes that they had to face.

For Ethiopian women what matters is not that their participation in all aspects of public life is ensured but they also need to own their destiny. It is not a matter of participation but owning them as the most important segment of the Ethiopian society. It is to be stressed that women's question in Ethiopia is a human question primarily because what affects them affects the entire Ethiopian society irrespective of ethnic, age, religious affiliation or gender difference.

Over the past national election is looming, women's participation in the entire system and their rightful power of competing for seats in the parliament is a litmus paper that would test the nature of the democratic process in the country.

Women achievers have already surfaced up in every aspect of socio-economic and political life in this country. They need to speak for peace as lack of peace primarily affects them and their children. This year's celebration of March 8 needs to be crowned with heralding the achievements of women at all levels.

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The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy

Special Edition

Empowering women to realize nation's socio-economic growth

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Half of the world's population is composed of women and empowering them means empowering an incredibly large number of the people. However, as it is well known, gender inequality is pervasive throughout the world, although the nature and extent of this inequality varies considerably across countries and regions. In most countries of the Global South, women and men do not have equal rights. There are significant gaps in terms of legal rights, access to and control over resources, economic opportunities, power, and political voice.

Women and girls, therefore, bear the greatest and most direct costs of gender inequalities. As a result, there are adverse impacts that affect society as a whole, ultimately harming everyone.

Empowerment is too broad and contextual term to be numerously defined. According to Naila Kabeer, Professor of Gender and Development at the Department of International Development, empowerment is a change and "it refers to expansion on people's ability to make strategic life choice in a context where this ability was previously denied to them".

According to this definition, empowerment for a woman means a combination of changes in her aspiration and achievement, i.e. being able to define her own life choices and to pursue her goals. In order to be able to make choices for oneself, one needs to understand the power dynamics inherent in every society. Understanding issues concerning power and gender, therefore, is the first step forward in understanding women's empowerment.

Economic empowerment has been defined in different ways as it is processed or carried out in different contexts and realities. Others define that economic empowerment as: "a process that increases people's access to and control over economic resources and opportunities including jobs, financial services, property and other productive assets (from which one can generate an income), skills development and market information indicator of economic empowerment.

According to the Central Statistics Agency's (CSA's) recent report, out of the 120 million populations in Ethiopia, half comprises women. Hence, any economic development plan without considering women will not be succeeded. It is still clear that the society is male dominated and women particularly residing in the rural part of the country are marginalized from their own affairs.

One of the key tools which enable to empower women and bring gender equality is expanding education and increasing women school enrolment and to that end the government engaged in constructing infrastructures such as roads, schools, clinics, electric power and piped water in the rural part since long ago and so far, encouraging results has been registered.

The Ethiopian government has been taking measures for ending poverty and

accelerating sustainable economic growth as is stated in its agenda in the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) from 2010-2015. The plan was carried out with a clear objective focused on agro-industry, rural development, industrialization, social and human development, good governance and democratization.

It is a major document that has been implemented towards the economic growth of the country which encompasses cross-cutting areas such as gender equality and youth participation. World Bank supported project assessed in 2022 concerned with the empowerment of women in Ethiopia on economic and social aspects in rural and urban areas showed that the status of women in the development arena was minimal both in rural and urban areas. The study shed light on the fact that women face constraints in accessing economic assets, which prevents them from expressing or exercising their rights.

As Ethiopia's economy is one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, there is a need to understand the discourses of women's empowerment in that context. One has to ask if this growth is inclusive or gender sensitive that gives fair and equal opportunities for all.

The problem in practice is that women's economic empowerment is still lagging behind despite the rhetoric used in the economic development discourses in Ethiopia.

Regardless of massive effort being exerted by government and other concerned bodies, Ethiopia ranks 109 out of 144 countries in the world on gender gap in economic empowerment and participation, according to the data of World Economic Forum 2022. The same data shows that Ethiopia ranks number 42 in terms of the labor force participation, and 105 out of 144 on wage equality for similar work. Ethiopia rank 45th out of 144 countries in women's political empowerment, and it is the 93rd place according to women holding ministerial positions. The figures presented show only the quantity of the gap or disparities. The problem of women economic empowerment transcends in its qualitative nature and is not assessed from the ability of human agency.

From different categories, economic empowerment must be perceived as the liberating element of women in bondage, which gives them a human agency to make free choice to exercise power. Donor-centered empowerment must consider context in interpreting discourses of empowerment. Economic empowerment increases women's access to economic resources and opportunities including jobs, financial services, property and other productive assets, skills development and market information.

It is central to process of maintaining benefits at all level: household, community and broader level. In this regard, encouraging outcomes are being registered especially during the recent years. For instance, the Ethiopian government along with investors has provided well furnished houses for those



Education plays key role for girls and women empowerment

One of the key tools which enable to empower women and bring gender equality is expanding education and increasing women school enrolment

in need including the elderly ones in which many of them are women.

Participating in economic empowerment has many indicators must be embarked on to unbundle the complexity of the notion of empowerment. During the meeting on the occasion of the World Population Day recently held focusing on the vitality of women empowerment for development, State Minister of Planning and Development, Tirumar Abate highlighted Ethiopia's commitment to the implementation of the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development (AADPD) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

She also stressed the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment in achieving sustainable development. The World Population Day celebration was a reminder of the importance of empowering women and girls and ensuring that they have the same rights and opportunities as men.

It was also a call to action to invest in women and girls to achieve a more sustainable and equitable future for all. The Ten Years Development Plan (2021-2030) has given

adequate emphasis on gender equality and social inclusion.

She also stated that The Ministry of Planning and Development is aware of the need to revise the 1993 population policy of Ethiopia. The institutional basis of population issues in Ethiopia at all levels needs to be strengthened. The Ministry of Planning and Development assures its continuous support to the issues of population and development in general and gender equality in particular.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Country Representative to Ethiopia, Koffi Kouame, stated that UNFPA is working in collaboration with Ethiopia to strengthen the role of women and girls in the society. He also said that uplifting the voices of women and girls is essential to unlocking the world's infinite possibilities.

The event also featured remarks from the Ambassador of Denmark to Ethiopia, representing the diplomatic corps in Addis. The Ambassador said that Denmark is committed to supporting Ethiopia's efforts to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment.

As mentioned above, the World Population Day celebration was a reminder of the importance of empowering women and girls and ensuring that they have the same rights and opportunities as men. It was also a call to action to invest in women and girls to achieve a more sustainable and equitable future for all.

In a message she delivered on the occasion, Minister of Women and Social Affairs, Ergoge Tesfaye (PhD) said that the government of Ethiopia has been taking various measures to ensure the benefits and equal participation of women in the country. She urged all to give the appropriate attention to support those women who are in dire situation.

Art & Culture

Special Edition

The male author who paints women with brighter hues

BY ALEM HAILU G/KRISTOS

Maxim Gorky referred to as a figurehead of socialist realism is noted for painting members of the fair sex with brighter hues. Right, it is hardly possible to get his works in which the word 'mother' is not mentioned. This bent of his is attributed to his grandmother. Telling him tales of edifying nature in his formative years, she brought him up showering him with all necessary love when a kid he sought a comforting chest ill-treated by his stepfather often beating him and his mother. His hatred towards his stepfather and his attempt to defend his mother from the male chauvinist man are well reflected in his book "My Childhood". Gorky lost his biological father and soon his mother early in life.

True to the saying there are individual differences in penning down literary pieces, there is a heated debate whether content or form matters. Many give more focus on the form, while others on the content. In other words, some are more concerned on the entertaining nature of the literary work. Foregrounding the language like formalists to create aesthetic effect, fun or surprise occupies their mind. They see a literary piece as a reflection of the tidbits of life. They may not dig deep to reveal social injustices or address social issues.

On the other end of the scale, though every literary work written in whatever form has a message, some are more concerned about the social messages the works carry across. How are women painted in the work? How children are treated and how economic injustices are addressed and the like take center stage in their works.

The styles above could be broadly categorized as "Art for Art's sake" or "Art for life's sake."

When we come to Maxim Gorky, we notice that he was a votary of Art for life's sake. Peculiarly, he was conveying the burning social messages of his time interestingly. Tilting more to Art for life's sake he was hitting a balance between the two styles on diametrically opposite ends.

Observably most fans go for works done in art



for art sake claiming that it is relatively palatable. They downplay art for life's sake a propagandist one. Fans for art for life's sake slam art for art's sake claiming that if a literary piece is devoid of a beef, it goes astray solely focusing on superficial things.

Back to Gorky, placing more focus on the social messages he hits a balance between art for life's sake and art for art's sake. With word pictures, the way he describes the setting in his work is unmatched as he vividly portrayed Italy, where he stayed as a refugee.

Also, in describing characters Gorky never stops short of features indicating that he knows a broad array of people, especially from the lower class as witnessed in his novel 'My Universities'. In his

workshe fantastically shows the beauty of the life of ordinary people,

Among the short stories Gorky wrote in Italy are found 'Let us praise Mother' and 'The Mother of the traitor'.

Let us see how he described women in two short stories compiled in his book 'Tales of Italy.'

The craft he used to write "Let us praise mother" is creating contrasts between the respectfulness and glory of a mother on one hand and how furious a ruthless king that has been shedding blood vengefully could be. Using symbolism here and there he creates the required opposite images.

At the climax the brutal king, who in cold blood

was shedding blood, bows down before the reverential mother whom even wild animals treat respectfully. Gorky also used the satiric and wisdom-packed utterances of a poet in the story that accompanies the king to mellow his irritability and wield influence on his decisions. Gorky also put words in the mouth of the poet, whom the ruthless king doted on, to laud mothers.

The conflict in the story between the anxiety and fear provoked by a merciless king and the respectfulness and honor of a poor mother whose child is held captive by the irritable king and the possible confrontation between the two create suspense to propel the story forward.

The coming to amity between the protagonist the poor mother and the antagonist the brutal king after a peaceful dialogue creates the resolution, for the king returns the kid to her mother with a bow.

Gorky employed the same technique in crafting the short story "Mother of the traitor." After drawing the attention of readers on the strong bond between a mother and her son in one hand and the loathsomeness of treason, once more, bringing into play images and symbols and contrasting the elements in the two sets, he creates a conflict that finds a resolution via a defamiliarized plot. The mother punishes her treasonous son, who conniving with an enemy was about to demolish his motherland. In this story Gorky shows the mercilessness of a merciful mother when a question mark hangs over the furtherance of a motherland. The suspense and the unexpected ending allow this story to stick out.

And also, another short story entitled "The Judgment" about an informal justice system by the proletariat shows how wise women, as judges, could handle defamation of an affair to spare a family from crumbling down. The way the women judges outwits the offender adds spice to the story to make it savory.

Gorky believes women must be held in the highest esteem as they create tomorrow with their children, whom he sees a harbinger to days ahead.

Heritage of Heroines

BY BITANIA TADLE

In Ethiopia, land of ancient grace,
There dwells a spirit of strength and grace.
Famous women, revered and bold,
Their stories in history, forever told.

Queen of Sheba, a legend divine,
Her wisdom and beauty forever shine.
A ruler of power, with a heart so true,
Her legacy lives on, in all that we do.

Empress Zewditu, a queen so fair,
Ruled with elegance, beyond compare.
Her reign a symbol of hope and might,
Guiding her people through the darkest night.

Tiru Nesh Debaba, a trailblazer bold,
Her strength and courage, a story untold.

Aster Aweke, a voice so pure,
Her music touches hearts, forever endure.

Amsale, a designer of beauty divine,
Her creations sparkle, like stars that shine.

Birtukan Mideksa, a voice so strong,
A fearless leader, righting many a wrong.
Champion of justice, unwavering and true,
Her courage inspires us, in all that we pursue.

But let us not forget the everyday heroines,
The housewives who toil behind the scenes.
Their hands work tirelessly, day and night,
Their love and dedication, a shining light.

In the kitchen, they create magic with food,
Nourishing their families, with love imbued.
In the home, they keep the flame burning bright,
Their sacrifices and hard work, a beacon of light.

On Women's Day, let's honor them all,
Famous women and housewives, big and small.
Their strength and resilience, a testament true,
To the power and beauty of women like you.

So let us raise our voices high,
For these women who reach for the sky.
In Ethiopia's heart, their legacy stands,
Famous women, in every land.

Art & Culture

Special Edition

Turning challenges as a female artist as inspirations

(Carrying modern painting across the board)

BY NAOL GIRMA

Ethiopia, a country known for its rich cultural heritages and artistic traditions, has a vibrant and diverse art scene. In recent years, there has been a surge of talented women painters who have broken barriers and made significant contributions to the Ethiopian art community. Traditionally, the art scene in Ethiopia has been male-dominated, with women artists facing numerous challenges and barriers to recognition. However, in recent years, there has been a noticeable shift as women painters have emerged as powerful voices in the Ethiopian art landscape. They have defied societal expectations and shattered stereotypes through their exceptional talent and creativity. Women painters in Ethiopia bring a distinct artistic flair to their work, blending traditional Ethiopian art forms with contemporary influences. Many artists draw inspiration from the country's rich cultural heritages, incorporating elements such as traditional clothing, rituals, and landscapes into their compositions. Additionally, themes of empowerment, identity, and social issues often feature prominently in their artwork, reflecting the challenges and triumphs faced by Ethiopian women.

Several influential women painters have made their mark in Ethiopia's art scene. One such artist is Sinafekesh Zeleke Women's Painters and Sculptors Association President, whose vibrant and colourful paintings capture the essence of Ethiopian life, often focusing on rural communities.

The success of women painters in Ethiopia extends beyond their artistic achievements. By challenging societal norms and pursuing their passion, these artists have become role models for aspiring painters, especially young women. Their success stories inspire others to pursue their dreams despite societal obstacles, fostering a more inclusive and diverse art community.

The talent and contributions of women painters in Ethiopia have gained recognition both locally and internationally. Their artwork has been exhibited in renowned galleries and museums, not only in Ethiopia but also around the world. This recognition has not only elevated the status of Ethiopian art but has also provided a platform for these artists to share their unique perspectives and narratives with a global audience.

Known as one of the pioneer female painters in Ethiopia, Sinafekesh has been an inspiration to many young women with the desire to pursue their dream of becoming artists. She fell in love with painting and

drawing at a very young age.

It is one thing to marry paint, brush and canvas to create work of art that inspires audience, but it is quite another for a woman to become a successful example in a depriving environment. But not for Sinafekesh, who is an accomplished painter and a pioneering female artist.

While describing the ups and downs of being an artist, especially female artist who strives in a developing country, Sinafekesh says each and every career has its own ups and downs. However, for a female painter the road is much difficult. She has to go through misleading social norms, difficult motherhood or raise children in difficult situations. "Apart from raising children and leading my family, I have to work at an office. On the other hand, the art of painting requires concentration, peace and serenity. These are the values of my career which are very difficult to find because of the family responsibilities and the office job," said Sinafekesh.

Meanwhile, the artist strongly believes that, family responsibilities, wrong societal perceptions about women could be visible ups and downs for female artists but they are also the pathways to a successful career.

She says there were different techniques that she used from one year to another to overcome different ups and down and accomplish several works of art and exhibitions.

Several artists could be inspired by several phenomenon, incidents or situations or imaginations but would also stick with some kind of style of genre to convey a message, according to Sinafekesh. She also says "Ideas may be what we see, hear, what we admire or from our imaginary thoughts. Our messages differ based on the specific period of time, reality or imaginations we lived in. But in order to convey the messages, one painter may use the realistic or the ways of abstract painting. That also works for me."

The Ethiopia Herald has also asked Sinafekesh if she has preferences between individual and group exhibitions when she decided to stage here works of painting. She would simply replay that she preferred individual exhibitions for her own specific reason. "Except few group exhibitions that I participated in, I always choose to display my paintings in my own individual exhibitions. That is because I don't like other people's ideas to limit mine. In another expression I don't want to be bound by other painters' styles, thoughts, philosophies or ways of painting".

Somehow, Sinafekesh wouldn't keep herself from spreading her knowledge and wisdom of art. She travels to different regional cities



(towns) and universities to hold her own voluntary individual exhibitions to raise awareness about the art of modern painting.

Even though the parental responsibilities are still intact (unavoidable), she had left the office job and became a fulltime paint artist and exhibitionist traveling to different parts of the country.

She says the reason why or the motive that led her to traveling and staging exhibitions in the countryside resides in raising awareness about the art of painting to farmers or local residents of a certain town or university. But she also admitted that the local people have never lived without art in their cultures and daily lives. "Our societies for long lived by melting and crafting iron, doing pottery and weaving, mixing paints and drawing or painting. But my aim is to raise more awareness about modern ways of painting art," she stressed.

Speaking of the comments that she receives from most of the exhibition audiences, Sinafekesh says they are mostly about how

tough it would be to be a successful female paint artist, especially with all the parental burdens as a mother. "However, like I said earlier family responsibilities as well as other social misconceptions can only be inspirations for any artist who knows what she/ he is doing!" says the painter.

In her humble opinion Sinafekesh wouldn't deny that she, to some extent, agrees with the idea that this world is a world of men. She notes that the world to some extent is tough for young especially female artists. "But it's the tough road that helps make a successful artist. Therefore, young female painters should always keep themselves committed to the career and work for the sake of it not money. They have to go through all the ups and downs with full passion for art".

About the current level of stage that the Ethiopian modern art is standing, Sinafekesh does not believe that it is on its golden age but there are much inspiring ideas, philosophies emerging through encouraging new works of art.

Society

Special Edition

“Successful women have an aura that says I belong in this seat”

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

She has gone through a lot of ups and downs at her early age. However, because she has a firm belief that every challenge has its own rewards for those who stand unwaveringly and strive to achieve their ambitions, she has determinedly put her heart and soul into her work to realize her childhood dream.

All the obstacles she faced in her path have created a favorable opportunity to realize her dream and reach where she is now. According to her, while she was attempting to overcome the challenges that life threw at her, she found her calling.

Yohana Reta was born and raised in Bishoftu Town, located 42 km away from Addis Ababa. As she always stated, Yohana attributes much of her successes and achievements to her father who was a devoted patriotic man with an unreserved love for Ethiopia; and paid the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

“My father is my role model. His commitment, diligence, courage, persistence and deep love for his country and his fellowmen have shaped my mind and influenced my attitude positively.”

The values and disciplines he instilled in her continue to serve as the foundation for her current accomplishments. Additionally, the love and support she received from her family have played a crucial role in shaping her future and leading her to gain several international awards.

Yohana’s mother also holds a significant place in her life. Assuming all responsibilities for raising her children with moral values and manners, she epitomized selflessness and compassion. Not only did she care for her own daughters, but she also extended her support to others in need.

Yohana credits her mother for teaching her the true meaning of selflessness, which inspired her to dedicate herself to helping vulnerable children and women. This commitment led her to found the “Safe Heaven Association,” with the assistance of a couple from the Netherlands whom she fortuitously met in her early years.

Yohana is a woman who always aspires to help others. This is particularly true for women, children and youth. Thus, using her past experience together with a vision of supporting others, she has now given her time, money and energy to the educational sector and has founded a higher education institute called ‘Golden Stars College’ that provides education opportunities in Hawassa, Addis Ababa and Hossana. What is more, she has also finalized all the processes to start another organization designed to provide support for women and youth.

Asked to what extent women are active in running higher educational institutes, Yohana said that, in most cases, it is common to observe more men owning and running higher educational institutes (Colleges) than women. Very few women own colleges. “In this regard, I feel that as a responsible



Yohana Reta, Founder and CEO of ‘Golden Stars College’

Ethiopian woman who cares for women empowerment, I encourage more women to dream big and contribute their share for their sisters. As part of this ambition, I am aggressively working to empower more women to be independent and self-reliant economically. That is why I am providing training for women to improve their leadership skills and have better dreams in their future.”

While talking to what extent her previous experience has helped her to be more successful in her current endeavors, Yohana said: “every human kind joins this world with purpose and reason. I am here to accomplish my purpose- to share what I have to fellow Ethiopians. My father has sacrificed his life for the sake of his motherland. That was his purpose. I also have a purpose for this country. I want to invest in the youth and women. That is what I am doing now. By investing in the education sector, I am endeavoring to generate responsible citizens.”

The future of this country is in the hands of the new generation. The more we cultivate responsible citizens, the more we create a great nation. In this respect, the education sector needs more women investors, as to Yohana.

effectively. “I advise Ethiopian women to have courage and confidence in themselves and take risks to achieve goals. All the ups and downs I have been through are matters that I have drawn a good lesson from and the wins that I am now witnessing are my trophies.”

Concerning the economic rights and benefit of Ethiopian women, Yohana said that the issue of women equality and benefit is already stipulated in the constitution of Ethiopia. This is a great milestone in Ethiopian history. Several women are assuming leadership at the government circle. However, there are still areas that need an intervention. This is specially challenged when it comes to the lower administrative level where women’s benefits are not entertained at the desired level. According to her, the economic rights and benefits of women should be practical going beyond devising a policy and more than paying lip service. It should encourage women to be active players of the economy by giving special support in selected economic sectors such as in agriculture, higher education sector, mining and others.

To the question how she defines Ethiopian women and how she relates March 8 with women, Yohana said that every Ethiopian woman is brave. This is especially true for those mothers and sisters who are shouldering all the responsibilities at home and outside. They are the one who has a great contribution to sustain the family and to the economy of the nation. Most mothers are raising their children in the absence of their husband. Against all the odds, they are the ones who nurture responsible citizens to Ethiopia.

According to Yohana, Ethiopian women are strong and high spirited. However, the current generation has a tendency to take shortcuts instead of taking risks to achieve goals. This is particularly true among the young generation who aspire to get prospered at the expense of others instead of capitalizing on their skill and knowledge. In this regard, I urge Ethiopian girls to develop self-confidence and be a role model to their future children.

Yohana has a dream to empower women and help them live their dreams. “In our country, there are estimated to be 60 million women. However, due to various societal pressures and internal struggles, many women fail to pursue their goals, realize their full potential and meet their dreams. In this regard, I have a vision to empower more Ethiopian women and youth. Using research and community services, training and consultancy, I want to address most of women’s challenges and support the society.”

“Regarding March 8, I consider the Day special not only to women but to all human kinds because it is the Day we honor our mothers, sisters, wives and daughters. But, it is also my firm belief that every day is “Women’s day!!” as far as we work to lessen the burden of women, to eliminate discrimination and ensure their full rights.

“I am among those few Ethiopian women who own private higher colleges in Ethiopia. I want to inspire more Ethiopian women to take the risk, if there is any, and involve in the area to generate well educated, responsible and patriot Ethiopians. What is more, as a mother of two, I want to practically show and inspire my children what women can do.”

When asked what challenges she faced during her journey and how she overcame those challenges, Yohana said that life is all about learning from past experiences; scaling up the success with perseverance and going forward. It is an open secret that living in a society that sets gender demarcation has its own negative impact on women. “There are wrong assumptions and gender-based borders that restrict women from engaging in some careers. And whenever a given Ethiopian woman attempts to break that border, there are some groups or individuals who are reluctant to accept and appreciate women’s exceptional competences and skills. This is what I learnt from my experiences.”

According to her, taking responsibilities at home and assuming leadership needs extra energy for every Ethiopian woman. This is the other challenge she used to experience. However, she is able to handle them



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Efforts on innovation, technology to ensure quality healthcare services

BY DIRRIBA TESHOME

The Ministry of Health recently noted that Ethiopian government has been investing on innovation and technology infrastructure to ensure quality healthcare services.

Health State Minister Dr. Ayele Teshome said the number and type of innovation interventions implemented in Ethiopia have increased in recent years in his keynote speech to the 8th National Healthcare Innovation and Quality Summit that was launched on Monday.

Not all, but some of these interventions were successful and have significantly improved the health system, he added.

As stated by him, innovations in medical technology, treatments and procedures



Dr. Ayele Teshome

are critical in improving quality and continuity of care. Innovations such as digitization and automation in the health information system contribute significantly to identifying potential safety issues, preventing medical errors and ensuring accountability and learning opportunities.

Furthermore, innovation can help

to address healthcare disparities and promote equity by improving access to care for under-served population as well as overcome geographical barriers.

He also noted that over the past ten years various reform programs have been carried and remarkable achievements obtained through innovation based solutions in the health sector.

By the same token, Innovation and Technology State Minister Bayissa Bedada said on his part that science and technology and innovation play a crucial role in achieving 2030 sustainable development goals and Agenda 2063.

“The Government of Ethiopia has been carrying out various activities realizing that innovation contributes to national economy of the county,”

he stated adding that the government has also been tirelessly working on legal frameworks, infrastructural and human development that would enable the sector become competitive and effective.

On behalf of WHO, Ethiopia Country Representative Dr. Dlamini, Dr. Bejoy Nambiar said the organization is committed to supporting the Ministry of Health in achieving strategic objectives of harnessing innovation for health systems quality, equity and safety.

The three-day summit under the theme: “Promoting Health System Innovation to Enhance Healthcare Quality, Safety and Equity” has attracted various stakeholders from the country and other international organizations working on health.

African countries should unite on the reform of the global financial architecture

Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe (ECA) - The 56th Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (COM2024) closed in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe with a consensus that African countries should with one voice, advocate for the reform of the global financial architecture for it to be fit for purpose and serve Africa's development priorities.

The ministers also called upon countries to develop instruments and institutions that can bridge the technology gap and develop innovative financing mechanisms that can work for Africa with the right governance frameworks.

“We, African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development having deliberated on the theme of the conference, note that Africa is off track in most indicators of the 2030 Agenda of the Sustainable Development and has even regressed in some,” said the ministers in their statement.

“Also, the first 10-year implementation plan of the African Transformation Agenda 2063 has just ended with visible achievements in some areas and shortcomings in others.”

In this regard, the ministers noted that Africa requires an additional \$1.6 trillion by 2030 to achieve the SDG goals and that the actual expenditure on the attainment of the goals on the continent falls short of the

amount required to achieve them.

Claver Gatete UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) said the resolution adopted on tax cooperation is important as it will help countries strengthen domestic resource mobilization and prepare for the Financing for Development Conference that will take place in 2025.

“This, indeed, marks a pivotal step towards fostering a fair and equitable global economic system,” said “Building inclusive green economies in Africa is not merely an anecdote but a pressing imperative that demands our concerted action,” said Mr. Gatete.

“In addition, the innovative solutions proposed, and the partnerships forged underscore our resolve to advance economic prosperity for all Africans.”

He indicated that ECA is reorienting its work, with particular focus on deepening our intellectual leadership on technology, infrastructure and climate.

“This will enable us to better support countries to accelerate the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the SDGs,” he said.

The ECA Executive Secretary extended his heartfelt gratitude on behalf of ECA to the President, the entire government and to the people of Zimbabwe for their warm hospitality.

In their statement, the African ministers

raised their concern over the public debt burden in Africa that has worsened during the past decade, with the average debt-to-gross-domestic-product ratio on the continent sharply increasing since the 2010s, from 39.49 per cent between 2010 and 2014, to 56.41 per cent between 2015 and 2019, to 70.47 per cent in 2020.

In addition to the need for increased financing, they said, there is a need for more effective policy and regulatory frameworks to help to close development and climate finance gaps in Africa, and that a supportive policy environment for scaling up renewable energy.

Mthuli Ncube, Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion said that the economic growth in Africa remained subdued in 2023, amid tight monetary policies, low demand for African exports and global factors such as the geopolitical tensions, leading to elevated food and fuel costs, as well as limited fiscal space. This is also being compounded by the imposition of unilateral sanctions on some African member states by the developed world.

“The Conference explored policy options that encompass reforming the global financial architecture, boosting private sector participation, exploring innovative financing tools, implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area and fostering regional and global cooperative initiatives to drive climate resilience and sustainable development across the continent,” said Mr. Ncube.

He noted that countries should urgently transition to inclusive green economies, to restructure the global financial landscape, to accelerate regional integration, and to provide tailored support for our Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and do not leave behind Middle Income Countries caught in the development trap.

The ministers recommended that the Economic Commission for Africa and its partners to systematically support the sustainable debt coalition in contributing to efforts to tackle the foreign debt challenges faced by Africa and the reform of the global financial architecture.

On the reform of the global financial architecture the ministers called upon ECA to intensify its work in ensuring the timely reform of the global financial institutions to make them fit for purpose and able to serve the interests of Africa and developing countries elsewhere in the world.

ECA, they said should collaborate with the African Union and other partners, to take steps to enhance the role of science and technology in the transformation of Africa into an inclusive green economy, including through the establishment of harmonized rules and principles in respect of the promotion, protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights within the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Source: UNECA

Women in Focus

Special Edition

Lieutenant Ayida: Ethiopia's leading woman airborne

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

Lieutenant Ayida Alaro is an Ethiopian Airborne Dispatcher Expert. She has jumped from an airplane about 37 times. She is someone who took the courage, bravery and patriotic feeling from forefathers and foremothers. The National Defense Force that she joined in her childhood filled her with strong patriotic feeling and commitment that she stayed there for about 18 years.

The airborne that she dedicated her life to, has presented her as the only woman who jumped from an airplane in both genders for 37 times.

Lieutenant Ayida Alaro has stayed with the Ethiopian Press Agency and talked about her life and career experience. Enjoy reading.

Ayida was born and raised in Addis Ababa around Filamingo area. She attended her Primary education in Netsanet Birhan Primary School and went to Bole Secondary School. She also took her diploma from Misrak General School.

Growing up in an area named 'Meshualekiya Arategna' where she had to see many soldiers adorned with their military uniforms every day, influenced her to join the military at a young age without having adequate knowledge about military life.

"Though I have little information about it, I knew that the patriotic feeling and strong commitment that the military life brings wouldn't let me be otherwise. It has been 18 years now since I joined military".

Speaking about her training, she said "A mother who just gave birth to her child would not feed him something he cannot eat. She will take the time to allow the child to have what is necessary at the right time through the process."

She went on saying: We got the training step by step starting from basics for six months to Hurso and Tolay Training centers. The profession of military symbolizes little Ethiopia as all the airbornes who are drawn from each part of the country represent Ethiopia. It is a place where people really get to know their country and stand as one though language differences might be constrained at some point.

When a soldier accomplishes his military training and is promoted to Commando, it requires physical and psychological readiness as things start to become challenging. Someone with basic military knowledge is also needed to be mentally ready to accept any situation to engage in the Commando, as to her.

But, she indicated that as someone who was born in Ethiopia, she was able to receive the courage and bravery from forefathers and foremothers.

Reminding that she jumped 37 times,

The mission of an airborne is jumping in the middle, front and at the back of the enemy to save his people

she said the first five jumps would get the airborne soldier five wings while 30 jumps would get him additional stars in his wings; however, the more people add jumps, the more they get frustrated since they see people falling, get injured and face trouble with parachute.

The Ethiopian Airborne has built a huge school with the vision of returning its former trophy. Thus, she would do whatever is necessary to make her country proud and make the vision come to reality.

Ayida has never faced risky challenges in her stay at the airborne though she encountered little fractions on her legs during her 33th jump. But it never made her retreat or go back yet she made other jumps after that.

"I remember my first jump; one of our comrades had been sacrificed. It was in 1998 on Antonov Parachute. It is forbidden to change your mind once you are on the plane, whatever the reason maybe. I think the airborne soldier was terrified. I realized he was gone when I saw the face of the jump trainers," she recalled.

The mission of an airborne is jumping in the middle, front and at the back of the enemy to save his people. Airborne pushes the military to victory; it changes history and sustains a nation. They are not for the show; it has so far brought about prominent individuals like Brigadier General Tesfaye Habtemariam who served in the Ethiopian army for over three decades in the Airborne Division.

When an airborne soldier jumps, it is different from other jumps that civilians make. It has to fly long kilometers holding heavy necessary weapons. Once he is on the land, he is expected to hide or burn his parachute as he is in the enemy's district



Lieutenant Ayida Alaro

and cannot leave a trace. Hunger, thirst and other challenges are not new to an airborne when he is in an enemy's district. But he has to bear all the difficulties to accomplish his tasks properly, she noted.

Lieutenant Ayida has not married yet. But the fact that getting married has made many women give up their dreams usually makes her unhappy. Women tend to give up their dream when they start a family; however, they need to follow their vision even through challenges and obstacles.

Nonetheless, Ayida mentioned that women like Athlete Tirunesh and Derartu Tulu have proved that starting a family and giving birth does not necessarily constraint women from following their passion. Marriage and children are blessings, thus they should not give up their dreams, she stressed.

Everyone in this world is born with purpose. Exerting responsibility does not necessarily mean executing office activities. While others built a house, others led households, institutions; the rest of us might be here to safeguard our nation. It is the collective effort that makes a country complete. We have to bear the challenges and build our

country successfully.

On the one hand, the role of women in the Victory of Adwa is undeniable, especially the role of Empress Taytu Bitul. Women of this generation need to also become in the front executing different tasks to represent their nation.

"As for me, I never compare myself with men. I see it as we could support and make a good team together. More importantly, my country could not be valued from my status. In whatever situation I am in, it does not represent my nation. We all say we love our country but we fail to make it practical. We forget that if we cannot make something fruitful, we can at least stay put from doing wrongs or harm the country. Ethiopians need to take responsibility for their country. They should stand as one to sustain peace in the country. Everyone should exert utmost effort to create the Ethiopia we want, she emphasized."

Despite the number of airborne that jumps multiple times, Lieutenant Ayida remains the only woman that jumps 37th time in both genders.