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Ethiopia's sea outlet quest promotes mutual – beneficial regional cooperation

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia's desire to own a sea outlet would accelerate regional cooperation and development as many of its neighbors including Egypt have been enjoying the former's natural treasures for centuries, Ex-Ambassador said.

Former Ethiopian Ambassador to Somalia, Asmamaw Kelemu (PhD) expressed that Ethiopia has been supplying Egypt and other lower riparian countries with river waters in an exchange for nothing.

Asmamaw, is also Diplomacy and Security Affairs Advisor, noted that Somalia and Egypt have refused the Ethio-Somaliland access to seaport agreement while they are dependent of Ethiopia's river waters.

The two countries should have supported Ethiopia's aspiration of having access to sea with all means of cooperation for the sake of their own interests, he said, adding that

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Empowering women spurs Ethiopia's prosperity

• Premier inaugurates Women Rehabilitation, Skills Dev't center

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- The failure to provide equal opportunity, educate and empower women would obstruct Ethiopians' aspiration to build a country they want, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said.

The Premier made the above remark while inaugurating the first-ever Women Rehabilitation and Skills Development Center that is being built by Addis Ababa's Mayor at the Kaliti Sub-city.

The center dubbed "Le Negewa" i.e. For Tomorrow is

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Ethiopia keeps auspicious investment inflow, macroeconomic stability

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia has registered a remarkable investment inflow and macroeconomic stability amid domestic and international challenges, the Ministry of

Finance (MoF) said.

High-Level Development Forum held yesterday under the theme: "Macroeconomic development, peace consolidation,

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MoTRI emphasizes stakeholders' involvement in consumer protection

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – The Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration (MoTRI) said the participation of relevant stakeholders is the prerequisite to ensure consumer protection and to protect the latter from malpractices.

The MoTRI commemorated the World Consumer Protection Day yesterday with the attendance of stakeholders via panel discussion and other programs.

MoTRI Consumers' Right Protection and Awareness Desk Head Seifu Ayele said on the occasion that various activities are underway to ensure the protection of consumers' rights. The modernization of marketing (using of marketing



technologies) has been contributing to this end.

Concerned bodies have been taking measures to correct the violations of consumers' rights and the Federal Police,

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FSD Ethiopia, FinEquity Africa striving for women financial empowerment

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – FSD Ethiopia and FinEquity Africa are joining hands to ensure women’s financial inclusion across Africa.

FSD Ethiopia organized a half-day discussion with various bodies under the theme “Barriers and Opportunities for Women’s Financial Inclusion in Africa” aimed at ensuring women financial empowerment.

Opening the event, FSD Ethiopia Financial Inclusion Director, Abel Taddele said that financial inclusion cannot be realized without women on an equitable basis. In this regard, Ethiopia, like many countries has significant work to do in closing the gender gap in access and usage of financial service.

As to him, Ethiopia remains a lot to bring women financial empowerment both in rural and urban areas. It means that many Ethiopian women remain excluded due to low digital literacy and lack of products that meet women needs, among others.

Referring the World Bank Ethiopia’s financial inclusion strategy for 2021-2025, Abel noted that the gender gap in account ownership among Ethiopian adults has significantly widened between 2014 and 2020.

The gap increased from just two percentage points in 2014 to an estimated 19 percentage points in 2020, he said, adding that the gender gap in Ethiopia has grown larger than comparable countries in the region, such as Uganda (13%) and Kenya (8% pints.)

FinEquity Africa Global Facilitator Aude de Montesquiou said, “Timely Discussion Events underscore the business cause for why inclusive, tailored policies and solutions are needed to unlock women’s potential as consumers, entrepreneurs, economic actors, and leaders.”

She added that her FinEquity Africa is committed to working with partners across African continent to better understand the diverse experiences of women and better measure their empowerment through access to financial service develop climate smart financial products, and the likes.

It was to be recalled that FSD Ethiopia is a development agency committed to build an accessible, inclusive and sustainable financial system to support Ethiopia’s economic growth.

Ministry, AFLEX ink MoU to upgrade water leadership

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE) and African Leadership Excellence Academy (AFLEX) inked MoU on leadership development program aiming at owning skillful management in the water and energy sector.

During the signing of the MoU yesterday , MoWE Minister Eng. Habtamu Itafa said that his ministry needs capacity building particularly in water management, energy and human resource administration.

AFLEX President Zadig Abreha said : “ We need skillful and knowledgeable leadership to utilize Ethiopia’s water resource apart from moving forward the sector into higher level .”

It was learnt that this MoU would save the hard currency expenditure on leaders training and development in overseas . The agreement includes the participation of MoWE staff in leadership development programs offered by AFLEX, exploring opportunities for extending leadership development services, organizing joint events, undertaking joint research and



institution-building activities, and facilitating exposure visits and leadership development programs.

Accordingly, the Mutual Cooperation Document serves as a formal agreement that solidifies the commitment of the

involved parties to work together, share knowledge and resources, and achieve their shared objectives. It establishes a foundation for long-term collaboration and sets the stage for fruitful cooperation in areas of mutual interest.



Reproductive health advocates urge stakeholders to play due role

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA - All stakeholders should play due role in protecting reproductive health of young women to ensure Ethiopia’s development, said National Young Women’s Charity Organizations.

The Organizations has held a workshop yesterday under the theme “Advancing women’s reproductive Health.”

On the occasion, National Young Women’s Charity Organizations, Founder Marta Mamuye told the Ethiopia Press Agency (EPA) that the youth, the government, and civil society organizations should play their part in protecting the reproductive health of women and girls.

She expressed that young women are more vulnerable to reproductive health problems because of child marriages.

This exposes them to unwanted pregnancy, the emotional actions they take, addiction, peer pressure to have unprotected sex which makes them vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, and abortions that can cost them their lives, according to Marta.

Network of Ethiopia Women Association Program Manager, Mistir Alebachew on her part said that sexual and reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being in all matters relating to the reproductive system.

Reproductive health problems are the leading causes of ill health and death for

women and girls of child bearing age. Reproductive health problems are not a one-time problem but it is a lifetime problem, she stated.

“Young women are exposed to various reproductive problems and this has a great impact on the development of the country, because the work force of the country is young. If young people do not take care of their health, it is difficult to ensure the development of the country,” Mistir said.

Young women are exposed for reproductive health problem because the actions they take are not based on information or knowledge as they are sensitive, she added.

Therefore, she urged all governmental institutions and NGOs to work together on raising the awareness of young women.

News

State taking measures to combat illegal gold mining

ADDIS ABABA (ENA) - Concerted efforts are underway in Tigray state to effectively combat illegal gold mining operations and maximize the gains from the sector, the Interim Administration Land and Mines Bureau disclosed.

The deputy bureau head Tesfalem Hadgu told ENA that Over 300 youth associations are being given licenses and workplaces to produce gold in traditional way

According to him, the youth members of the association are actively involved in prospecting activities across the 26 woredas where gold mines are found.

Tesfalem emphasized that the peace and stability in the region has provided a window of opportunity for the organized youth associations to participate in traditional gold extraction practices.

Each association consists of 25 young individuals, and jobs have been created for seven thousand youth.

The official further stated that licensed associations have been granted access to up to 5,000 square meters of gold mining area in their preferred locations since the beginning of February.

The deputy bureau head pointed out

that illegal actors have exploited the state's challenges to plunder gold mines. Investigations and surveillance are underway to take legal action against these wrongdoers.

Tesfalem underscored the responsibility of the newly licensed associations to produce and market gold through legal channels.

He further revealed that the bureau aims to exploit mineral, including gold, in a coordination with the Revenues and Trade, Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Justice and Security bureaus.



Ethiopia keeps...

and resilience building" in the presence of state chiefs, ministers, resident ambassadors and development agencies.

Speaking at the occasion, Finance Minister Ahmed Shide said that the government has been aggressively working to ensure macro-economic stability, addressing institutional constraints for inclusive and private-sector led growth through launching the Home Grown Economic Reform Agenda.

The Minister also stated the government is also taking the essential steps to create an enabling environment for investment and business by revising policies and strategies to channel the state-led growth to create a fair playing ground for private investment and competition. "Despite the overlapping internal and external shocks, the country has become one of Africa's recent examples of resilience."

So far, the government along with partners has been putting concerted efforts to push the reform agenda forward thereby achieving remarkable outcomes in terms of per capita income growth, debt management, FDI improvement among many others, he elaborated.

Furthermore, Ahmed indicated that the forum is a timely and critical platform to hold strategic dialogue between the government and development partners to set a common understanding on Ethiopia's vision and priorities towards development. "Restoring macroeconomic balance and removing market distortions are critical to revive its long-term economic growth prospects."

Thus, Ethiopia is currently embarked on the second Home Grown Economic Reform to join gains and address current and emerging macroeconomic issues and rebalance the public and private sectors' role in the economy.

Lauding Ethiopia's commitment to strengthen its global partnership, the minister called on development partners' continued support and contribution in terms of macroeconomic stability and regional integration that would help to realize the country's development aspirations.

Empowering women...

established to support women facing social and economic challenges. The center, which provides vocational training starting from psychological support and health care is said to create new career pathways and make women fit in the society,

In his opening remarks, Abiy Ahmed mentioned that women constitute half of the Ethiopian society whereby they have been playing a significant role in serving their country in different areas including in the defense, Abay Dam and other mega. Women have also a major share in the construction of this rehabilitation center too.

"Thus, it would be impossible to achieve the major goals that the nation aspires to accomplish if it fails to ensure gender equality."

Praising those who participated in the construction, the Primer emphasized that the center exceeds the recently built projects including Friendship and Entoto parks given its objectives.

The coming into force of the project not only fills the gaps that vulnerable and sexually assaulted women faced but also the underlying challenges that the nation has been encountering in terms of exposing children to street life.

He further highlighted that the center would be instrumental in promoting the role of women in reconciliation, and peace as they are naturally gifted in settlement and cooperation.

Addis Ababa, Mayor Adanech Abiebie on her part stated that gender inequality has drawn back women from exploiting their full potential in various areas.

In cognizant to this fact, the city administration has been undertaking several activities to ensure women's equal participation and benefits though much more effort is still needed.

According to Mayor Adanech, the center would give vulnerable women and victims of physical and sexual violence the opportunity to skill development and employment.

The groundbreaking center, which has the capacity to receive 10,000 women annually and 2,000 in term designed to uplift women facing social and economic difficulties. Offering a range of services from psychological support and medical care to professional training, the center is set to create new employment pathways and foster empowerment for women in the community.

The center equipped with suitable bedrooms, libraries, indoor sport gymnasiums, dining halls, modern kitchens and a medical center that has the capacity of a first-level hospital. It has also training and performance centers, laundries, onsite daycare, sport fields, and other facilities.

The center will train women on computer kills, nursing, hospitality, hairdressing, beauty, urban agriculture, cooking, urban beautification, electrical and wood works, garment and textile and tailoring and other different professions.

The center rests on 100,000 care meters of land and is composed of 13 buildings of which six are meant for training, five blocks of dormitories and one building for different facilities including gym and library and another for health center.

Ethiopia's...

they rather rejected this ambition playing down the resources they are receiving from Ethiopia.

"The Red Sea is an intercontinental corridor connecting Africa, Asia, and Europe. It is the number one influential sea body. Ethiopia, a landlocked country of the region, is now under siege of threats," he described.

To Asmamaw, Ethiopia is encountering political, economic and security challenges because of its dependency on other countries' seaport.

"Ethiopia has no full right to import secret apparatuses including military weapons without the knowhow of externals." The problem will be continued until the country gets a seaport under its own control. Perhaps, the growing economy and population may exacerbate the condition and would lead to uncontrollable situation, he commented.

Somalia and Egypt are well understood of the fact that the Ethio-Somaliland MoU will not harm anyone. "I think, they are claiming against the MoU not to defend their interests," Asmamaw said, indicating that the major instigator here seems Egypt which is trying to preserve hegemony over the region's internal politics.

Somalia, as a beneficiary country of resources emanated from Ethiopia should reconsider its stance and back to cooperating with Ethiopia for mutual benefit, he noted.

Ethiopia originates Blue Nile and Shebelle rivers which are the major sources of water for Egypt and Somalia.

MoTRI emphasizes stakeholders'

courts and others have been taking part in the process and they are acting in accordance with Ethiopia's criminal law that deals with the issue. Mainly, the responsibility relies on the consumer protection association, he added.

Sefu also urged consumers to play their part in safeguarding their rights through various means in collaboration with consumers association, MoTRI and other stakeholders. Moreover, concerned bodies as well as

consumers should protect themselves from unsafe products, false advertising and others through campaigning and other activities.

The Ministry has been giving a series of consumer education to ensure their rights and the compliance among suppliers. Consumer protection requires meeting quality, quantity and price and other requirements to help buyers to make rational choices.

For his part, Addis Ababa City Administration Consumers Protection

Association President Engida Asfaw said that ineffective products and other issues have been facing the rights of consumers. "Since there is an awareness creation gap from buyers, the association has been trying to fill the gaps via campaigns and others in collaboration with relevant bodies."

The association is stretching its structure to support the effort and its establishment has been playing a crucial role in this regard, Engida emphasized.

Opinion

Intellectuals have good opportunities to defend national interest

BY GETACHEW MINAS

There are plenty of opportunities for Ethiopian intellectuals in different fields. The country with its rich history and diverse cultural heritage presents immense prospects for intellectuals across different fields. It is endowed with huge resources that are not yet fully exploited for its development. Its people have been blocked by alien forces from exploiting these resources. They have been suffering from poverty due to internecine that is destructive to all sides.

Ethiopians have suffered enough from the conflict and trauma of more strife. They suffered because of their rich endowments which attracted foreign exploitative forces. These forces have the intention of controlling and taking advantage of the resources by artful and insidious means. They designed any strategy for their political and material gains. They have been creating social conflicts among Ethiopians to weaken them. They also introduced an outdated and misinformed policy of destabilizing the country using ethnic, religious and other vulnerabilities.

Foreign driven divisive policy should be rendered irrelevant to Ethiopia by the intellectuals. In so doing, they fortify the unity of the country and aspire for joint political, social and economic development. Initially, they may engage in research activities at universities and research institutions to understand the realities on the ground. They may use representative samples from different urban and rural areas in different regions. Cultural similarities and differences may be identified through these studies. Focusing on the similarities common identities of Ethiopians may be fortified.

Ethiopian intellectuals have great responsibility for identifying similar attitudes and outlooks about their country. They have to communicate to the people their academic and research results. These outcomes have to be introduced to different sections of the people residing in different regions. They should not limit exchange of information to the academic circle only. If reality to be told, some studies are left on shelves without even being read by concerned intellectuals.

Ethiopian intellectuals should create the opportunity to collaborate with local and international scholars. They may be involved in projects related to the political and economic history of the country. They have also the responsibility for a deeper understanding of the culture, economy, and social issues. The Ethiopian intellectuals may be exposed to a variety of culture representing several ethnic, tribal and clan groups.

Similarly, foreigners and tourists coming to Ethiopia enjoy these diverse groups

originating from various parts of the country. The academicians have produced a variety of documents on the economic performance of the country. They have made analyses on agriculture, industry and services and on their contribution to the growth and development of the Ethiopian economy. Similarly, sociologists have made studies on the psychosocial relations among the people of the country. In general, the intellectuals have the responsibility to relate the past and present socioeconomic developments in the country and suggest the future trends.

The Ethiopian intellectuals may promote innovation and entrepreneurship in their country. They definitely contribute to the growing entrepreneurial ecosystem in Ethiopia. They also establish new enterprises in partnership with local businessmen. These new investments create employment opportunities for the youth. These enterprises produce goods and services for local and external markets.

The entrepreneurs engaged in domestic investments contribute to output, employment and earn foreign exchange. They explore opportunities for development of technology and innovation. The Ethiopian intellectuals may be engaged in the development of technology that enhances agriculture and renewable energy. Agricultural development contributes to increased output and employment. It also generates foreign exchange by exporting products for the external markets. Ethiopia is also endowed with renewable energy that generates power to different sectors of the economy.

The intellectuals make endeavors to enhance social development in Ethiopia. They engage with various donor organizations to address social issues through community development. When residents in a community are organized they attract the attention of donors through the academic groups. These groups study the social problems of a given community and come out with programs and projects to be financed by donors. They may design projects for meeting the needs of people in the field of education, healthcare, and sustainable development. Schools may be built in rural areas for enabling children to have access to education.

Similarly health centers may be created to provide healthcare for the people in a given community. Training centers may also provide skills to the youth. The schools, health facilities and training centers contribute to sustainable development of the country as a whole. Where skilled labor force is available, it promotes the economic and social development of the country.

The Ethiopian intellectuals have the vast opportunity for the development of arts and culture in the country. They contribute to the preservation and promotion of the rich cultural heritage of the country through artistic endeavors, such as literature, music,

and visual arts. They may also assist in the preservation of archaeological heritage of the country for domestic and touristic purposes.

The intellectuals may also collaborate with local artists and organizations to showcase the cultural diversity of the country with which Ethiopians are proud. With cultural preservation there comes environmental conservation. Here, there is a need to use intellectual skills to address challenges related to the environment. Efforts and skills of the Ethiopian intellectuals may resolve these challenges without worries about abuses of the cultural heritages. Continuous efforts will definitely contribute to sustainable practices in maintaining the rich cultural resources of the country. The intellectuals will have to collaborate with international environmental organizations to promote conservation efforts and raise awareness about climate change.

Ethiopian intellectuals have the opportunity to promote technology and engineering in various sectors of the economy. They have the capacity to participate in the development of infrastructure projects. Road building particularly in the rural areas is a major precondition for development. Also, the construction of dams, canals and irrigation are essential inputs for modern agricultural development in Ethiopia. The technology initiatives aimed at improving the connectivity of the country are critical for the overall economic development in Ethiopia. It is, therefore, a necessity to educate and train next generation of engineers and technologists to contribute to the development of their country. These are useful for transmitting knowledge in all sectors of the economy.

The Ethiopian economy has to be fortified with skilled personnel that contribute to an increase in production and productivity. The rate at which goods and services are produced has to rise to meet the demands of the people for these items. Productivity also enhances output for exports that are competitive in the international markets. The intellectuals have, therefore, the duty to contribute to high productivity.

The capacity to produce competitive export items earns foreign exchange for the country. Ethiopia needs foreign exchange with which it imports inputs required for its economic development. Some of these inputs are fuel, fertilizers, machineries, and vehicles for transportation. Intellectuals are against the import of luxury goods and vehicles that have no contribution to the economy. These imports should be banned as they leak hard earned foreign exchange. The income earned from export of goods and services have to be used for the purchase of medical instruments and medicines. Medical personnel and healthcare institutions cooperate to improve medical research and healthcare services. Initially, they educate and train personnel that provide healthcare services to patients.

The intellectuals, therefore, contribute to public health initiatives, especially in rural areas where access to healthcare may be limited. As taxpayers, the rural people have to be given the best medical services available in Ethiopia. The intellectuals should focus on the provision of health, education, transport and other services to the rural people in the economic development program of the country.

The Ethiopian intellectuals should be allowed to engage in policy research and analysis to contribute to the development of the country. They should be engaged in preparation of effective and sustainable government policies that address problems faced by the people. They may engage productively with governmental and non-governmental entities to address issues of governance and challenges to transparency. In this respect, Intellectuals defend and promote good governance to respect the rights of the people. They also try to minimize or remove the challenges that hamper transparency in public services. They also contribute to educational and training programs and initiatives by providing expertise in curriculum development. This effort improves the quality of graduates that flow into the economic sectors for employment. The quality of education is based on the standard of the teacher training program conducted in the country. Intellectuals do explore opportunities for online education and e-learning platforms to reach a wider audience.

It is very crucial for the intellectuals to participate in the media and communication programs and projects. They may engage in journalism, writing, and media production that enhances and contribute to informed public discourse. Intellectuals are also instrumental in the use and application of communication skills to advocate for social and political participation. They inform the public of its constitutional rights to participate in economic, social and political spheres. They may refer to the history of Ethiopia on the issues related to these spheres of life.

The continuity of the history of the people and country is of the essence. It provides intellectuals with opportunities that are as diverse as the Ethiopians are. They cater for a range of intellectual interests and opportunities. It is, therefore, important to collaborate with all categories of people in every community to develop a sense of national unity. The Ethiopian intellectuals have every opportunity to understand the specific needs of Ethiopians and contribute meaningfully to the socioeconomic development of their country.

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

Editorial

A big step in alleviating women's hurdles

A Women's Rehabilitation and Skills Development Center, which was constructed with a total capital of around 3.1 Billion Birr and was inaugurated in Kaliti area, the outskirts of Addis Ababa. The Center with an intake capacity of around 10,000 women annually was inaugurated by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

Speaking during the inauguration ceremony Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (Ph.D) stated that the construction of the Center is central in improving the lives of impoverished women mainly those from the streets by providing them with life skills, psychological support and vocational training.

Women in developing countries like Ethiopia are responsible to majority of the tasks and activities that a family and society executes. Their burden starts from household chores, to the farm and work place, school, hospital and elsewhere.

Women are more vulnerable to many socio-economic problems than their male counterparts. These problems expose them to abuse of their rights, threatens their life and health, among others. Hence, the problems that beset women directly and indirectly affect the entire society. They indeed need an affirmative action to rehabilitate them from the social and economic injustice of the past and empower them to be effective in all their activities. Therefore, the inauguration of the center is an exemplary intervention that could amplify the outcome of investing in women.

In this regard, the government of Ethiopia has been undertaking a number of activities to protect the rights and safety of women, to enhance their inclusion in the country's social, economic and political endeavors and ensure gender equality.

Of course, Ethiopia has travelled a long way to better support women and girls over the last decades ranging from ratifying international and regional conventions that are associated to the rights of women to enacting national laws and policies. In recent times, women are made to take key positions in the government's offices including in the premier's cabinet. Further, it has taken a number of strides to make sure that the rights of girls and women are recognized and protected thereby ensuring their representation in all areas.

However, despite the efforts and energy exerted to empower women and girls, the gain is not at the desired level. Even today, millions of women have continued to face widespread gender-related barriers owing to the long established social, cultural and religious stereotypes. As a result, millions of girls and women are compelled to lead a miserable life.

Considering the gravity and massiveness of the problems that women are facing today, it is important to stop business as usual approaches of helping vulnerable women and upscale the level of interventions that are geared towards addressing them. The rehabilitation works have to go with a better pace to surpass the problems and see the life of vulnerable women transformed soon.

This calls for a large scale and concerted efforts of government, non-governmental and humanitarian organizations in implementing effective problems-solving rehabilitation works that aim to meaningfully address the impending problems of women.

The center inaugurated yesterday can be one example in this regard. If it can support about 2000 women at a time, it can surely bring about a visible impact on the detrimental situation of women's life in the country. This can become a reality if the government and stakeholders benchmark the experiences of this center to regions through time.

Opinion

The role of seaport access in expediting Ethiopia's economic growth

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

There is no doubt that Ethiopia's direct access to a seaport would smooth the path of the wellbeing of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, making certain a more stable costal environment. With such access, the country would be better positioned to vigorously take part in maritime affairs and contribute successfully to security endeavors in the region. As a matter of fact, this would encompass both the security of profitable undertakings and the utilization of naval forces to defend its interests in the area.

It is common knowledge that the existence of a seaport would meaningfully expand Ethiopia's business processes, offering access point to overseas trade and oiling the wheels of Ethiopia's economic relationships with other nations. By setting up straightforward approach to a seaport, Ethiopia can have recurrence to new business opportunities further curdling its position on a worldwide scale.

Ethiopia's ambition for direct line to a seaport is not only rightful but also rational from permissible, ethical, and practical standpoints. It is crucial for Ethiopia to have a direct link to maritime routes for economic development and national security.

This premeditated move closely corresponds international legal standards and laws commanding access to ports and maritime privileges further legitimizing the country's pursuit of waterway access.

It is true that by attaining direct access to a seaport, Ethiopia can smooth the path of its strategic positioning in the region and safeguard its capacity to circumnavigate maritime encounters successfully.

Speaking recently to the Ethiopian Press Agency, a Political Science Scholar Prof. Biruk Hailu stated that Ethiopia's acquisition of a sea gate in the strategic, yet volatile region is of great significance to the area's maritime security and repulsing criminal activities.

As to him, the security of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden will be more guaranteed if Ethiopia has direct access to a seaport and can participate well in maritime issues. Besides, the seaport plays a critical role in intensifying its commercial activities and deploying the naval forces. Therefore, Ethiopia's aspiration to direct access to port is justifiable and reasonable on legal, moral and other grounds.

Taking its large population and economic prowess into account, Ethiopia has been suffering a lot in the past 30 and plus years due to the absences of direct access to seaport and the loss has also had a lasting impact on its security and the public wellbeing.

Ethiopia's acquisition of a seaport from Somaliland comes based on two sides' interests and a win-win approach, not by any pressure or coercion. Some interest groups' opposition to the port deal is influenced by the distorted information of our historical enemies. Likewise, Ethiopia has many commercial ships that are operating as far as China and South America but no party to protect them. Therefore, the agreement would help to protect the ships security through cooperative approach.

This access would enable Ethiopia to address

security threats proactively and protect its national interests while contributing positively to maritime stability. Ultimately, direct access to a seaport is essential for Ethiopia's long-term development and security objectives, making it a reasonable and justifiable pursuit on multiple fronts.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland, bestowing Ethiopia right of entry to a seaport, is being regarded as a positive development towards nurturing collective advantageous and encouraging long-lasting peace and growth in the region.

This pact reflects a pledge from both parties to act in concert for their collective interests, and has the faculty for reinforcing the closer economic relations between Ethiopia and Somaliland.

It becomes apparent that Somaliland has previously entered into pacts with other nations, heedless of their remoteness from the region, manifesting that there is no legal system for condemning Ethiopia for trying to find access to a seaport through amalgamation with Somaliland.

Without doubt, this agreement plays a huge role in taking the development endeavor of Ethiopia and Somaliland to the next level of development and leading to positive outcomes for both parties.

According to Government Communications Service (GCS) of Ethiopia, the MoU signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland includes wide scopes of cooperation in social, economic, political and military fields. It enables Ethiopia to gain a military base and access commercial maritime services through reciprocity and through a lease agreement. The comprehensive MoU for partnership and cooperation reflects efforts made by the two parties to further strengthen their friendship and respond to the historic questions of both parties.

"The new agreement will facilitate a strategic partnership in a sustainable manner based on clear details and transparency. As clearly outlined in Ethiopia's foreign policy, Ethiopia gives priority to its neighbors. Ethiopia seeks to find solutions to its neighbors' problems by working together."

On the subject of the issue speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Addis Ababa University Federalism and Good Governance Lecturer Tesfay Jimma (PhD) in recent times highlighted the need to push for give and take diplomatic approach to achieve the country's seaport aspiration thereby build its economy and global influence.

He further stated that the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that was signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland in order to accessing seaport to the former is a reasonable agreement that ensures the mutual benefit of the two and promotes sustainable peace and development in the region.

Somaliland has signed various agreements with different countries even these partners came far from the region. So, there is no legal ground that allows accusing Ethiopia for reaching access to sea agreement with Somaliland. Some historic enemies have been working day in and day out to affect Ethiopia's economic development and international influence. These countries worry only about their peculiar interests paying no attention to the role Ethiopia plays for stability and growth of the region.

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The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy

Urban gardening for justifying food self-sufficiency, economic growth

BY MENGESHA AMARE

It is well recognized that of the myriads of means to contribute to economic growth, the development of agricultural practice though carried out on small plots of land is increasingly becoming a crucial move. It is called urban agriculture, urban farming or urban gardening. This activity is really a practice of cultivating, processing, and distributing food in or around urban areas following the production of fruits, vegetables and other related supplementary harvest.

Cognizant of the fact that this invaluable march, urban gardening, needs to be explained by professional utterances, *The Ethiopian Herald* approached Mekonnen Birru, an agro-economist graduated from Haramaya University and working for a private agri-consultant.

He said, “Urban agriculture can involve animal husbandry, aquaculture, agro-forestry, apiculture or urban beekeeping and horticulture. These activities occur in semi-urban areas as well. Urban farming is part of the urban agriculture and can be a beneficial impact on the lives of social-economic and environmental sustainability of the city so that it becomes an integral part of sustainable development.”

He said that urban gardening is where people practice cultivation, mainly of food, in and around urban areas, towns and cities. Basically, it is the traditional cultivation of crops, but in urban centers.

According to Mekonnen, with urbanization and the desire for the majority of people to do their farming right where they are, urban gardening is considerably being taken up and has been a successful alternative – a shift from the traditional thinking that the cultivation of crops can only be done in rural areas.

As to him, urban agriculture is significantly useful in bolstering food security and economic growth as it has been contributing a lot to increased household income. Farming households have shown higher incomes than non-farming households with similar socioeconomic characteristics. Increased income is through savings on food purchases and selling of produce.

Responding to the question revolving around the role of urban gardening in relation to ‘Yelemat Trufat,’ Mekonnen stated that urban agriculture is a means to produce fruits, vegetables and other related yields on own land, helps to get variety as space-effective as possible thereby helping citizens ensure food self-sufficiency and the nation back the effort towards guarantee food security.

It has also helped the government foster state of stabilizing the high cost of living and support citizens to secure balanced diet though the scope has been limited.



Cities and towns in the country have shown progress in terms of utilizing the urban gardening although the number of individuals employing such a remarkable means quite minimal. As to him, the very point here is exercising urban gardening should not be a one stop action instead it has to be carried out in a sustainable manner and needs to be a culture among the society.

No doubt, cities and towns have become hubs for economic activity, productivity, and important platforms for achieving sustainable development and other parts of the nation can draw important lessons from them. The potential of urban agriculture in improving urban local economies and urban micro-climate is of paramount importance in supporting the effort geared towards ensuring food security at national level, indeed! Hence, it needs to be well acknowledged and expanded in all parts of the nation.

Mekonnen further elucidated that the government, be they are state ones or the federal body, investors, companies working on the area, the farming community as well as individuals in local areas by efficiently utilizing spaces in urban areas can grow crops and other fresh farms produce as well as rear livestock or poultry and fish to help provide adequate food and more local employment opportunities in urban localities.

According to Mekonnen, hunger and poverty are common plagues that have bothered most urban dwellers over the years. Lack of adequate infrastructure and the lack of proper employment opportunities for the rapidly growing urban population in urban settings have contributed to the soaring of high cost of living and poverty.

“Furthermore, the cultivation of crops and planting of trees in urban settings can keep the ground moist and fertile to avoid droughts. It also helps reduce the impact of floods and landslides on communities

by slowing down the movement of water and mudflows. Urban agriculture is crucial in creating true communities by developing a sense of belongingness and connectedness to each other. It has also shown the potential to create employment, development of micro-enterprises, increase income and reduce poverty,” he opined.

Owing to the viable advantages ranging from an increase in employment opportunities, alternative means of income, reduction of urban hunger and poverty to provision of fresh and healthy farm produce for urban dwellers, the gardening is highly becoming a means for boosting commercial activities in urban settings as well as the creation of a very engaging and socially inclusive harmonious populace.

As to Mekonnen, urban farming system can be an alternative to improve the balance of the urban environment and socio-economic of urban dwellers. The use of fertilizers and organic waste treatment is also crucial, indeed!

The economic potential is achievable because urban farming can be developed, both outdoor and indoor as per environmental conditions, available technologies and types of crops as well as appropriate urban areas. The economic role of urban farming in the future will be more strategic because it can provide urban communities with a multitude of benefits.

He said urban gardening can also provide people in urban areas with ecological and economic advantages as it is economically contributing to the production of foodstuffs.

He said, “In many places, urban farming has been recognized for its contribution to short food supply chains, urban food security and livelihoods, and recreational value, too. Despite the limited space available in urban areas, urban farming can provide important shares of easily

perishable commodities, like leafy vegetables, which are grown in close proximity to urban markets.”

Urban agriculture is not a magical solution, but it can contribute to building urban resilience and ensuring food security and its development and implementation strategy and action plan has to be framed in a bid to maximize the production of fresh and nutritious food and should be supported by the urban authorities and influential experts working on the area, he underscored.

Capacity building in urban agriculture for interested households, extension workers and public sector workers is important, including technical capacity in the safe recovery of yield and utilization of compost from organic urban wastes.

Yes Mekonnen said, urban gardening involving simple food crops such as vegetables and fruits can help reduce the dependence on vegetable and fruit produce from farms or imported from other countries, thus it is increasing available food for families and urban dwellers.

“Urban gardening also gives urban dwellers access to readily available foods rich in nutrients, supplementing other food products. As a result, jobs are created, food costs go down, and people consume more quality foods. A healthy community also translates to vibrant and hardworking people who can work towards building the economy,” he added.

Mekonnen said, “Urban gardening allows individuals to interact socially, contributing to society’s social and emotional well-being. It creates a sense of community participation for both the community and individuals and families, making community events more possible and easier to work on.”

As it involves matters of the environment, urban gardening bolsters environmental awareness through aspects such as protecting soil fertility via protecting urban ecological biodiversity, rainwater harvesting, and water recycling and so on.

It increases the land area utilized for agriculture, increasing food security as the world population soars and arable land constantly faces depletion. Besides, urban agriculture involving simple food crops such as vegetables and fruits can help reduce the dependence on vegetable and fruit produce from farms or imported from other countries, thus increasing available food for families and urban dwellers.

Mekonnen further underlined that urban agriculture also gives urban dwellers access to readily available foods rich in nutrients, supplementing other food products. The move also reduces carbon footprints by reducing carbon emissions while transporting food, vegetables, and fruits from their production area to their consumption spot.

Art & Culture

Why Africa needs a permanent cultural centre located in Addis

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

The most important message the recent celebrations of Adwa's victory over imperial Italy sent was that the victory is not only Ethiopia's victory but that of Africa's. It was a victory shared with black people world' over. As such, it is the first moment in history that created the conditions for Africans and black people in Diaspora to walk tall and be proud of their ancient heritages. Because of Adwa, they now stand united against oppression by negative global political and economic forces that sabotage their efforts for comprehensive independence. The African victory at Adwa has pushed Africa's consciousness to the next level by creating conditions for taking at least two crucial steps towards the continent's full independence.

The first is the inclusion of the Victory of Adwa into the African Union Charter as the most important event of the 20th century that has led to Africa's unity. The second step might be the annual celebration of Adwa Victory Day not only in Ethiopia, its birth place, but also throughout Africa. As a complementary step to the two major initiatives, one can perhaps suggest that an all African International Cultural Centre should be opened in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa which is the symbol of African unity and the centre of struggle against colonialism and neocolonialism.

Ghana's first president Kwame Nkrumah wrote his book entitled, "Neocolonialism the Last Stage of Imperialism" in 1965. After 60 years of Africa's political independence from colonialism, the major themes of the book still remain valid to present day political conditions both within Africa and in relations between Africa and the Western world in particular. The new colonialism is called neocolonialism and has several manifestations: economic, political, diplomatic and social. However, cultural neocolonialism is often relatively overlooked while the other dimensions are overemphasized.

"One variant of neocolonialism theory critiques cultural colonialism, the desire of wealthy nations to control other nations' values and perceptions through cultural means such as media, language, education and religion, ultimately for economic reasons."

Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci once wrote that cultural hegemony was the instrument through which a ruling class imposes its values and beliefs and practices over the rest of society that is forced to accept these values as its own. This theory might also be applied to study the relationships between neocolonial (or global powers) and the poorer countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America they dominate by using their wealth and powers to impose their cultures on the African people in particular. "Cultural imperialism uses wealth, media power and violence to implement the system of cultural hegemony that legalizes materialism."

Africa is nominally or politically independent but it has not become independent in the full sense of the term because she is still depending on rich Western countries to run its economy manage its politics and conduct its diplomacy.

Thus, Africa is still living under the yoke of Western neocolonialism and will remain so until it achieves all rounded independence in the politics, economy, socially as well as culturally. This is however something all Africans nowadays understand and recognize but they can do nothing to overcome it because of the heavy handed way with which the rich countries are conducting their affairs with Africa.

If there was one thing the recently concluded Africa's summit meeting of heads of state and governments, failed to address, it was the need to give more emphasis to Africa's cultural renewal or revolution. Whenever people talk about Africa's renaissance they mostly talk about its economic rise and advancement or its political democratization. Culture is almost always pushed to the margin of major concerns. And yet all civilizations that have achieved material advancements have done so by simultaneously modernizing their cultures.

Culture is given different meanings at different times and places in history. The Age of Revolution in European history for instance consisted of, the period between 1789 to 1848 both times marked by the radical restructuring of society or radical shifts in power relationships, mainly in France and Germany. "The Age of Revolution mid-19th century during which a number of significant revolutionary movements occurred in most of Europe and the Americas." The other historical instance of revolution in culture occurred in Mao's China. "Its stated goal was to preserve Chinese communism by purging remnants of capitalist and traditional elements from Chinese society. Though it failed to achieve its main objectives, the Cultural Revolution marked the effective return of Mao to the centre of power."

When we talk of Cultural Revolution or revolution per se, we are not talking about applying the European or Chinese model of radical changes in the African context. Africa cannot as a continent, undergo any kind of revolution be it political, social or economic. But it can undergo a radical transformation in its culture with the objectives of doing away with cultures that are un-African or contrary to African aspirations of social progress by purging African societies of the rudiments of colonialism and neocolonialism as well as archaic traditional practices that are inappropriate to the continent's developmental aspirations. In Africa, we don't talk of Cultural Revolution but of cultural renewal or cultural renaissance by using these terms interchangeably.

The African Union (AU) has adopted what is known as the Charter for African Cultural

well as the popular foundations of their culture in a mere three years. The promote freedom of expression and cultural democracy requires decades of relentless and committed efforts. The preservation of African cultural heritages through restoration and rehabilitation requires more time, resources and day to day follow up and critical thinking. Likewise, you cannot combat and eliminate all forms of alienation, exclusion and cultural oppression in African within three or four years.

Instead of time frame, what we should discuss here is whether initial steps have been taken in this direction in the last three years since the adoption of the Charter. Africa does not lack experts or scholars who are capable of writing of legal documents or articulating them on paper.

What it seriously lacks are practical steps that can be counted and are visible on the ground. Three years may not be a long time even to lay the groundwork of the entire edifice of Africa's cultural renewal. Yet, at least the first pillars of the building should start to appear.

Unfortunately, there is also serious shortcoming in this area. As the latest AU summit has made it clear and as the AU Secretary General Mussa Faki Ibrahim has made it crystal clear Africa has not yet taken steps to promote the ideals of the charter such as Pan-African unity and democracy and peace building. Many years have passed since Africa pledged to "silence the guns" for instance but the guns have become louder than ever as the summit was conducted.

Let us take one example: Africa's cultural heritage. Why is it so important that experts are presenting sophisticated and learned analyses of the nature as well as the need for preserving this heritage. As we all know, "African heritage is the history, cultural practices and beliefs of the African people. It is important to preserve African heritage because it helps us understand our past and where we came from. It also helps us understand our culture and how we relate to each other."

The real question here must be: what have we done so far in order to translate this conviction into reality.

If we look at the balance sheet of cultural relationships between Africa and the rich countries of the West, we realize that they are still based on the old paradigm of dominance of the former by the latter. We can even say that Western cultural dominance has become even more subtle as it presents itself as the culture of humanity as a whole which is basically a deception.



Science & Technology

Unleashing the power of digital Ethiopia: Transforming the country's economy

BY LAKACHEW ATINAFU

Ethiopia, a country rich in history and cultural heritage, is now embarking on a transformative journey towards a digital future. With a population exceeding 115 million people and a rapidly growing economy, Ethiopia recognizes the immense potential of digital technologies in driving economic growth, enhancing productivity, and improving the lives of its citizens. In this article, it is important to delve into the concept of a digital Ethiopia and explore its significance in shaping the country's economy.

One of the key pillars of building a digital Ethiopia is the development of robust digital infrastructure. The government has been investing significantly in expanding access to the internet, improving connectivity, and building a reliable telecommunications network across the country. Initiatives such as the National Broadband Plan and the expansion of fiber-optic networks are laying the groundwork for a digitally connected nation.

Ethiopia has witnessed a dramatic increase in mobile penetration in recent years. The proliferation of smart phones and affordable data plans has opened up new avenues for e-commerce, online banking, and digital services. With a population that is predominantly young and tech-savvy, the rise of digital platforms and mobile applications is revolutionizing the way Ethiopians access goods and services, conduct transactions, and engage with businesses.

E-commerce platforms are emerging as powerful drivers of economic growth, enabling small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to reach a broader consumer base beyond traditional brick-and-mortar stores. By leveraging digital platforms, entrepreneurs can expand their businesses, create employment opportunities, and contribute to the overall economic development of the nation.

Digital financial services are playing a pivotal role in promoting financial inclusion and empowering the unbanked population in Ethiopia. Mobile money solutions, such as M-Pesa, have gained traction, allowing individuals to send and receive money, access credit, and make payments using their mobile phones. This is particularly crucial in rural areas where access to traditional banking services is limited.

By providing convenient and secure financial services, digital technologies are making it easier for individuals, households, and businesses to participate in the formal economy. This fosters entrepreneurship, enhances savings and investment, and contributes to poverty reduction and inclusive growth.

To fully harness the potential of a digital Ethiopia, investment in digital skills and innovation is of paramount importance.



The government, in collaboration with educational institutions and private sector partners, is working towards equipping the youth with the necessary digital literacy and technical skills. Initiatives such as coding boot camps, online learning platforms, and technology incubators are nurturing a generation of innovators, entrepreneurs, and tech professionals.

Furthermore, fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship is vital to drive technological advancements and create a favorable environment for startups. By supporting homegrown talent and promoting research and development, Ethiopia can foster digital innovation that addresses local challenges and creates exportable solutions, thereby boosting the country's economic competitiveness on a global scale.

The Ethiopian government has recognized the importance of digital transformation and has implemented various initiatives to facilitate its growth. The Digital Ethiopia 2025 Strategy outlines a comprehensive roadmap to leverage digital technologies across sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, healthcare, and education. This strategy aims to enhance service delivery, improve efficiency, and create an enabling environment for digital innovation and entrepreneurship.

Additionally, establishing supportive regulatory frameworks, ensuring data protection, and promoting cyber security are crucial to building trust in the digital ecosystem and attracting investment from both domestic and international players.

As Ethiopia embraces the digital era, the country is poised to unlock significant economic opportunities and improve the lives of its citizens. By investing in digital infrastructure, fostering digital skills, promoting innovation, and implementing supportive policies, Ethiopia can position itself as a regional leader in the digital economy.

MiNT State Minister Yeshurun Alemayehu (PhD) made the above remark yesterday at the panel discussion that was held as part of the Digital Ethiopia Week.

Speaking at the occasion, the state minister

& e-commerce development, national ID, cyber security, among others.

The midterm evaluation of the achievements of Digital Ethiopia 2025 indicated that the process is at a promising stage but a lot is yet to be done to address the demand at national level.

The government is looking for a wider support and contribution from development partners like EU to expand achievements to deliver much more results in this regard, Yeshurun emphasized.

“We have received support from the EU through another channel to develop the national electronic government strategy and the government enterprise architecture. By this project, we have observed that the EU’s support is practical and focuses on actual implementation.”

Moreover, the BEIC project which is implemented by GIZ and financed by EU is one of the exemplary projects that bring tangible results in the areas of automating public private dialogue, electronic consultation, tax collection and trade expansion.

Appreciating the EU and BEIC for their continuous support and longstanding development partnership with Ethiopia, the state minister further noted that the conference would be important to support the digital transformation endeavors of Ethiopia.

The EU Economic Governance Team Leader Ionna Alburesco mentioned that the potential of digital transformation in enhancing businesses, and economic development is significant and should be acknowledged.

“Digitalization has transformed people’s lives, the way they live and interact with businesses and government institutions.”

“Digitalization should be a tool that is accessible to everyone,” she noted, adding that EU is leading to digital transformation especially in developing laws and regulatory frameworks to manage and oversee digital transformation.

Commending the Ethiopian government’s ambitions in the digital transformation path and the Digital Ethiopia strategy 2025, Alburesco said the commitment in the realization those strategies have been demonstrated by different ministries including the MiNT.

“EU has been Ethiopia’s trusted partner in digital transformation and it is committed to support your part in the area. We have been and we will continue to be involved and supportive in this process.

A digital Ethiopia holds the potential to drive economic growth, create employment, enhance financial inclusion, and improve service delivery across various sectors. It is an exciting time for the country as it paves the way for a brighter and more prosperous future powered by digital technologies.

By investing in digital infrastructure, fostering digital skills, promoting innovation, and implementing supportive policies, Ethiopia can position itself as a regional leader in the digital economy

mentioned that Digital Ethiopia 2025 is a journey that requires consistent commitment of stakeholders in the domain. “As per to our national Digital Ethiopia strategy 2025, all country wide efforts shall be geared towards addressing the key pillar issues of the infrastructure, enabling interactive systems and the overall ecosystems as per the stated targets and global standard.”

According to him, the aspiration can only be achieved and converted to measurable output items if they are accompanied by continuous effort. In this regard, the government of Ethiopia has been continuously working on variety of sources like ICT and telecommunication infrastructure expansion, e-government

Society

Traditional courts, volunteerism, self-peacekeeping initiatives drive social transformation

BY HIZKEL HAILU

Traditional dispute resolution and reconciliation mechanisms and volunteerism are powerful tools that offer numerous advantages in promoting social cohesion, justice, and community development. These approaches have proven to be effective in diverse contexts in terms of fostering understanding, empathy, and a sense of collective responsibility.

Traditional dispute resolution mechanisms, such as traditional courts, provide a localized and culturally sensitive space where individuals can seek justice, resolve conflicts, and restore trust within their communities. Volunteerism, on the other hand, cultivates a culture of support, creates a sense of togetherness and solidarity, and develops a shared understanding of each other which leads to meaningfully contributing to the well-being of their communities. Together, these approaches create a foundation for inclusive and harmonious societies, where individuals are actively engaged in shaping their shared future and working towards a common goal.

Through harnessing the advantages of traditional dispute resolution and reconciliation mechanisms and volunteerism for sustaining peace, communities can experience social, economic, and psychological benefits, leading to sustainable development and a thriving society.

Cognizant of this fact, in the Western Hararghe Zone of Oromia State, Ethiopia, a remarkable transformation is taking place through the implementation of cultural courts, volunteerism groups, and peacekeeping initiatives.

Approached by The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Chief Administrator of the Western Hararghe Zone Ikram Teha, said that these initiatives have emerged as powerful tools in promoting reconciliation, justice, and strengthening social cohesion. As to her, one of the key advantages of traditional courts is their ability to eliminate false witness, which has long been a hindrance to justice. Traditional courts provide a local space where individuals can present their cases in an environment that reflects their customs and values.

Through relying on the community's collective knowledge and cultural understanding, traditional courts can discern the truth more effectively and arrive at fair judgments, she noted. The removal of false witness not only upholds justice but also restores trust in the judicial system and promotes a sense of security within the community.

For her, the traditional courts' commitment in the removal of false witness is seen through their meticulous investigation processes. Unlike formal courts, cultural courts prioritize dialogue and meditative



Ikram Teha

processes to uncover the truth. They give equal weight to verbal testimonies, physical evidence, and the consensus of the community. This holistic approach ensures that judgments are based on a comprehensive understanding of the situation, reducing the risk of biased decisions that can arise from false testimonies.

She further noted that the cultural courts provide a safe and accessible space for individuals who may be hesitant to approach formal courts. The community-oriented nature of these courts fosters an atmosphere of trust and familiarity, encouraging individuals to share their grievances openly. This inclusivity ensures that marginalized voices are heard and considered, promoting a more equitable and just society.

She further mentioned that the "Busa Bornoffa" volunteerism group has played a critical role in fostering a culture of mutual support and solidarity within the Zone. Through their annual membership fees, group members contribute to a fund that enables them to support one another during emergencies. This collective effort strengthens social bonds, builds resilience within the community, and promotes a culture of selflessness and compassion. Volunteerism becomes a way of life, where individuals willingly extend a helping hand to their neighbors, creating a supportive and interconnected society.

As to her, the volunteerism group's impact extends beyond emergency situations. Members actively engage in community development projects, such as building schools, improving infrastructure, and providing healthcare services. These initiatives not only address pressing societal needs but also empower individuals by fostering a sense of ownership and stewardship in shaping their communities.

Additionally, the volunteerism group serves as a platform for skills development and knowledge sharing. Members have the

opportunity to learn from one another, exchange expertise, and collaborate on various projects. This cross-pollination of ideas and experiences strengthens community ties and promotes personal growth, creating a vibrant and dynamic society, she noted.

The "Gachena Sirna" peacekeeping group on the other hand plays a vital role in maintaining peace and stability within the Zone and the broader region, said Ikram, adding that, these peacekeepers are chosen from the community for their commitment to upholding peace and their understanding of local dynamics. Noting that they act as mediators, resolving conflicts before they escalate, and ensure the safety and well-being of all residents, she stated that the peacekeeping group's presence and active involvement contribute to create a secure and harmonious environment.

As to her, the peacekeeping group's success lies in their deep connection to the community and their ability to navigate cultural nuances. They are trusted figures who can mediate disputes impartially and with cultural sensitivity. Their interventions emphasize dialogue, negotiation, and the restoration of relationships. Mentioning that the peacekeeping group is serving as a bridge between communities, fostering cross-cultural understanding and collaboration, she explained that by addressing conflicts at their root, peacekeepers help prevent further escalation and promote sustainable peace, she added.

According to her the combination of cultural courts, volunteerism groups, and peacekeeping initiatives in the Western Hararghe Zone brings about numerous societal advantages. Firstly, it empowers individuals to take ownership of conflict resolution and justice, fostering a sense of agency and responsibility. The local nature of these initiatives ensures that decisions are made with a deep understanding of the community's needs and cultural context.

This, in turn, strengthens social cohesion and nurtures a collective identity rooted in shared values.

Secondly, these initiatives cultivate a culture of peace and understanding. Through actively engaging in volunteerism and peacekeeping, individuals become ambassadors of peace within their communities. Through their actions, they inspire others to embrace peaceful resolutions, promote dialogue, and seek common ground. This culture of peace permeates society, leading to reduced tensions, improved relationships, and a greater sense of unity among community members.

Moreover, the societal advantages of these initiatives extend to economic development and poverty reduction. By promoting justice, stability, and a culture of mutual assistance, the Zone experiences improved conditions for economic growth, she noted. The presence of cultural courts and peacekeeping groups instills confidence in investors and businesses, leading to increased economic activities. Moreover, volunteerism groups contribute to community development projects, such as infrastructure improvements and educational initiatives, which further stimulate economic progress.

"Additionally, these initiatives have a positive impact on social well-being. Through addressing conflicts and promoting justice, cultural courts and peacekeeping groups create an environment where individuals feel safe and secure. This sense of security enhances mental and emotional well-being, fostering healthier and more resilient communities. The volunteerism groups, with their focus on mutual assistance and compassion, create social support networks that nurture a sense of belonging and social connectedness, reducing feelings of isolation and improving overall quality of life".

All in all, the success of cultural courts, volunteerism groups, and peacekeeping initiatives in the Zone showcases the transformative potential in promoting reconciliation, justice, and social cohesion. By eradicating false witness, fostering volunteerism, and safeguarding security, these practices have become integral to the fabric of society.

Besides, these initiatives have far-reaching societal advantages, including economic development, poverty reduction, and improved social well-being. As other areas seek to address conflicts and promote harmony, they can look to the Western Hararghe Zone as a model that demonstrates the power of cultural reconciliation mechanisms in building a just and harmonious society. Through expanding these initiatives and adapting them to different contexts, societies can nurture a culture of peace, justice, and mutual assistance, fostering a more harmonious and prosperous future for all.



This is Ethiopia

Explore Harla Archeological Site

BY TEWODROS KASSA

Located in Dire Dawa City Administration, the Harla Archeological Site is a hidden gem waiting to be discovered by tourists seeking an enriching cultural experience. With its fascinating history and unique artifacts, this site has the potential to attract visitors from around the world. The Harla Archeological Site offers a glimpse into the ancient civilizations that once thrived in this region. From intricate carvings to well-preserved ruins, every corner of this site tells a story of the people who once called it home. As visitors explore the site, they can immerse themselves in the rich history of Ethiopia and gain a deeper understanding of its cultural heritage.

The Harla Archeological Site is steeped in history, with artifacts dating back centuries. Visitors can learn about the rise and fall of ancient civilizations and gain insight into the traditions and customs of the people who lived here. Not only this, by exploring the site, tourists can connect with the local culture and gain a greater appreciation for Ethiopia's diverse heritage. From traditional music and dance performances to authentic cuisine, there is no shortage of cultural experiences to enjoy. In addition to its historical and cultural significance, the Harla Archeological Site is also blessed with natural beauty. The surrounding landscapes offer breathtaking views of lush greenery and rolling hills, providing a tranquil setting for visitors to relax and unwind.

Recently, Ambassador of the United Kingdom (UK) in Ethiopia pledged to provide all the necessary supports for the archeological research being conducted at Harla, Dire Dawa in order to make the research effective and help the local communities take use of the State's tourism resources.

The UK Ambassador to Ethiopia, Darren Welch and his team visited various tourism sites in the vicinities of Dire Dawa.

In addition, the team visited a cemetery of British and African soldiers, Harla Community Museum, the seven thousand years old residential areas, ancient cave paintings at Laga Oda Gungufata and other tourist sites in the area.

The team has also paid a visit to a 12th century mosque recently discovered by Professor Timothy, British archeologist and instructor from Exeter University.

The Ambassador told local media that he delighted on the occasion of his visits and the reception accorded to his team stating that the Harla ancient cemetery depicts the livelihood of Muslim communities during the Middle Ages.

"I am happy with what I have seen here in my first trip to the area and believe that there are more archeological remains to be discovered in this area which needs to be further promoted," he said.

He added that these wonderful, historic and natural tourist resources should be preserved pledging UK's support for the archeological research being

conducted at Harlaa in order to make the research effective, help the local communities take use of the State's tourism resources and contribute to the development of tourism industry in Ethiopia.

Prof. Timothy Ensoll, team leader of the Harlaa Archeological discovery and research team briefed the Ambassador and his team on the artifacts which were preserved and exhibited in the museum.

Head of Dire Dawa City Administration Culture and Tourism Office, Michael Endale on his part said that the visit paid by Amb. Darren and his team to Dire Dawa will help to promote tourist resources in and around Dire Dawa.

He added that more tasks will be accomplished focusing on developing and promoting tourism resources in Dire Dawa area.

Moreover, giving due attention to ancient historical heritages and cultural assets will have a significant contributions to boost the country's tourism sector through attracting more local and international tourists.

Accordingly, the Harla Archeological Site is a place shrouded in mystery and intrigue. It is believed to have been an ancient city dating back to the 6th century AD, making it a treasure trove of historical significance. The site is home to ruins of ancient buildings, tombs, and artifacts that offer a glimpse into the past way of life of the Harla people.

Visitors to the site can explore the remnants of the city, walk through the narrow streets, and

marvel at the intricate carvings on the stone walls. The striking architecture and layout of the site make it a photographer's paradise, with plenty of opportunities to capture breathtaking shots.

Tourists flock to the Harla Archeological Site for a variety of reasons. Firstly, the site offers a unique opportunity to delve into the history and culture of the Harla people, uncovering the secrets of their civilization. History buffs and archaeology enthusiasts will find plenty to love about this ancient site.

Secondly, the natural beauty of the Harla Archeological Site is unparalleled. The sprawling landscape, dotted with ancient ruins, offers a serene escape from the hustle and bustle of modern life. Visitors can take leisurely strolls through the site, breathing in the fresh air and soaking in the peaceful ambiance.

In sum, the Harla Archeological Site in Dire Dawa is a must-visit destination for tourists seeking to immerse themselves in Ethiopia's rich history and culture. With its historical significance, cultural experiences, and natural beauty, this site has something to offer every visitor. Don't miss out on this extraordinary opportunity to explore the mysteries of the past.

The stunning landscapes and fascinating artifacts of the area is an amazing destination to attract tourists looking for a unique and enriching travel experience. So pack your bags, and embark on a journey of discovery at the Harla Archeological Site.