



The Ethiopian Herald

Vol. LXXX 174 31 MARCH 2024 - Megabit 22, 2016 **SUNDAY EDITION** Price Birr 10.00



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WBG allocates 500 mln USD to support Ethiopia's energy projects

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – The World Bank Group (WBG) has financed over 500 million USD budget to support Ethiopia's renewable energy projects, said the Ethiopian Electric Power (EEP).

EEP Director General Ashebir Balcha told *The Ethiopian Herald* that there are various organizations and countries that have been extending financial support to

See WBG allocates ... page 4

Diasporas extend unreserved support to Abbay Dam

- Raise over 50 mln. USD

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopian Diasporas have extended holistic support to the Abbay Dam and contributed over 50 million USD for the construction of the iconic project since its launching, the Ethiopian Diaspora Service (EDS) disclosed.

EDS Communication Director Wondwossen Girma told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that Ethiopians and foreigners of Ethiopian origin in the Diaspora have been supporting the building of the dam financially, professionally,

and in other ways.

On top of their active engagement in public diplomacy and advocacy activities, Ethiopian Diasporas have been contributing over 50 million USD for the construction of the mega project in bond purchase, donation, and others,

Wondwossen also noted that Diaspora communities from all walks of life have been demonstrating overwhelming participation in public gatherings, discussions with the dam negotiating teams, twitter campaigns, and other

See Diasporas extend ... page 4



Wondwossen Girma

NBE pegging away to improve women's financial inclusion

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- Several initiatives has been implemented to transform Ethiopian financial industry through empowering women, National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) said.

Speaking to *The Ethiopian Herald*, NBE's

See NBE Pegging away... page 4

Sharing Chinese experiences in TVET programs

BY YESUF ENDRI

In move towards enhancing the education quality of Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) in Ethiopia, a Chinese experienced teacher has been imparting knowledge to his Ethiopian students.

Jiang Jiang, an electrical engineering technology teacher, has been sharing his experiences and knowledge in the Ethiopian academic landscape for the past 13 years. He has been working at the Federal Technical and Vocational Training Institute (FTVTI) since 2011.

Guided by the Ethio-China TVET cooperation agreements, he is now providing

See Sharing Chinese... page 4



Nation unveils plan to remove lake Koka's water hyacinth

BY YOHANES JEMANEH

ADDIS ABABA – The Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE) and Oromia Water and Energy Bureau announced plan to remove water hyacinth from lake Koka.

The Ministry in collaboration with the Bureau launched water weed removal program yesterday.

On the occasion, MoWE Minister Office Head Mamusha Hailu stated that the water hyacinth locally known as Enboch has been affecting lake Koka, which has been serving as a source of Hydroelectric power, drinking water for humans and animals, irrigation purposes and so on.

As to him, all stakeholders including



Mamusha Hailu

government bodies, farmers, youth, women and scholars must work in cooperation to safeguard the lake



Million Bekele.

that its wide range of the reservoir is invaded by the invasive weed.

Removing water Hyacinth from lake

Koka requires a sustainable effort that participate many stakeholders, according to Oromia Water and Energy Bureau Head Eng. Million Bekele.

She expressed that consecutive weed removal campaigns and performance evaluation will be done to achieve the plan as fast as possible.

To this end, she said her Bureau will apply the experiences that have been drawn during the eradication activities of the weed from other lakes in the state like Denbel and Batu.

These activities have recovered the lake and enabled the state and the society benefiting from fishing, and tourism practices, she recalled.

State working to smooth fertilizer distribution, combat illegality

BY FIKADU BELAY

DURAME – The Central Ethiopia State said it has taken significant steps to ensure efficient fertilizer distribution for the coming main farming season and to control illegal actors in the value chain.

Approached by the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), the Central Ethiopia State Deputy Chief Administrator and the Rural Development Cluster Coordinator Usman Surur stated that consolidated efforts are underway to ensure efficient distribution of fertilizers among the farming community.

Usman, who is also the state Agriculture Bureau Head, further noted that by taking on this responsibility, the Bureau hopes to support local farmers in their activities that contribute to the overall growth and productivity of Ethiopia's agricultural sector.

Cognizant of last year's soil fertilizer availability and seasonality setbacks, the state administration is working tirelessly to address the problem and to distribute adequate soil fertilizer in this farming season.

To enhance accessibility and equity, soil fertilizers are exclusively distributed through farming unions, and this approach aims to empower farmers and improve their access to essential agricultural inputs. This approach is also beneficial that no external actors outside of the unions are authorized to supply soil fertilizers within the state and strengthen the cooperative system, he elaborated.

Usman also indicated that in a



Usman Surur

strong stance against illegality, the state government has taken decisive measures against officials, professionals, dealers, and unlicensed brokers who have taken part in illicit distribution of fertilizers. "This proactive measure aims to safeguard the interests of farmers and promote fair and transparent practices in the agricultural sector."

"By the same token, the state administration demonstrates its commitment to agricultural productivity and the wellbeing of the farming community by distributing soil fertilizer fairly and cooperating with the federal government to combat illegal dealers and other challenges."

Ensuring more access to soil fertilizers and other agriculture inputs will enable farmers in the state to boost productivity and supplement the national food security attempts, the deputy chief administrator remarked.

Japan scholarship awardees vow to serve home country

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA Ethiopian academicians who received the Japanese government's scholarship (MEXT) pin hope to acquire a great deal of knowledge during their stay and vow to utilize the expertise for their home country's development.

The Japanese government gave a MEXT scholarship to eight Ethiopian students in various universities including Hokkaido, Osaka, Nagoya, Tohoku, Kyushu, and Okayama last Wednesday.

One of the scholarship beneficiaries and Mizan Tebie University academic staff Semere Wolday told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the scholarship will pave the way for the students to learn from Japan's technological advancement knowledge prowess. "I am going to join one of the prestigious universities, Osaka Graduate School of Pharmaceutical Science in the field of Organic Chemistry. I am also a research student for two years there."

Japanese are well-known for innovative culture, which will play a significant role to Ethiopian students in advancing their knowledge in that area. It is to be recalled that Japanese companies recently launched three novel devices that help to treat cancer, he added.

Noting the shortage of medical chemists in Ethiopia, Semere expressed desire to serve his country and narrow the skill gap witnessed in the area.

Addis Ababa University Civil Engineering Instructor and a member of the Japan Ethiopia Alumni Society (JEAS) Essayas Gebereyohanis (PhD) said, "I completed both the MSC and PhD studies at the Tokyo University and acquired a great deal of knowledge and expertise in the process. Due to the resemblance of the



Semere Wolday



Essayas Gebereyohanis

two countries' cultures, learning in Japan is also a unique experience for Ethiopian students."

According to Essayas (PhD), a Japanese mentality is a research-oriented, deep, and detailed nature in every aspect of life, and claims that Ethiopian students who gain scholarships in that country are 'lucky.'

It is to be recalled that the Japanese government has been giving university scholarships to Ethiopian students over the past many years.

Editorial

Pulling off common growth via harnessing untapped resources

It goes without saying electricity is the life blood of industrialization a sure proof for affluence. Thus, those countries bountifully blessed with a resource conducive for generating such energy could easily materialize their development plan harnessing their God-bestowed wealth, prominent among which is water that falls in the renewable energy source and stands tall for its environment friendliness.

Tapping such a resource requires conviction and an all-out effort of citizens obliged to get off the ground by their shoestring budget or bootstrapping if support from external sources proves in short supply.

It is mindful of the fact that utilizing its water resource Ethiopia is striving to spearhead its surge towards modernization and to warrant its ability of coming close to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG).

It is to be recalled that its citizens for long were sweltering under a power supply problem compelling mainly women to resort to firewood. The country was also forced to zero in on light industries. Bleak was the fate of Ethiopia strangled by power shortage. A turnaround was called for.

Not confining its vision within its perimeter, Ethiopia today aspires to electrify the region and beyond. As per this dream, Ethiopia, which brought into being the Great Renaissance Dam (GERD), is flexing its muscles to sell electricity up to the southern tip of the continent. As common growth through economic growth is a timely one such push deserves commendation. All the more so, as such common growth ensures peace a key ingredient as well as a perk of development.

The Ethiopian Electric Power (EEP) has disclosed an envisaged plan to create grid connection among eastern and southern power pools of Africa.

In the long run after infrastructural development Ethiopia also plans to extend its wings in power supply to European countries. It is not hard to surmise how Ethiopia will turn out to be an energy powerhouse in Africa and beyond.

According to FDRE Planning and Development Commission's 10-year Development Plan, Ethiopia has a principal objective of energy development plan envisaged for the coming ten years (2020/21-2029/30). It aims at ramping up power generation capacity from 4,478 megawatts to 19,900 megawatts. It also aims at increasing power transmission lines from 18,400 km to 29,900km. Stepping up electricity export from 2,803 GWH to 7,184 GWH is also in its plan.

In this era of globalization, let alone standing aloof, weathering hardship closing ranks on a firm economic base is an uphill battle. In cognizance of this fact, Ethiopia wants to click with all African countries in more ways than one—beyond electricity. Specially, in translating Africa's free trade zone into action Ethiopia's effort is salient. Following suit, east African countries must break loose from debilitating poverty.

Here it is worth noting that efforts to this effect since the wind of change wafted across the country's sky are appreciable. The fact that this is in congruence with the principle of accretion is heartwarming.

As the Chinese proverb goes "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." Mind full of the scenario development partners, donors and developing countries must extend a helping hand to such effort of standing on their own feet.

Also homing on alternative renewable energy sources is vital.

Opinion



GERD and economic Pan Africanism

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

All Ethiopians here and at overseas are getting ready to celebrate the 13th Anniversary of the ground breaking ceremony for the construction of Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam. This article is dedicated to the event and attempts to show how GERD is becoming a pace setter in economic pan Africanism in the energy sector.

The occasion is expected to be marked with various events including fundraising, cultural shows and panel discussions.

The national objective of the construction of GERD strictly synchronizes with the objectives of the formation of Pan Africanism, the Constitutive Act of the African Union which was ratified by more than 50 African nations in July 4, 2002 and Agenda 2063 formulated in on January 2015 and finally African Continental Free Trade Area developed on March 23, 2018.

Despite possessing huge amount of hydropower resources, wind farms, solar energy and geothermal energy, Africa has remained energy deficient producing only 10% of its potentials. GERD is a pioneering renewable energy source which proved itself to be one of the biggest energy sources for promoting economic pan Africanism.

How can one establish the linkage between GERD and the objectives of AU, AfCFTA and Agenda 2063? What are the indicators that clearly demonstrate such links?

The fundamental objectives of AU Constitutive Act also tally with the major intentions for which GERD was commissioned. Article 3 (C) sets the objective of accelerating the socio-economic and political integration of the continent while section (j) of the same articles provides on promoting sustainable development at the economic, social and cultural levels. The article also refers to the formation of regional economic community in which GERD may play an important role in supplying cheaper and cleaner energy sources that African countries badly need.

The major objectives that the AU has envisioned included sustainable and

inclusive economic development, human capital development, agriculture value addition and agro-business development, employment generation for youth and females, social protection, gender and youth empowerment, good governance, infrastructure development, science and technological innovation, manufacturing based industrialization, peace and security and culture and arts. Out of the 12 objectives, 9 of them are directly related to the fundamental objectives for which GERD was constructed. Of particular importance is the role that GERD would play in providing adequate renewable and modern energy resources for industries in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa, income generation, and the promotion of science and technology through skill transfer in the areas of hydrology and hydropower development.

Promotion of lakeside agriculture development and fishery as programmatic elements of GERD would promote agriculture based food security. In this context, GERD could serve as a means of promoting peace and economic cooperation when hydropower resources are shared with the neighboring countries and those African countries far off.

Despite the fact that both Egypt and Sudan have been repeatedly mention about the danger that the construction of GERD poses on their water supply, as stated above, the fundamental objective of GERD is to generate electricity to the tune of 6000 MW not only for Ethiopia but also for several East African countries including Sudan, Egypt and possibly Eritrea and other countries in the region. The dam will generate 15130 GWH per year to cover the supply of power at the national level which is growing by 30% every year. However, guided by the principles of sharing African resources with African countries to promote mutual development, Ethiopia is already practicing economic pan Africanism in the energy sector. The benefits of GERD particularly to Egypt and Sudan is not limited to power supply. The dam removes silt that could be accumulated the dams at downstream countries, reduces sedimentation and would help to conserve water on the dam which will be used to regulate water supply and prevent flooding.

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



The Ethiopian Herald

Established in 1943

Published daily except Mondays
By The Ethiopian Press Agency

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The Ethiopian Herald

"It's My Dam" created great sense of Ownership : *Chief Negotiator*

ADDIS ABABA - The motto "It's My Dam" has created a great sense of ownership and inspired Ethiopians to provide unwavering support for the construction of Abbay Dam, Ethiopia's Ambassador to USA and Chief Negotiator Sileshi Bekele told ENA.

The construction of the dam which commenced in 2011 is now near completion.

Ethiopia has repeatedly expressed its stand that the construction of the dam is based on cooperation, fair utilization of water resource, and good neighborhood.

Also, it has strong position that the tripartite negotiation with Egypt and Sudan on Abbay dam should be based on mutual benefit, respect, and fairness.

The tripartite talks regarding the filling of the



Sileshi Bekele

dam and related issues was held in January 2020 and concluded with no agreement. During a press conference following the collapsed talks, the then Minister of Water and Energy and the current Ethiopian Ambassador to USA and Chief Negotiator

was asked about the management of the dam upon its completion.

A lady journalist from Middle East asked him, "Who is going to administer the dam upon completion?", Sileshi recalls.

He proudly responded with the famous answer "It's my dam. We Ethiopians will manage it."

The chief negotiator affirmed that the motto #ItsMyDam has special place in the heart of all Ethiopians since that historic press conference.

The motto has played a pivotal role to mobilize the public by creating sense of ownership and motivation to support the dam, he elaborated.

#ItsMyDam, which was widely promoted

by institutions, individuals, the mass media and social media, has created great inspiration among the general public.

The 13th year laying of the foundation of the Abbay Dam will be commemorated at the end of this month under the theme: "Together We Made It Possible."

The theme "Together We Made It Possible" demonstrates that Ethiopians have reached the last phase of the construction of dam by working in unity and it is a gratitude and recognition of Ethiopians for their unwavering support and contribution for the dam, he further noted.

During the past years, over 19 billion Birr was raised for the construction of the dam through various fund raising mechanisms.

Diasporas extend unreserved...

kinds of movements to fight the unjustified pressure of some interest groups.

"Accordingly, the Diasporas have held massive demonstrations in major cities across the globe and denounced those groups' unwarranted pressure and the attempt to block their home country's aspiration to prosper."

The Diasporas have also been actively engaged in awareness-raising campaigns on the positive outcomes of the mega dam for the downstream countries and communicating Ethiopia's commitment to ensure mutual benefits in the utilization of cross-border resources.

He further highlighted that members of the Ethiopian Diaspora have taken part

in knowledge and skills transfer and conducting empirical research on the possible impacts of the project that refute the false allegations circling the Abbay Dam.

The director extended calls for increased support for the completion of the dam that has immense capability to transform Ethiopia's agrarian economy and to expedite development endeavors in their homeland.

It is to be recalled that Ethiopia is currently marking the 13th anniversary of the launching of the mega hydroelectric dam under the theme "Together we can" in various fundraising programs and related events.

Sharing Chinese experiences...

technical support at Luban Workshop in the institute.

"Dispatched by the Chinese Ministry of Education to work in technical education in Ethiopia, I am providing technical support at Luban Workshop in the FTVTI. The education cooperation between China and Ethiopia has a long history. FTVTI was established by the support of Chinese government in 2005," he told *The Ethiopian Herald*.

Speaking about his commitment on TVET, he said, "I place great emphasis on practical skills development in teaching. For instance, when teaching courses on microcontroller, PLC, and robotics, I spend a significant amount of time preparing real engineering projects for practice."

Since his placement in Ethiopia, his job is to teach students to install hardware, programming software, debugging and running projects.

His term was once ended, but he renewed his stay after Ethiopian Ministry of Education requested him to continue his service. He believes he is serving here

directionless young people eager to learn advanced technologies, seeking to change their destinies.

"I aspire to be a bridge for academic exchanges between the two countries, aiding these young people in realizing their dreams," he said.

Commenting about the TVET education she received from Jiang and his colleagues, a postgraduate student, Kalkidan Mihiretie said that the support [of Chinese teachers] helped her understand how she will act with the end-latest technologies after her graduation.

Ethiopian Labor and Skills State Minister, Teshale Bericha (PhD) also told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the partnership with Chinese government helps students to access better technological education here in Ethiopia.

"The support by the Chinese government to the Vocational and Technical Institute is both financially and technically. They are providing teaching service, laboratory technologies and scholarships... [] we appreciate all this cooperation," he said.

NBE pegging away...

Bank Supervision Director Firezer Ayalew stated that NBE has carried out knowledge based assessment in collaboration with development partners in order to identify and address the challenge with regard to financial inclusion.

Following the assessment, a women intervention framework has been developed and it is expected to be implemented at national and state level, he said, noting that the second national financial inclusion strategy, which has been implemented by NBE, is currently pursuing its midterm implementation stage.

"Besides ensuring that the financial system is inclusive as well as stable, the strategy aspires to bring about significant change in scaling up what has been gained in the first strategy as well as enhance its sustainability," he underscored.

Firezer further stated that a target has been set in terms of enhancing the representation of women in the leadership position in financial institutions.

Without ensuring this, it would be difficult to unlock the potential of

women, create jobs, and realize economic growth, he added.

In this regard, the role of the government and NBE is to make sure that women are adequately and fairly represented in those positions in the financial industry.

Understanding the need to address the underrepresentation of women in financial institutions, NBE has recently announced the launching of a new initiative entitled :Network of Ethiopia's Women in Finance (NEWFin).

He indicated that the establishment of NEWFin is a direct response to challenges that women are continuously facing to participate and advance in the finance industry.

Moreover, he stated, the initiative includes networking forums, workshops, mentorship programs, and advocacy initiatives aimed at promoting gender diversity and inclusion within the financial sector.

Underlining the need to have adequate representation of women in leadership roles, he stressed that NBE encourages financial institution to include the issue of gender, adopt different systems as well as revisit their business model.

WBG allocates 500 mln...

Ethiopia's energy projects . The WBG and the African Development Bank are partners in supporting country's energy sector.

Recently, the WBG has funded over 500 million USD. Accessing this budget, EEP drafted to launch some 14 new power generation and transmission as well as distribution projects across the country. The fund would contribute highly in overcoming power accessibility problems and others, he said.

Hence, there are public queries to build substations and fulfill power accessibility and others. The realization of these 14 projects would address the problem, he added.

According to him, the country has been working to rehabilitate hydropower projects to boost power generation. As a result, electro mechanical components should get rehabilitation after 20 years service provision. Currently, there are projects that need rehabilitation. For instance, efforts are

underway to rehabilitate Tekeze hydropower project to boost power generation.

Currently, all of energy sources have been yielding 5250MW. The Abbay dam project construction completion would double the current energy capacity. Hence, the construction of Koisha hydroelectric power project completed 65%. Currently, shortage of finance particularly foreign currency exchange has been challenging the project.

However, the government has been eyeing various alternatives to address the problem. And the EEP has been allocating its foreign currency revenue for it. Furthermore, it will commence power generation after three to four years, he underscored.

Ethiopia has been exporting electricity to neighboring countries after fulfilling its local power demand. Currently, it exports only 10% of its energy to neighboring countries and uses 85% of for its local consumption, he expressed.

Opinion

Reaping bounties out of Abbay Dam

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Ethiopia is working from dawn to dusk to put an end to underdevelopment and poverty. The country has been framing a range of lucrative approaches to this end. Of the myriads of mechanisms the country has been employing to augment economic development and societal wellbeing, the construction of the Grand Abbay Dam is indeed one of the prototypes!

This great and ancient nation could hardly move forward until all citizens became determined enough to see the dearth off for good and expand a number of opportunities as well as engines of economic growth. This writer believes it is time for Ethiopians to forge a new unity, fraternity, and amicability over disintegration, disagreement, and a mere sense of hostility.

Damming the Abbay River is a clear manifestation of Ethiopians' long-lasting cooperation, unity, and determination, as ranging from a woman engaged in menial street vending to high-profile investors, they have been contributing a lot to the effort geared towards getting the country prosperous. Hence, every Ethiopian has been participating in the construction of the dam. The 95% accomplishment of this momentous step has never come out of the blue, and it is not a simple deal; instead, it has meaningfully incurred the nation and its people a lot in terms of blood and sweets.

The thirteen years journey is as costly as scarifying life. Surprisingly, Egypt has been constructing manmade river using the Abbay water, but it has all the time opposed Ethiopia's action on its own river. It is quite unacceptable and wrong approach. The Abbay water is tantamount to blood drop of all Ethiopians. Of course, natural right all the time prevails over historical one even that is based on narrow colonial accord as the latter is highly susceptible to distortion and sly approach. What is the very point on which this peace would like to hammer is Egypt is in a position to construct man-made river using the Abby water, but stands against Ethiopia's Grand Abbay Dam.

Cognizant of the fact that Ethiopia has never had any intention to harm downstream riparian countries; every one of them has to be by the side of this innocent nation to grow together. Besides, Ethiopia needs a national energy policy that lets Ethiopians control country's energy system.

As long as Abbay is designed to trap 100 years of sediment inflow, reducing sediment inflow through watershed management is a key to achieving long-term sustainability. Besides, the various watersheds demonstrate a successful example of economically self-supporting watershed management in and around the Dam.

Yes, Ethiopia began generating electric power from the Dam by switching on turbines on the Dam despite claims from Egypt and Sudan assuming that doing so may affect their own hydroelectric power initiatives. From Ethiopia's perspective, the Dam is an essential tool for it to meet its economic and development needs especially through generating hydroelectric power, as more than half of its population has been suffering from lack of access to electric power.

The dam is also expected to help the nation expand agriculture, a major sector as well as the mainstay of the Ethiopian economy, enables it to irrigate hundreds of thousands of acres of land and creates numerous jobs for Ethiopian farmers

Not only will the Dam therefore help Ethiopia overcome its economic and development challenges but it will be of significantly useful in increasing Ethiopia's national income, and benefiting neighboring countries by turning the country into a major regional exporter of electricity. The great benefits it promises to bring to Ethiopia help explain the country's position regarding Egypt and Sudan's demands, and shed light on why it appears unwilling to negotiate to reach an agreement over the Dam's filling and operation.

Ethiopia has legal and sovereign right to use the Abbay or Nile water for development fairly and equitably, and it has no interest in harming the lower Nile Basin countries in doing so.

Since Ethiopia needs to hold water back and dams can be used to store, control, flooding and generate electricity, and a dam is a structure built across a stream or river, Ethiopia has capitalized on damming its great river--the Abbay River.

There has been a significant proliferation in purposes for constructing dams to control stream flow and secure water storage. Technological changes have been paralleled with construction of ever-larger dams such as what is being constructed on the Abbay River to gain control of larger water supplies. Unequivocally, as nature has its rhythm of change, the challenge is to fit human use into nature with minimal adverse environmental impacts.

Hence, accurately quantifying the impact of hydropower development on the environment is of great significance in achieving clean energy and sustainability. Besides, hydro-power development requires the construction of much hydro-power plants, which consumed a large amount of resources such as metal materials and energy input and severely changed original surface runoff—the Grand Dam and the recreational scenes around it, close to 100 recreational hubs.

The Abbay Dam is serving a variety of functions and provides all Ethiopians with numerous benefits like irrigation,

industrial proliferation, and recreational purposes, among others. All these purposes are kept in mind when Ethiopia started constructing the Abbay Dam.

Furthermore, a portion of water storage in the Dam and reservoir is supplied for drinking, municipal and industrial purposes, for hydro power and electrical generation. There are several environmental advantages of hydroelectric power including its flexibility, affordability, and the perks of being a renewable resource, too.

Once constructed, the Abbay Dam can generate constant electricity via hydro power scheme and last longer than thermal power plants. The resource is renewable given that it can be used repeatedly downstream for power generation. Unquestionably, hydro power can be stored or diverted and is one of the most eco-friendly means of producing power. One of the major advantages of the grand dam is thus its eco-friendly features. Because this Dam uses a renewable resource, it helps reduce emissions of greenhouse gasses like carbon dioxide.

It also serves as a recreational activity as it comprises close to 100 recreational centers around. True, several dams throughout the world are known to provide an area for boating, skiing, campaign, picnics, and boat launches. Ethiopia's are not exceptional to such a rewarding move.

Obviously, hydroelectric power is considered a renewable source of energy because the reservoir water that is used to generate electricity is continuously replenished and reformed.

Ethiopia has been committed more than any time else to exploit its water resources and reap the bounties it has been endowed with since it has been aspiring for growth and prosperity.

The country has been trying to supply water for irrigation, municipal water, flood control, hydroelectric power generation, river navigation thereby coming up with sustainable economic development and environmentally friendly growth. True, drinking, bathing, cooking, swimming, cleaning, etc are also of the major benefits garnered out of the Abbay Dam and even from others, which would be constructed after drawing important lessons on how to construct dams and what are the setbacks and strengths, too. Recognizing the fact that river damming yields great social-economic benefits, Ethiopia is relentlessly working along that line.

In due course of damming rivers of course, Ethiopia has been assessed the cost-effectiveness of existing processes in line with environmental conservation measures. To this end, it has been formulating future key research directions for constructing eco-friendly dam construction with the aim of helping foster sustainable hydro power development.

The country has taken into account the all rounded situations of the construction process as the process also reduces lateral connectivity of rivers, which decreases the interactions between rivers and floodplains/wetlands in river basins, for instance.

Most importantly, Ethiopia is left with a long journey to well utilize all its water resources as the country is widely endowed with rivers, lakes and other water bodies which are potential enough to be developed.

A variety of conservation measures, including turbine passage facilities, artificial breeding and release, ecological reservoir operation, and habitat compensation in tributaries, have been proposed and implemented with a view to mitigating the impacts of river damming. Each measure has its own advantages and limitations, application conditions, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness, and thus should be selected according to the specific situations of a given dammed river, the Abbay one, for instance. Thanks to cooperation among all riparian countries, the Abbay Dam and reservoirs now serve more purposes than was ever anticipated when they were planned to be built.

As the very strategic and responsible nation, Ethiopia is expected to look at the dynamic interactions between the Abbya's hydrology and infrastructure and its economy. The Dam has shown a coordinated filling and operation thereby increasing the total electricity generation from both the Grand Dam and the entire system. Hence, all riparian countries should collaborate with Ethiopia not only in dam construction but also viable economic coordination in eastern Africa in particular and across the entire continent in general.

In a nut shell, the Grand Abbay Dam is going to be largest hydropower facility in Africa upon completion. This entails that new research sheds light on consequences for the riparian countries drawing from the process it has been through. Coordinated filling and operation of this Grand Dam increases economic benefits and resilience in the riparian countries and all countries are expected to work and grow together. No doubt, in the Nile Basin region, eleven African countries are economically dependent on the river, albeit differently. In recent years, the water infrastructure in the Eastern Nile has seen significant changes, with more dams being constructed in upstream countries.

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

Business & Economy

NEWFin: Driving change to fill gender gap

BY LAKACHEW ATINAFU

In recent years, Ethiopia has made significant progress in various sectors, including finance. However, like many countries, it continues to grapple with gender inequality, particularly in the realm of finance. To address this persistent gap, a Network of Ethiopian Women in Finance (NEWFin) has emerged, playing a pivotal role in empowering women and working towards gender parity.

The network of Ethiopian women in finance serves as a powerful platform that empowers women by providing them with opportunities for professional growth, skill enhancement, and mentorship. By fostering a supportive community, the network helps women build confidence, develop leadership qualities, and expand their knowledge base. Through workshops, seminars, and networking events, women in finance gain access to valuable resources and information that enable them to thrive in their careers.

Stereotypes and traditional gender roles have long hindered women from pursuing careers in finance. However, the network challenges these norms by showcasing successful women who have excelled in the financial sector. By highlighting these role models and their achievements, the network inspires young women to challenge societal expectations and pursue careers in finance, thus breaking down barriers and promoting inclusivity.

One of the primary objectives of the network is to increase the representation of women in leadership positions within the financial sector. By advocating for gender diversity and inclusivity, the network works towards ensuring that women have a seat at the table where key decisions are made. This increased representation not only benefits individual women but also leads to more balanced and inclusive policies that address the needs and perspectives of all stakeholders.

The network acts as a knowledge-sharing platform, facilitating the exchange of expertise and best practices among women in finance. Through mentoring programs and peer-to-peer learning, experienced professionals guide younger members, helping them navigate challenges and build the necessary skills to advance in their careers. This collaborative approach fosters a culture of continuous learning and growth within the financial sector, ultimately contributing to its overall development.

The network of Ethiopian women in finance actively engages in advocacy efforts to influence policy changes that promote gender equality in the financial sector. By joining forces, members of the network amplify their voices and advocate for reforms that address systemic barriers and biases. Their collective advocacy strengthens the case for gender-inclusive policies, leading to greater opportunities and a more supportive environment for



women in finance.

Promoting gender equality in the financial sector has broader economic implications. Studies have shown that increased female participation in finance positively impacts economic growth and stability. By filling the gender gap in the financial sector, the network of Ethiopian women in finance contributes to the overall economic empowerment of women. This, in turn, leads to greater financial independence, poverty reduction, and improved living standards for women and their families.

The network of Ethiopian women in finance plays a crucial role in bridging the gender gap within the country's financial sector. Through empowerment, breaking stereotypes, enhanced representation, knowledge sharing, advocacy, and economic empowerment, the network creates an environment that fosters gender equality and inclusivity. As the network continues to grow, it is expected to make significant strides in transforming the financial landscape of Ethiopia, ensuring equal opportunities for women and contributing to the nation's overall development.

The Network of Ethiopia's Women in Finance (NEWFin) initiative will reduce the gender gap within the financial sector, National Bank Governor Mamo Mihretu said at the launch of the network to local media. The Network of Ethiopia's Women in Finance (NEWFin), launched by the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE), is a pioneering initiative designed to bridge the gender gap in leadership within Ethiopia's financial sector.

The Bank believes that NEWFin will transform the landscape of the Ethiopian financial industry by empowering women to ascend to leadership roles, thereby driving gender equality and economic growth.

Opening the conference on making the financial sector work for women, Governor Mamo noted the underrepresentation of women in the financial industry both in the demand-side as the user of financial services and on the supply-side as managers and employees of financial institutions.

According to him, this is not merely a matter of equity but also economic efficiency and sustainability, a matter of sound policy and public confidence.

Announcing the launching of NEWFin, he stated that the Network of Ethiopia's Women in Finance is more than just an initiative.

It is a commitment to transform the financial sector, empower women, and enable them to thrive as leaders and drive gender equality, Mamo noted. As a result, the network will reduce the gender gap within the financial sector at the national level, the governor added.

World Bank Group Acting Country Director, Doina Petrescu pointed out on the occasion that Ethiopia's financial sector is evolving quickly and the World Bank (WB) is privileged to support this process.

WB has been working with the National Bank of Ethiopia team and many more to help accelerate this process, it was learned.

The World Bank technical experts have supported the implementation of the first national financial inclusion strategy and assisted with the banking sector liberalization, Petrescu pointed out.

The NEWFin initiative officially launched envisions a financial industry that empowers women, enabling them to thrive as leaders and actively promoting gender equality as its mission is centered on avoiding the barriers that impede women's progress within the financial sector.

The network is dedicated to providing avenues for achieving work-life balance, challenging societal norms and fostering mentorship and coaching connections, ensuring that women have the support and opportunities needed to succeed.

To empower women and enable them to be active participants in finance, the Ethiopian government can undertake several measures:

Most of all, the government can enact and enforce laws that promote gender equality and protect women's rights. This includes legislation that ensures equal access to

financial services, prohibits discrimination in employment and credit, and promotes women's economic empowerment.

Access to financial services is also the other endeavor that the government can work to expand women's access to financial services, such as banking, credit, and insurance. This can be done by establishing financial institutions that specifically target women, implementing policies to encourage financial inclusion, and promoting the use of digital financial services.

Furthermore, financial education and skills training coupled with providing financial education and skills training programs targeted at women can greatly enhance their financial literacy and knowledge. These programs can cover topics such as budgeting, saving, investment, and entrepreneurship, enabling women to make informed financial decisions and manage their resources effectively.

The government can also create programs and initiatives that support women entrepreneurs, such as providing start-up capital, business development services, and mentorship opportunities. This can help women establish and grow their own businesses, thereby increasing their economic independence and contribution to the finance sector.

Having these implementing gender-responsive budgeting ensures that government budgets and policies take into account the specific needs and priorities of women. This can involve allocating resources for women's economic empowerment programs, infrastructure development that benefits women, and social protection measures that address gender-based inequalities.

The government should also foresee option to actively promote women's leadership and representation in the finance sector by encouraging women to pursue careers in finance and providing opportunities for their advancement. This can be achieved through mentorship programs, leadership training, and creating a supportive and inclusive work environment.

As scholars and studies put forward, collecting sex-disaggregated data and conducting research on women's economic participation and barriers they face in the finance sector is crucial. This data can inform evidence-based policies and interventions, ensuring that government initiatives are effectively targeted and tailored to address the specific challenges faced by women.

It is important for the Ethiopian government to adopt a multi-faceted approach that combines these strategies to create an enabling environment for women's economic empowerment and active participation in the finance sector. Collaboration with civil society organizations, international partners, and the private sector can also contribute to the success of these efforts.

Planet Earth

Ethiopia's "Yelemat Tirufat" Initiative to reduce micronutrient malnutrition in Ethiopia

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

The subject of nutrition and micronutrient malnutrition in particular is a special area of study and the author of this article is not a specialist on the subject but is interested in briefly identifying the positive and constructive contribution that the "Yelemat Tirufat" Campaign can render to the national effort to reduce macro and micronutrient malnutrition in Ethiopia with a special emphasis on micronutrient deficiency among children, the elderly and people of all walks of life in the country.

Nutrition is not just about having enough food to eat. It also refers to the health and general physical and mental development of the population.

Micronutrient malnutrition, also known as hidden hunger, is a significant public health challenge in Ethiopia. Despite improvements in food security and nutrition over the years, many Ethiopians still suffer from deficiencies in essential vitamins and minerals.

Here are some key points about micronutrient malnutrition in Ethiopia:

Micronutrient deficiencies are widespread across Ethiopia, affecting large segments of the population, particularly women and children. Common deficiencies include vitamin A, iron, iodine, zinc, and folate.

Micronutrient malnutrition in Ethiopia is primarily caused by inadequate dietary intake of nutrient-rich foods, poor food diversity, limited access to fortified foods and supplements, and underlying factors such as poverty, food insecurity, and limited access to healthcare services.

Micronutrient deficiencies can have serious health consequences, including impaired growth and development, weakened immune function, increased susceptibility to infectious diseases, anemia, vision problems, and cognitive impairments.

Vitamin A deficiency is a significant public health concern in Ethiopia, particularly among children under five years of age and pregnant women. It can lead to night blindness, increased risk of infections, and childhood morbidity and mortality.

Iodine deficiency is another common issue in Ethiopia, affecting thyroid function and leading to iodine deficiency disorders such as goiter, cretinism, and impaired cognitive development in children.

Iron deficiency anemia is prevalent among women of reproductive age and children in Ethiopia, contributing to fatigue, weakness, impaired work capacity, and poor pregnancy outcomes.

Ethiopia has implemented various strategies to address micronutrient malnutrition, including food fortification programs, supplementation initiatives, nutrition education and behavior change communication, maternal and child health services, and agricultural interventions to promote diverse and nutrient-rich diets.

Ethiopia has made progress in fortifying staple foods such as wheat flour, edible oils, and salt with essential vitamins and minerals, including vitamin A, iron, iodine, and zinc, to improve population-level micronutrient intake and reduce deficiencies.

Despite efforts to address micronutrient malnutrition, challenges remain, including limited access to fortified foods, inadequate coverage of supplementation programs, insufficient public awareness and knowledge about nutrition, and socioeconomic barriers that hinder access to nutritious foods and healthcare services.

Addressing micronutrient malnutrition in Ethiopia requires a multi-sectoral approach that addresses underlying determinants of malnutrition, strengthens health systems, improves access to nutritious foods, promotes dietary diversity, and enhances public awareness and education about nutrition and health. Sustainable solutions will require continued investment, collaboration, and commitment from government agencies, non-governmental organizations, civil society, and the private sector to ensure the well-being of Ethiopia's population.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed launched "Yelemat Tirufat" which literally means basket bounty is four years development campaign, which focuses on nutritional opulence in November, 2022.

The purpose of the campaign is to boost productivity and production of dairy, eggs, chicken, and honey and related products as well as intensify efforts to achieve food self-sufficiency and ensure nutritional opulence at the family and national levels.

The campaign contributes for job creations, increasing exports, and hastening import substitution.

Accordingly, "Yelemat Tirufat" campaign, especially meat, milk, honey and fish production registered great achievements when compared with the previous production rate.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture (2023) "Yelemat Tirufat" development campaign, more than 20,000 villages have been identified and put to work in honey, milk and egg production in all areas of the country.

Monitoring, supplying resources and awareness creation activities have been carried out for the selected villages, she said, adding the production of milk has increased from 5.8 billion liters to 8.6 billion liters.

It is expected to increase to 11.7 billion liters in the coming years.

According to the Ministry, effective work has been done in egg production and distribution of chicken, where the number of chicken has increased from 26 million to 42 million.

The development initiative is also playing a crucial role in creating job opportunities, for 259,000 jobs have been created annually through the development of livestock resources alone.

The campaign is part of the nation effort underway to ensure food security and self-sufficiency in food and to increase exports of agricultural commodities in the area of food.

The author believes that the importance of this campaign is related to the fact that it is a home grown national initiative to be implemented across the country in various agro-ecological arrears. Moreover, the writer believes that mainstreaming the campaign in program components of urban agriculture will help to not only secure balanced nutritional intake across the country but will also contribute to fighting off diseases that result from micronutrient deficiency specially among children and their mothers, lactating mothers and the elderly.

As stated above, the author of this article is not a professional expert on nutrition but is mindful of the fact that children in IDP camps across the country and lactating mothers need a special attention in life saving nutritional and micronutrient deficiency prevention programs. The Seqota Declaration is a special program designed to reduce stunting among children which is brought by micronutrient malnutrition.

Seqota Declaration (SD) is a high-level commitment unveiled by the Ethiopian government in July 2015 to end stunting in children under two years by 2030. Informed by a conceptual framework built around three pathways of change, the 15 years Seqota Declaration Implementation Plan focuses on delivering high impact nutrition specific, nutrition sensitive and infrastructure interventions across multiple sectors including health, agriculture, water, irrigation and electricity, education, social protection and women and children affairs in 40 woredas in Amhara and Tigray region along the Tekeze River Basin. Therefore, the African Development Bank has made a commitment to finance this project to contribute to the government effort.

The project has four components. The first component focuses on climate smart infrastructure development for effective service delivery including community-based water supply infrastructure, community irrigation infrastructures, institutional infrastructure support (nutrition corners at Farmers Training Centers, schools, small scale feed and food processing Centers, health posts, and poultry multiplication center) and implement ESMF and ARS activities. The second, third and fourth components focuses on soft interventions such as promotion of consumption of nutritious foods, strengthening institutional systems and capacity building and coordination and project management.

Macro and micronutrient malnutrition is reportedly far more severe in areas of the country that are recurrently affected by climate change induced drought which exacerbates deficiency in food supply and more particularly lack of vitamin rich vegetables, root crops and fruits.

The production of various types of food

in the "Yelemat Tirufat" campaign must be supplemented with food preservation techniques that are manageable at household and community levels. Bumper harvests during good seasons must be preserved for periods of food gaps, which is mostly the case in the north, south, and western parts of the country. The writer is of the opinion that food preservation methods like smoking, drying, and grinding are useful as long as they are preserved in a manner that is commonly practiced in rural Ethiopia. For instance, enset or kotcho, which can be preserved in carefully constructed dugout holes, are of critical importance for preserving and utilizing during periods of dry spells accompanied by food shortages.

"Yelemat Tirufat" campaign can bring about far more better results if it is based on area specialization in food production which takes into account agro-ecological variation across the country.

The campaign is useful for combating MN deficiency diseases like night blindness or sight impairments, goiter and mental retardation and a host of diseases which result from lack of essential vitamins that the body would need for normal functioning.

Backyard vegetable gardening accompanied with planting fruit trees can also be a good source for fighting vitamin deficiencies among children in rural Ethiopia. If this is integrated with poultry and bee keeping, milk production, families in outback areas of the country could be able to have diversified food intake and also earn some income to meet their financial needs at household level.

"Yelemat Tirufat" can also serve as a raw material source for the growing agro-industries in Ethiopia which are already on the pipeline to produce value added food products primarily for international markets. This sets another alternative for increasing foreign exchange income that the country needs for enhancing national development programs.

On the other hand, food processing industries in the country that produce fortified baby foods and other types of vitamin rich nutritional products can produce special types of food too be used in therapeutic feeding centers that usually operate in drought affected and conflict infested areas of the country.

Given the demand for fortified foods in the country, there are only very few food processing complexes many of which are concentrated in Addis Ababa. The process of maximizing the benefits of "Yelemat Tirufat" demands full public participation in all the cycles of the implementation of the campaign. On the other hand, it is very important to evaluate the results of the campaign in each region of the country and compile all the learning's obtained over time.

Finally, the author suggests that "Yelemat Tirufat" campaign can be upgraded from campaign level to a permanent programmatic intervention throughout the country.

Art & Culture

The challenges of bringing Africa's artistic, historical heritages under one roof

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

No doubt that African unity has to start with African culture, mind, and soul. Colonialism had stolen the African mind and the African soul. We have not yet fully reclaimed our lost culture, our identity, and our soul. African unity will materialize when we start to think less as individual countries but as Africans. When we think of ourselves as Nigerians, Malians, Moroccans, or South Africans, we tend to forget that we are all Africans and that we share a common identity. We can only reclaim our African identity when we give priority to Africa instead of our separate or fragmented identities. Otherwise, we are going to remain entrapped in our nationalism, tribalism, ethnicity, and parochialism.

We should be first and foremost Africans and then assume other identities. Europeans call themselves Europeans, not Germans, French or British. They have already forged a common European consciousness, not because they are wiser than us but because history has created for them opportunities that we did not enjoy. Asians identify themselves as Asians and not as Japanese, Chinese, or Koreans. It is the same with Americans.

They call themselves Americans and not Californians, Alabamans, Mississippians, or Alaskans. Why did they choose this alternative? Simply because they have profited by coming together and by sharing a common identity. Shouldn't we Africans not call ourselves Africans first and keep our second or third identities for another occasion? Africans have profited nothing by being disunited, dispersed, and fragmented, or by assuming secondary identities.

Africa is even now one of the most politically, culturally, and economically fragmented and marginalized continents, more marginalized than Latin America or Asia. Latin Americans have fought and won against the Portuguese and the Spanish conquistadores and built their own identity on the basis of a mixture of native Indian, African, Spanish, and Portuguese ethnic, racial, or class characteristics. With some difficulties, Asians are going along similar lines.

When the row between North and South Korea finds a peaceful settlement and the dispute between Taiwan and mainland China becomes a thing of the past and unity becomes a reality one day by peaceful means, Asia will no doubt become one big and powerful geographic and economic entity that will be able to challenge world dominance by one or two superpowers, and world peace will at last become a tangible phenomenon. These geographic areas are already advancing in that direction. Where is Africa in all this?

It would not be unpatriotic or un-African to say that Africa will have to put in more work and will need more time to reach where the Latinos and Asians are now. There are certainly a few disadvantages Africa will have to overcome on its way to inevitable continental unity. The Latinos and Asians were luckier than Africa to speak one or two languages and be culturally more homogenous than Africa. How many ethnic groups, languages, traditions, and cultures are there in Africa? Maybe thousands. This is, of course, an unfortunate historical disadvantage. And that is why Africa needs to work harder than the other continents to create the preconditions for integration that cannot come with decisions by the African Union or the United Nations.

As our main focus is African cultural integration or the creation of a common African identity that will certainly expedite integration in other areas, it would not be superfluous to discuss here some of the challenges awaiting us along this trajectory. The reinstating of Africa's cultural, artistic, and historical patrimonies is one of the hardest things to achieve along the way until final unity will be attained sometime in this century.

The million-dollar question now is, "What is to be done at present until the vision of a fully freed Africa becomes a reality?" For analytical purposes, we can divide the tasks into three different parts. The first may be how to bring back cultural and historical relics stolen from Africa and taken to European metropolises during the colonial era. The second point may be how to collect these kinds of relics from within Africa and bring them together first within each individual African country and then centralize, protect, or preserve them as common African cultural patrimonies under one umbrella, preferably brought together in the capital of a country such as Addis Ababa, Cairo, Algiers, Dakar, or anywhere else. The third issue would be to build one big "African Museum of Arts and Sciences" like the ones that exist in Western countries and use it as a research and exhibition center where tourists and global scientists would come and stay to do research work and offer the amazing collection to visitors.

Such a huge institution, once built with African money, will certainly be operated with the huge income that it will generate by itself from donors, visitors, and all kinds of investors. What matters is to take the first step towards this ideal and then work hard to turn it into a global icon for black culture all over the world. This may sound ambitious at this stage, but it can definitely be done.

The task of repatriation of African cultural heritages started a long time ago and is still progressing, although slowly. This is

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because repatriation is being conducted on the basis of individual or group initiatives and has seldom been conducted by African Unity, the single body with the relevant power and authority to conduct the work under its supervision.

In the past, and in the context of Ethiopian cultural and historical heritages, repatriation efforts were largely initiated by individuals in families like the Pankhurst family, and more particularly by Richard and Rita Pankhurst, the dynamic intellectual duo who spent much of their lives championing Ethiopian causes. This includes, of course, their courageous advocacy in favor of the return of the Axum obelisk and other items sitting in the British Museum. Although their efforts have yielded tangible results, both of them passed away before competing what they had set out to achieve in this regard.

Various scholars and activists have made tremendous efforts to bring back Ethiopia's

artifacts and items of great historical significance. There were also committees set up for this purpose, and they had done a great job in the context of the Axum obelisk. It is not clear whether these committees are alive or not, but what is indisputable is that their activities are not visible these days. It is, however, possible to reactivate the committees or form new ones at the national level, and such work should be undertaken not only in Ethiopia but also all over Africa. It is quite obvious that Africans have lost a great deal under European colonialism.

Africans have more or less lost various historical and cultural relics that are now found in various European capitals, some of which are still regarded as war trophies or war booties. We need to reclaim what was ours and let the old colonial wound heal, as well as the ongoing legal and illegal business with looted African treasures that is promoted with full knowledge and sometimes the direct or indirect cooperation from European authorities that are denying that such activities are taking place in their own turfs.

Regarding cultural and historical relics that are still undiscovered within Africa, it would be up to African governments and African experts to search, find their lost treasures, and bring them to international attention. The Egyptians have done a great deal of commendable work in this area. They are still continuing their search for their past, which is nourishing and enriching their present. Ethiopia too has conducted similar efforts in the past, although present day efforts are a bit sluggish. African anthropologists should give priority to African hidden treasures and use their skills and knowledge to help the continent rediscover and bring its past civilizations to light so that they can be used for its spiritual and material development.

Intentional organizations should also help them financially and by providing training to young African cultural workers. There are so many African philosophers, ethnologists, anthropologists, and so on, living in the West and lecturing at prestigious universities. These elite intellectuals should come down to Africa, study their traditions and cultures, and contribute to the collection of Africa's patrimonies or heritages under one roof.

What is the point of writing books on western philosophy and Western anthropology while African culture remains hidden in obscurity instead of being recognized by the world and serving as a weapon for Africa's spiritual and material liberation and total unity? This can be done when Africans start to think, plan, work, and dream as Africans as one people on one continent instead of sticking to the old, anachronistic, and defeated paradigms of tribalism, ethnicity, and parochialism in general.

Society

Ethiopia celebrates religious diversity as a source of pride, strength

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Over centuries, Ethiopians have cultivated a culture of tolerance and co-existence among diverse religious communities, fostering a deep sense of peace and unity within the country. Religious tolerance is deeply ingrained in the fabric of Ethiopian society, representing a timeless tradition that has withstood the test of time. Ethiopia's commitment to religious freedom, interfaith dialogue, and cultural celebrations has fostered an environment of respect, acceptance, and coexistence.

As the country continues to navigate its path towards progress and development, preserving and nurturing this age-old practice of religious tolerance will remain a cornerstone of Ethiopian identity.

Ethiopia's religious landscape is marked by a rich tapestry of Christianity and Islam, each holding a significant place in the nation's heritage. The country's commitment to inclusivity and tolerance has earned it a reputation as a beacon of hope for religious co-existence and harmony, as recognized by historians and scholars alike.

Meskel Square, a renowned venue for hosting grand national events in Addis Ababa, recently played host to a series of religious gatherings that attracted thousands of Orthodox Christians, Protestants, and Muslims. Despite efforts to sow discord, each event concluded peacefully, showcasing the resilience of Ethiopia's spirit of unity and understanding.

The 4th Ethiopian Grand *Iftar*, a significant event held last Wednesday here in Addis Ababa, brought together Muslims in colorful attire from all corners of the city to observe the breaking of the fast ceremony at Meskel Square.

During the program, the President of the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council, Honorary Dr. Haji Ibrahim Tufa, emphasized the shared responsibility of citizens in promoting peace and harmony. He highlighted the importance of supporting individuals affected by displacement and called for a collective effort to restore peace in the community. This event not only celebrated the unity among different religious groups but also underscored Ethiopia's enduring commitment to peace, tolerance, and the promotion of a harmonious society in the global community.

Sheikh Sultan Aman Eba, President of the Addis Ababa Islamic Affairs Council, highlighted the significance of the Grand *Iftar* in showcasing the dedication of Ethiopian Muslims



towards maintaining peace and stability. He called upon all Muslim residents in the city to support ongoing projects, such as the construction of modern mosques and various governmental infrastructural developments across different areas.

Ustaz Abubeker Ahmed, Special Advisor of the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council and patron of the Grand Street *Iftar*, on his part emphasized that the Street *Iftar* not only promotes religious beliefs but also brings people from diverse backgrounds together.

Although relatively new in Ethiopia, the Street *Iftar* has gained momentum since its inception, aiming to foster unity and solidarity among individuals from all walks of life.

In an interview with *The Ethiopia Herald*, Ismael Hussein, who participated in the fourth Grand Street *Iftar* at Meskel Square, expressed the importance of showcasing Ethiopia's rich Islamic history and its tradition of unity and harmony among various religious groups. He highlighted Ethiopia's historical significance as the first country to welcome Islam during times of persecution, providing refuge to its followers.

Hussein emphasized the role of the Street *Iftar* in demonstrating the humility and faith of Ethiopian believers during the holy months of Lent and Ramadan, observed by Christians and Muslims.

He underscored the blessings and unity experienced by celebrating the *Iftar* alongside fellow Muslim brothers and sisters, which serves as an opportunity to share Ethiopian values with the world.

As a Muslim, Hussein highlighted Ethiopia's unique place in Islam, noting the presence of tombs of thirteen senior messengers of Islam in the country.

Throughout history, Ethiopia has been a sanctuary for those persecuted due to their religious beliefs, earning a reputation as a beacon of tolerance due to its significant position in the teachings of both Christianity and Islam.

Sheikh Sultan Aman Eba concluded by emphasizing that the successful organization of the Grand Street *Iftar* provides a platform for sharing values of humanity and unity. He stressed the importance of standing together to counter any negative sentiments towards Ethiopia, sending a powerful message to both the global community and the nation's adversaries that Ethiopia's religious diversity is a source of pride and strength.

The Grand Street *Iftar* event, which saw the participation of over 80,000 individuals in Addis Ababa, was organized by the Halal Promotion and Nejashi Humanitarian Organization. This annual gathering, initiated four years ago, aims to promote cohesion, peace, and solidarity within the Muslim community.

The theme of the 4th Grand Street *Iftar* in Addis Ababa was 'Gather for Unity', reflecting the core values of the event in bringing together people from diverse backgrounds to celebrate unity and harmony. The significant turnout at the event underscores the growing importance of fostering a sense of togetherness and understanding among individuals of different faiths in Ethiopia.

Ethiopia, a country known for its rich cultural heritage and diverse religious landscape, has a long-standing tradition of religious tolerance. Throughout its history, Ethiopia has embraced a spirit of coexistence, respect, and acceptance among different religious communities.

Ethiopia's religious tolerance can be

traced back centuries, deeply rooted in the country's ancient traditions and historical events. Ethiopia's geographical location at the crossroads of different civilizations has facilitated cultural and religious exchanges, further promoting tolerance and understanding.

The Ethiopian constitution, enacted in 1995, upholds the principles of religious freedom and equality. It explicitly mandates the separation of state and religion, ensuring that no particular faith is favored over others. The constitution protects the rights of individuals to choose and practice their religion freely, without fear of discrimination or persecution. This legal framework has provided a solid foundation for religious tolerance in Ethiopia.

Religious tolerance in Ethiopia is not merely a passive acceptance of different faiths but actively encourages interfaith dialogue and cooperation. Leaders and representatives from various religious communities regularly engage in discussions, promoting mutual understanding, and addressing common challenges. These dialogues foster a sense of unity and respect among different religious groups, strengthening the fabric of Ethiopian society.

Ethiopia's cultural traditions and festivals also reflect the spirit of religious tolerance. While religious tolerance has been a longstanding practice in Ethiopia, it is essential to acknowledge the challenges that exist. In recent years, there have been isolated incidents of religious tensions and conflicts, often fueled by external factors. However, the Ethiopian government and religious leaders are committed to addressing these challenges and promoting peace and harmony among all religious communities.

Law & Politics

Backing Ethiopia's sea access quest

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

It is important to remember that the world is changing. Similarly, the desire to ensure one's national interest has become a priority in many countries. Having represented a nation on many frontiers, countries, including superpowers around the globe, have been exerting their utmost efforts. Ethiopia is also doing its level best to maintain its national interest in this volatile Red Sea region.

Depending on single port has been costing the country arms and legs because the country could not get to access the sea on its own. For the past three decades, the country has been using various neighboring ports, and this path, using neighboring ports for the coming many years, can be difficult for a country with 120 million population. Not having sea access, Ethiopia has been under economic and security threats as the nation are very much dependent on imported goods.

Back in January, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (Ph.D.) called for regional cooperation through a win-win approach for mutual interest in relation to letting Ethiopia access the sea. The Premier also offered a kind of give-and-take approach to let the nation access to the sea and in return Ethiopia let the other party get a share in one of the flagship projects or companies including the Ethiopian Airlines and the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD).

After rigorous efforts from Ethiopia, Somaliland accepted the call from its neighbor and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to let the latter access a part of its sea territory and in return, get recognition from Ethiopia to be known as a sovereign country and other additional agreements.

The MoU has faced different feedbacks. After the MoU was signed, the two parties also entertained different pressures from different directions. Some historical enemies of Ethiopia have left no stone unturned to avert the MoU by standing with Somalia. Even, some countries have also used different blocs such as the Arab League to reflect their stand towards the accord.

In fact, when Somaliland previously entered into an agreement with one of the giant companies, DP World, the agreement did not face that many complaints from countries or blocs. Whereas, when it comes to Ethiopia's move, entities that do not want the nation's development raise their voice for objections. Such moves are what Ethiopia has been overcoming in its long history.

Ethiopia and Somaliland have presented themselves and their agreement that the accord is not designed to affect any party or nation. Besides, the MoU is all about defending the national interest of both parties. In good truth, Ethiopia should



Ethiopia has been taking multiple actions in the horn in order to ensure the peace and security of the region by deploying and sacrificing its soldiers in neighboring nations

be part of the region and get what other nations get.

Ethiopia has been taking multiple actions in the horn in order to ensure the peace and security of the region by deploying and sacrificing its soldiers in neighboring

nations. Unfortunately, those countries have forgotten the deeds that Ethiopia paid for the region. On the other hand, other nations who have done nothing stood by and did everything to tarnish the MoU so as to defend their national interest behind the curtain.

The two negotiating parties have shown their stand regarding the accord. To this end, Ethiopia, this time, needs the international community to support Ethiopia and the accord to become effective. Again, Somaliland has expressed its government and people's desire towards the accord in support in full.

Recently, during the course of the official discussion with the Swiss Foreign Minister, Ambassador Taye Atske Selassie, the Foreign Affairs Minister of Ethiopia, expressed the nation's wish that it is high time for the international community to support Ethiopia's desire to own a seaport. The minister has requested Switzerland to stand with Ethiopia as the latter is now putting utmost efforts to regain a sea outlet.

Ambassador Taye stated, "Ethiopia has been demanding access to the sea for decades. The first reason is pretty much economic; the pursuit that flourished at this time is also mainly triggered by economic causes because the economy is over-dependent on a single port. Besides, Ethiopia has been demanding outlets which become unattainable."

As to him, it is now high time for Ethiopia to seek additional ports for basic transactions and commercial purposes. Thus, the Ethiopian government is searching for alternative ways to access the sea with justifiable modalities. The Red Sea has become a center of insecurity as it has created uncertainty for Ethiopia. It is also becoming very difficult to navigate [without security apparatus], he added.

As to the ambassador, Ethiopia is thus cooperating with countries and multilateral organizations for the stability

of the region-Horn of Africa. Ethiopia is concerned with regional instabilities including the Sudanese case and trying to facilitate mediations with a view to resolving conflicts by conflicting parties' own effort and conciseness, he noted.

Speaking about the Sudanese case, he said that Sudan is critical and important for the region; and direct consultation between Sudanese parties would bring stable peace as Sudan has to be led by the Sudanese themselves.

In a similar vein, having stayed exclusively with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Mohamed Hussien Jama Rambo, member of the Somaliland house of Parliament, also elucidated that Somaliland is not just dedicated but unwavering in its commitment to implement the sea access deal it entered with Ethiopia recently.

The MP slammed external intervention while vowing that Hargeisa will not bow down to any pressures. He added, "We are accustomed to pressures from entities that do not appreciate our development. Yet, we resist these pressures, demonstrating our resilience. We honor agreements. Somaliland will not bow down to any pressure."

Commenting on the statements of some entities like the Arab League, he said that the agreement between Somaliland and Ethiopia does not concern the Arab League, and they should not waste their time on such issues. Previously, Somalia objected to Somaliland's deals with DP World and the U.S., but the objection did not work. It did not impact how these deals were implemented, he added.

Speaking of the reaction of the Somaliland public, he said that Somaliland people are happy with the agreement. They welcomed it and expressed joy. Somalilanders are ready for business and are committed to engaging with their neighbors closely to ensure integration. That is enshrined in the constitution.



Ephrem Endale
Contributor

Between you & me

“I Hate...”

We're discussing a lot of things these days, aren't we? There is so much to talk and to discuss about. Amidst such interactions the unexpected happens. You know like ideas and concepts for which you aren't ready or about which you never gave even a few minutes' thought somehow sneak their way in.

It was during one such discussion that someone brought the issue of the widening gap between the rich and the poor. Indeed it is a very touchy issue worthy of lots of discussions or debates whatever we call them. Of course, it would be close to wishful thinking to say that we've enough reliable data to base our arguments on. The lack of well thought out and well researched ideas and data is something that keeps us in the dark on numerous issues. Still we enter the game of arguments with the arsenal of thoughts we have or we think we have. This guy who brought up the rich/poor gap issue didn't kick off his arguments with data or any convincing points. He says, "Everybody hates the rich!" Wow! That as the first sentence to start discussions is way of the mark. I mean if anyone start their arguments with "I hate..." the sane thing to do would be to stop the clock running right there. Wherever the term "I hate..." is the focal point then you can be sure it's already be five minutes to midnight.

Yes most of might be a bunch of haters. There might be a hundred and one things we hate on different levels. We hate groups, we hate individuals, we hate entire communities, we hate entire denominations, and we even hat countries about which we know little or nothing about; the list is endless. But it'd be

fair to say that the common denominator is bias. Wherever hate is mentioned an integral part of any discussion or argument there sure would be bias, and lots of it too. Wherever hate is pushed in at the beginning or anywhere in a sentence logic and reason are pushed over the cliff.

Most of us probably to keep our social relations intact never publicly profess our hatred of one thing or another. In case we do so then it means we're sure others are in the same boat with us. Still hearing someone express their hatred of something is not a particularly good experience. Especially if some guy uses the "everybody..." term and in a roundabout way makes you part of the haters the remaining part of your day which has been running smoothly into midafternoon would practically be over. The pain in your guts at hearing such comments like, "Everybody hates the rich..." must feel what a sudden Tyson upper cut does to your entire anatomy; you know like seeing all the colors we know and the others waiting to be discovered. After his over the speed limit opening the guy adds, "We hate the rich." If the full force of the comment hasn't hit you yet, this is where it gets personal. The fellow sounds he was speaking for all of us; the 'Attila the Hun' marching us into a confrontation we weren't ready for and about which we haven't yet chosen sides. In short the guy was talking in our name, most of us must have been saying deep inside, "Not in my name!"

Let's give the guy the benefit of the doubt and the first question that comes to our mind is from where in the world did he get such an

idea? And also what prompted him to put all the rich in the same basket. Of course the cry "No! No! No! Keep us out!" still echoes; of course soundlessly. "Who the hell does he think he is to speak for us?"

Look I'm not singling out this guy for his comments, the fact is there surely would be others amongst us who hate the rich for no reason at all or for the simple reason of their being rich! Odd as it may sound there are souls who hate people just because they are rich while they never did them any wrong.

"Why do you hate that woman so much? The way you're talking about her she must have messed your life in some ways. Has she done you some harm?"

"She hasn't done me any wrong. Don't tell me you like that ^&#*!"

"I don't know the woman! How in the hell would I hate or like a woman I don't know except that she lives in a niece-looking home! Anyway you didn't answer my question."

"She is rich and I hate rich people."

"Why do you hate rich people?"

"You mean all rich people?"

"All of them."

"But why?"

"They are the ones who made us poor."

"Isn't a little hard to prove."

"The trouble with you people is that you daydream of the houses and the cars of the rich and you forget you're dirt poor." If you're itching to say your "Goodbye!" this the right

moment.

Of course, some would say except for the indiscriminate carpet-bombing of the rich the guy might have some truth. After all these days hearing what quite a number of the rich are supposedly doing with their money, you wonder if those people are indeed healthy minded. It's as if they pluck the money from the trees rather than sweat for it! Again, of course we hear that there are ways and there're WAYS where the millions flood in minus the 'sweating' which even the holy books tell us is the prerequisite for having our food! The conventional wisdom is that if you throw your money all over the place it means not much legitimate sweat has been put into earning it.

There are so many myths and tell tales about the rich that you wouldn't know what to hold and what to let go. So many theories as to how people become overnight millionaires to you wouldn't know what to hold and what to let go.

All said hatred for an entire community maybe because of the wrongs the few commit isn't a very civilized way of societal living. By the way I have heard of some well to do persons who don't want to lay their eyes on the very poor. There is this woman who chose to drive her car on the main roads even when there were shortcuts, shortcuts which could save gas and time, through villages not because she is against using shortcuts but she is personally against laying her eyes on the poor folk of the area.

Nothing takes negativity to its worst level than any comment which begins with "I hate..."

Me and My Bus Rides - A 'Freshman' Talking!

A little confession; I rarely used city buses for quite a long time, until now that is. One reason was that most of the time my workplaces and residence were only walking distances away. Wasn't that nice! But like most things in life that now has changed. For the first time in my life I've relocated to one of the areas far from central town; you can take an average of an hour bus ride. So with relocation means that some things wouldn't be what they used to be. For better or worse things would be changing. One of the major changes is means of transport. You'd like to use convenient choices which would ensure you reach to the places you want without much hassle and changing cars along the way, and also there wouldn't be much bleeding of your wallet. After all the farther you move from your previous residence transportation costs are sure to spiral and more care is needed. So me, the guy who isn't that much used to travel in city busses is using them more frequently. One great thing about busses it's that most of the time it's from 'A' to 'B' which saves you time, money and unnecessary exhaustion.

Though I'm no more than a freshman, and though I'm not armed with enough what's and if's to comment I've also to admit riding in city buses comes as an experience of its own. There is room for some philosophy. "Do they have to cram all these people all at once? This is unhealthy and causes a lot of discomfort!"

Yes, it is unhealthy and the discomfort could be frustrating. It's so easy to criticize anyone and everyone these days without that important practice of giving all sides the attention they deserve. So I feel a little itchy some things though I don't consider myself a one-sided fellow.

One might ask, "Why don't they have more busses running so that all of us could travel seated?" Such a guy must be one of the nicest fellows. We're crammed not because we enjoy being sandwiched but because the facts on the ground dictate it. Yet such travel could be UNCOMFORTABLE the likes of which you'd want to avoid at all costs. But like other things acquainting oneself with the uncomfortable since there are no plan B's would probably save a few nerves from being overstretched to the point of to the point of giving you the feeling the brick layers are messing up with your head. But then there is the reality we have to live with. Say if some brass says, "Ok, from tomorrow on there would only be sitting spaces on the busses. If any passenger is seen standing, the chauffeur, the passenger and the company would be sued!" It'd be nothing less than a miracle if he keeps his chair!

It's too early to narrate what I feel now; In fact, truth be told and I might never come fully loaded. But then I proved that I was a freshman bus user a couple of times. What did I do? I'll tell you what I did. And you have to

be reminded this comes from some guy who thinks of himself the perfect metropolitan (what!) I jumped my bus stop two times. And I jumped them almost by three bus stops. But then walking back I was quite content and relaxed. It wasn't only nice sport; it also came as a mini-sightseeing of sorts. So now maybe too 'proud' to ask people "Have we reached such and such a place yet?" I've now started studying the landmarks and I can tell you it isn't at all easy.

The most interesting part is the actual travel with people sandwiched like anything and yet talking, laughing, throwing jokes, even openly gossiping and acting as they'd act under normal circumstances. Hey, take it from me and in city buses you don't complain about pushing and jostling. No way! Not only the drivers and the conductors but even the passengers would think you are the newest nerd in town. You might ask me how anyone could come to terms with such amount of pushing, jostling, your feet being stepped on and you stepping on the others' feet. I don't think I'm in a position to offer any advice here, but I'll do so anyway. Learn to live with it. That is only your bus rides would become just another daily routine about which you needn't think a second time.

"Hey, take it easy! You're pushing me!" Do you know what the reaction to this would be? The person accused of pushing and the

other passengers would be startled and the complainer would be seen as a poor guy missing some screws upstairs. The one important needs to do is watching one's pockets and I mean really 'WATCHING!' because the pushing and the jostling is comes as a goldmine opportunity for some.

The talk in buses is so interesting that that's one place where you learn (and sometimes unlearn!) things. For one thing unconsciously is informed what's happening in various parts of the town, parts which might never have seen or even passed close by. You hear info about what's going on in offices as frustrated employees spill it out there. You hear various explanations as to the behavior of some big-time person about whom you had completely different views. Information you took as legitimate by the strength of its contents is blown to pieces when someone with firsthand experience narrates a completely different scenario. Of course, I'm not suggesting all narratives you hear on buses are legitimate. In fact based on the trips I've so far narratives based on lies and deceptions are plenty. Most of the time the narrators don't seem to do them consciously. It is only that they have been sold down the river by their sources.

All said busses are the perfect hotbeds info of all kinds of issues and where human behavior is displayed at its best and sometimes at its worst.

In Pictures

Generating electricity in environment friendly way

BY NAOL GIRMA

Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen Tiruneh underlined that Ethiopia's environmental protection endeavours should involve the community in order to minimize the climate change impact at a national public-mobilization campaign that aims at combating environmental pollution and its complications.



The motto "It's My Dam" has created a great sense of ownership and inspired Ethiopians to provide unwavering support for the construction of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, Ethiopia's Ambassador to USA and Chief GERD Negotiator Sileshi Bekele



The US Assistant Secretary of State Department's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization operations commended the significant strides achieved by the Federal Government of Ethiopia in implementing the CoHA and advancing the Transitional justice process.

A farewell ceremony has been held for senior Ethiopian police officers departing to join the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in South Sudan. At the seeing off ceremony, Ethiopian Federal Police Commissioner General Demelash Gebremikael said the Ethiopian police force is becoming increasingly a sought-after force by international organizations due to its ethical standards and military capability.



Published bimonthly in collaboration with Addis Ababa Science and Technology University

AASTU's commitment to quality education: Striving for excellence

BY DIRRIBA TESHOME

Addis Ababa Science and Technology University (AASTU) is dedicated to providing quality education, underpinned by a comprehensive quality management system. To elaborate and demonstrate the experiences and the commitments of the university, Dr. Kemal Ibrahim, AASTU Vice President for Academic Affairs, has forwarded the followings.

In a continuous effort to enhance the teaching and learning experience, the university has undertaken various initiatives focusing on curriculum development, accreditation, teacher capacity building, and student personality development.

Since 2019, AASTU has been meticulously designing quality curricula with active involvement from stakeholders. The university is committed to meeting international standards in engineering programs (Washington Accord) and applied and natural science programs (ABET accreditation organizations).

Currently awaiting responses for about nine programs, AASTU's pursuit of international accreditation aims not only to empower graduates in the global job market but also to elevate the university's international standing. Since 2019, AASTU has been meticulously designing quality curricula with active involvement from stakeholders.

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Recognizing the pivotal role of educators, AASTU places a strong emphasis on teacher capacity building. The university facilitates opportunities for teachers to engage in both local and international learning experiences. Furthermore, a higher diploma training program equips teachers with essential



Dr. Kemal Ibrahim, AASTU Vice President for Academic Affairs

pedagogical skills. AASTU mandates terminal degrees for its teaching staff, fostering a culture of continuous learning. The institution promotes field externships, allowing teachers to gain practical insights into industry challenges and developments.

Student Personality Development: AASTU goes beyond class room education by

nurturing students' overall development. The Student Career Development Unit and Student Personality Development Center empower students with additional skills crucial for success in the professional world. A commercial complex under construction will provide a platform for students to develop and commercialize innovative ideas. Integrated science and engineering project courses for third-year science and fourth-year engineering students promote collaborative project work, enriching their educational experience.

In its commitment to quality as a cultural norm, AASTU actively engages stakeholders and partner organizations, involving the entire university community. Annual awards recognizing outstanding staff members in various academic and administrative fields underscore the institution's dedication to fostering a culture of excellence. AASTU's unwavering commitment to quality education is not only shaping future leaders but also contributing to the overall advancement of the academic landscape.

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