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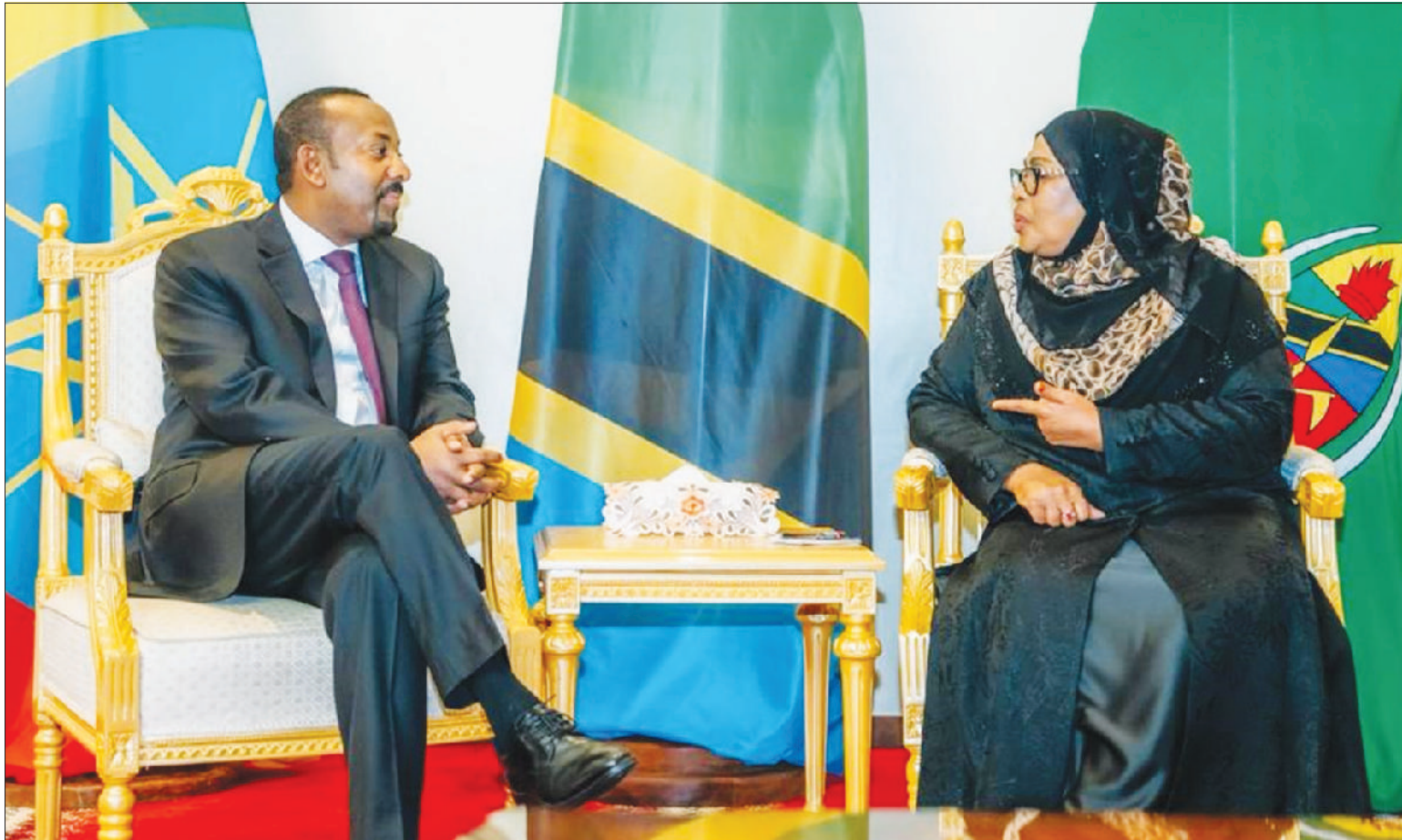
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Ethiopian building five additional domestic airports

ADDIS ABABA (ENA)- Ethiopian Airlines Group is building five more domestic airports with the view to expanding domestic destinations, Chief Executive Officer Mesfin Tasew said.

Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mesfin Tasew told ENA that the airline is working to expand domestic and international destinations.

According to him, the airline has 136 international and 22 domestic destinations.

With the increasing number of its planes, the airline is expanding its domestic destinations, it was learned.

The airports would be built at Mizan Tepi Aman, Negele Borena, Yabelo, Gore Mettu and Debre Markos.

The CEO stated that 4 of the airports will be completed within a year.

Expansion of destinations is implemented in accordance with needs of domestic customers,

See Ethiopian building.. Page 3

Ethio- Tanzania ties enjoy bright prospects

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia - Tanzania relationship has recently enjoyed a sound momentum of growth and made notable strides in strengthening bilateral ties, said Ethiopian Ambassador to Tanzania.

In an email interview with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Ambassador Shibrumamo said that the two countries have agreed upon aviation services and hydroelectric power trade in recent years.

The latest state visit of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) to Tanzania was also aimed

at augmenting and expanding cooperation agreements between the two countries, he noted.

Ethiopia has giant airliner and huge electric generation potential in the energy sector,

See Ethio- Tanzania.. Page 3



Churches express commitment to fight climate change

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA - The All Africa Conference of Churches has committed to working with the government to fight climate injustice and mitigate climate change.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church's (EOTC) Development and Christian Commission

See Churches express.. Page 3

AfCFTA: Ethiopia to commence trial trading commodities

• Offers some 6,000 commodities tariff to AfCFTA

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia is set to commence trial trading of commodities under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration (MoTRI) announced.

In an interview with FBC, MoTRI Minister Gebremeskel Chala said that Ethiopia has made the necessary preparations put in place the trial trading phase and implement the framework agreement through streamlined strategies.

"Alike other African member countries, Ethiopia is currently employing preliminary activities to commence commodities trial

See AfCFTA: .. Page 3





Amb. Anil Kumar Rai

Incoming Indian ambassador determined to deepen cooperation with Ethiopia

ADDIS ABABA (ENA) - The new Indian Ambassador to Ethiopia, Anil Kumar Rai, has pledged to deepen cooperation with Ethiopia in many dimensions.

The ambassador, who presented his credentials to President Sahlework Zewde, told ENA that he has received guidance from both Indian and Ethiopian leaderships to deepen the cooperation between the countries.

“Both these countries are having a very long history of cooperating each other. This cooperation has many dimensions and these dimensions can further be widened and scaled up.”

The ambassador pointed out that there are many developmental priorities of India and Ethiopia which need to be addressed together; and the leaderships at the top are closely working on these issues.

Ethiopia's recent membership in the BRICS will further help to work together to ensure Ethiopia's participation to maximize value and voices of developing countries within the group, he stated.

“This year, Ethiopia has become a full member of BRICS and we as the founding member of BRICS, are working closely with Ethiopia to ensure that their participation in BRICS brings more value and a new dimension to this multilateral forum, and become the true voice for developing countries.”

Middle East, Asia, and Pacific Countries Affairs Director-General, Gebeyehu Ganga said Ethiopia and India have a well-established relationship on both bilateral and multilateral political matters.

Ethiopia and India have a well-established relationship encompassing investment, trade, people-to-people exchanges, science and technology cooperation, and collaboration on both bilateral and multilateral political matters, he pointed out.

India is among the top five investors in Ethiopia, according to the director-general.

Gebeyehu added that Ethiopia has been an African voice for so long and the countries will strive to be leading voices for the South-South cooperation.

Ethio telecom delivers assistive devices for students with disabilities

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - Ethio telecom delivered yesterday assistive devices for students with physical disabilities that are said to create a conducive teaching-learning environment and supplement the latter's daily activities. Speaking at the ceremony, Ethio telecom Chief Communication Officer Mesay Wubshet stated that the company is discharging its corporate social responsibility in health, education, and humanitarian arenas.

The support includes hearing devices, wheelchairs, tricycles, crutches, canes, and walking frames, and worth over eight million Birr.

Mesay also stated that the company has established a digital learning center and enhanced students with disabilities' internet access in a bid to create conducive teaching-learning environment. “Also, Ethio telecom is providing pocket money for low-income citizens on a monthly basis.”

The operator has provided these assistive devices to create an inclusive school environment and ensure students' sustainability in school, he elaborated.

Federation of Ethiopian National Association of Persons with Disabilities (FENAPD) Executive Director Abayneh Gujo on his part said that the support benefited 500



students with physical disabilities who are residing in different parts of the country. Some 199 students with physical disabilities in Addis Ababa will receive the assistive

devices that were donated by Ethio telecom and the remaining will be distributed to different parts of the country soon, the director remarked.

PEPFAR announces 111 mln. USD support to Ethiopia's response to HIV/AIDS

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA - U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) has announced a 111 million USD support to Ethiopia's response to end HIV/AIDS by 2030.

In a press release sent to *The Ethiopian Herald*, PEPFAR announced that 111 million USD has been spent to help Ethiopia to end HIV/AIDS by 2030 as per the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In the release, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and Senior Bureau Official for Global Health Security and Diplomacy for Health Diplomacy Ambassador Dr. John N. Nkengasong announced the approval of the 111 million USD (over 6 billion Birr) Country Operational Plan 2023 (COP23) through the U.S. PEPFAR program to support Ethiopia's continued response to end HIV/AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.

Minister of Health Mekdes Daba (MD) and U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia Ervin J. Massinga have attended the virtual event.

The release added that the COP23 Year 2 plan represents ongoing cooperation between PEPFAR and the Ministry of Health to develop joint programming to



support the needs of people living with HIV in Ethiopia.

The approval announced by Ambassador Nkengasong ensures a continuation of this programming, which will ensure Ethiopia is on track to achieve epidemic control by 2030, the statement noted.

The release also stated that the PEPFAR, with the Ministry of Health and various stakeholders, has designed a plan focused on closing gaps in HIV prevention, care, and treatment for key populations and addressing geographic disparities.

The plan will prioritize improving

HIV services in conflict-affected areas, enhancing case-finding strategies, and reaching vulnerable populations such as children, adolescents, and gender-based violence survivors, it mentioned.

Over the past 21 years, PEPFAR has invested approximately 3 billion USD to support the HIV/AIDS response in Ethiopia which helped strengthening the health system through workforce development, improved infrastructure to support HIV services, and supported the establishment of referral laboratories and a national health information system to address HIV, it was learned.



Some 1,700 health professionals in Tigray return to job

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - Out of the 2,500 health extension workers that were serving the community in the pre-war period, some 1,700 have been returned to duties, the Tigray State Health Bureau disclosed.

Bureau Health Extension and Promotion Team Coordinator Michael Hagos told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that capacity building and refreshment training have been offered to the returned health professionals.

Such training is instrumental to make the health professionals psychologically ready

to carry out tasks and to return to their previous work spirit.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the bureau trained experts to resume the health extension programs, and now it is in complete readiness to ensure health service delivery across Tigray, Michael added.

Yet, lack of inputs, limited budget, and other related constraints have hampered effort to transform the activity into the next level. "We are trying to resume the health extension programs across Tigray in the near future, and if the gaps are filled, the service delivery would be greatly improved." Moreover, the task requires close collaboration with

the Ministry of Health and other relevant stakeholders."

Noting 80 percent of the state health facilities were affected by the war, the bureau head highlighted that experts have been providing services in areas that needed immediate health support including schools, large settlements and others.

Furthermore, identification and treatment of children who are affected by malnutrition is ongoing. The bureau has also been exerting efforts to address malaria, cholera, and other diseases and requires holistic support to enhance its capacity to treat these pandemics in regular healthcare system, he remarked.

Ethio- Tanzania ...

he stated, adding that Tanzania is now in demand of cooperation with Ethiopia in both sectors.

Historically, the Ethiopian Airlines was the first airline landed in Kilimanjaro, Tanzania, according to the Ambassador.

The Airlines has been flying to Dar es Salaam since 1966 and now it makes 42 flights per week to Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar, and Kilimanjaro, he mentioned.

In addition, the Tourism Board of Tanzania and Ethiopian Airlines inked an agreement in 2012 as the latter has been serving passengers traveling to the country, he indicated.

"The cooperation is not only restricted on the airline services. Ethiopia has trained about 75 pilots and 25 engineering technicians during the 2016 to 2023 period," Amb. Shibru said.

As the countries located within the same region, the diplomatic relation is comprehensive and Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) on several cooperation areas have also reached since the opening of Ethiopian Embassy in Dares Salaam in 2018, he noted.

He further stated that Ethiopia and Tanzania have abundant river waters that can be converted into energy.

"Same as Ethiopia, Tanzania is upper basin of Nile and signed the Comprehensive Framework Agreement (CFA) earlier. Therefore, the cooperation on Nile River is another interesting course in the relation," he highlighted.

The two East African countries have been in official diplomatic relation since 1960s in spite of the inadequate engagements.

Ethiopian ...

Mesfin said, additional airports would be built based on study.

On the other hand, he pointed out that Aksum and Kebedeh airports are being renovated, the CEO said, adding that both will be open soon.

The airline will continue expanding domestic routes, according to Mesfin.

Ethiopian Airlines has set a vision to increase its annual revenue to 25 billion US dollars by 2035 and to transport 67 million passengers in a year.

AfCFTA: Ethiopia to commence trial...

exchange of goods with selected counterpart countries," he underscored.

He further mentioned that the Ministry has also projected to nullify 90% import taxes of agricultural and industrial products within ten years.

Similarly, some 7% of goods are also approved to be nullified in the long term and other 3% strategic items exempted

from the list that is believed to give policy space for the given nation framed as per the common framework agreement, the Minister noted.

Thus, the country has approved 90% of commodity tariffs for 6,000 goods to the African Free Trade Zone, he further remarked.

When this trade agreement framework is

effectuated in full swing, it would become world's leading free trade zone that realizes the African Union's Agenda 2063 goal of becoming economically vibrant and influential continent, it was learnt.

It is to be recalled that the leader of the African Union member states has recently endorsed Ethiopia's tariff line poised to exchange goods within the AfCFTA.

Churches express commitment to...

organized a workshop with the All Africa Conference of Churches on the issue of climate change. The workshop aims to work together and share experiences.

All Africa Conference of Churches Representative Tinashe Gumbo (PhD) said at the event that government action alone will not fix this systemic problem. "We must also engage with decision-makers in government and business to bring about positive change on climate. All Africa Conference of Churches believe faith members working together can be a vital ingredient in achieving climate justice."

Developing countries have been particularly affected by the carbon dioxide emissions from developed countries, especially in Africa, and money is needed to fight the climate crisis. Developed countries are not paying the money they promised to pay for the carbon emissions they emit.

So to solve this unfair issue, the governments of African countries should include the voices of religious institutions related to climate injustice in their policies, he said.

The National REDD+ Program Coordinator Yitebtu Moges (PhD) for his part said that the government is open to working with

religious institutions to mitigate climate change. He appreciated the commitment of the Africa Conference of Churches to fight climate injustice.

The EOTC Development and Christian Commission Development Department Deputy Head Geberesilasie Atsibeha told the Ethiopia Press Agency that the Church is doing various works to preserve and improve the culture of cultivating, protecting, caring for, and picking the seeds of the forest.

The EOTC has over 400,000 of hectares land that is covered by forest. The Church

has more than 70,000 monasteries and churches, 50 percent of which are rich in natural resources and contain various indigenous plants.

But recently, society has not been able to solve the problem of food security, so the forests of the monasteries are challenged by expanding the agricultural land and selling firewood to earn income.

Therefore, to solve this problem and to keep the forests protected, works are being done to solve the problems of society by replanting the areas where the forest cover is devastated, Gebresilasie stated.

Opinion

Values and benefits of dialogue

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Dialogue has significant values and benefits in the Ethiopian society. This is expressed in a variety of ways and manners. Dialogue cultivates, fosters and promotes a deeper understanding, appreciation and consideration of different values, beliefs, ideas and experiences. It permits and allows individuals to share and exchange their thoughts, beliefs and feelings. It encourages and promotes compassion and a more inclusive grasp of a variety of ideas and views.

Dialogue is instrumental in conflict resolution among individuals, groups and communities. Engaging in open, clear and honest dialogue is important for reaching a solution in any conflict in Ethiopia. It is critical to engage Ethiopians in a conversation which helps in identifying the main causes of their disagreements. It is instrumental in reaching a common ground and finding mutually inclusive and agreeable solutions to the problems the country is facing. Once these solutions are accepted by the contending individuals, they guarantee peace and harmony that keeps conflicts at bay.

People may build relationships through conversation, discussion and dialogue which are essential for developing, strengthening and building relationships. These factors enable people to join, connect and meet on an individual and emotional level. They foster faith, conviction, respect, and rapport on various issues. Discussions, conversations, and exchange of ideas contribute to learning and growth.

Dialogue stimulates and encourages the exchange of current information and knowledge on critical issues. It offers and provides opportunities for people to gather ideas from each other. In so doing, they gain new insights, and widen their visions and perspectives. Conversation and dialogue contribute to personal empowerment. Experts have reached the conclusion that dialogue contributes to intellectual development. Dialogue contributes immensely to cultural understanding. In the world of globalization, dialogue promotes and facilitates cultural understanding. It contributes to appreciation of the views of others who originate from various cultures in Ethiopia.

It promotes tolerance through reducing misunderstandings among peoples of Ethiopia. It allows individuals from different and diverse backgrounds to share their experiences and traditions. Through exchange of ideas and values, dialogue promotes broadmindedness, acceptance, and lenience. Through dialogue, members of the Ethiopian community may achieve cooperation, partnership, support and teamwork.

Successful, efficient and effective dialogue is a cornerstone for triumphant, glorious

It is important to recognize that the cultural and political situation in Ethiopia can be solved through dialogue provided that there is honesty, integrity, sincerity and candor to serve the Ethiopian people in achieving freedom from poverty, hunger, scarcity and deficiency in the land of plenty

and exultant collaboration and teamwork. It allows for open communication within teams, groups and associations leading to an advanced level of cooperation. It contributes to synergy and the achievement of common goals within communities of Ethiopian friends and associates. This is possible because of enhanced communication skills for engaging in dialogue. These skills help in advancing and refining the communication talent, dexterity and proficiency of individuals. These include active and effective listening, which helps store the required knowledge and information.

Communication skills contribute to the articulation of thoughts clearly and evidently without creating any doubts. These skills help individuals in expressing themselves in a way that is not vague, but easily understood by others during a discussion.

Dialogue stimulates creative thinking during exchange of ideas among individuals and groups. It encourages creativity and innovation by bringing together persons of different perspectives and issues. It creates a stage for inspiring discussion on solving problems. It leads to new solutions to problems arising among individuals and groups.

Exchange of ideas is the first step for human beings in devising relevant approaches to solving problems. Using dialogue is a better alternative for allowing individuals to reflect on their own beliefs, values, and behaviors. This approach helps individuals to check if their beliefs are based on truth, reality and certainty without any prejudice. Though difficult, their values may be checked against social and individual behaviors. Such self-reflection contributes to personal development through time. It helps individuals to become aware of the circumstances they are in.

In a democratic system dialogue makes citizens better equipped to study their society and contribute to social interactions. Dialogue is basic and fundamental to democratic societies. It encourages citizens to express their ideas and opinions freely and without any fear of repercussions. They do engage in political discourse independently with partisan, followers and supporters of their views and beliefs. They collaborate with these groups to participate in decision-making activities and processes. In so doing, they foster a more inclusive and participatory community and society at large.

In short, dialogue has a decisive, vital and crucial role in enhancing understanding among individuals and groups. It plays a role in resolving conflicts among parties that contend for power or authority. Usually, partisan groups in a democratic society do not resort to fights and skirmishes to resolve issues. They have lessons learnt from centuries old partisan wars that what they could not solve by means of force could be resolved by dialogue. It built relationships, knowledge, and growth that contributed to personal and to various aspects of social development.

The culture of dialogue in Ethiopia is rich with diverse heritages that include a tradition of discussion and communication. There are various elements of culture of dialogue in Ethiopia that are reflected in its history and cultural contexts. The country has a strong oral tradition, in which storytelling and communication plays a major role. It transfers cultural values, history, and wisdom from one generation to the next.

The focus on oral communication builds a culture of dialogue within communities and villages. Ethiopia is also known for its cultural diversity. This has been possible because of the existence of various ethnic groups, languages, and traditions that coexisted together. The appreciation and acceptance of diversity has also been an asset for the country. It gives recognition to the importance of dialogue among various ethnic, tribal and cultural groups. Dialogue contributes to a culture of understanding among diverse groups in Ethiopia.

One of the factors that contributed to the dialogue and coexistence of various groups of people in Ethiopia is the religious influence. Religious studies show that religion, particularly Christianity and Islam, has a significant impact on the culture of dialogue in Ethiopia. Religious preachers taught their followers on values such as tolerance and compassion. They also emphasized the values of understanding and encouraging dialogue among their followers.

Also, the elderly persons in communities have created mechanisms for traditional conflict resolution. These mechanisms are often based on the consensus of the community members. They have been instruments of mediation in the Ethiopian

culture. Elders and community leaders are respected members of communities and play a crucial role in facilitating dialogue. They resolve disputes and maintain harmony within Ethiopian communities.

Sociologists have focused on the Ethiopian coffee ceremony, which is a traditional ritual of preparing and serving coffee. It has served as a forum for social activities that encourage dialogue and community bonding. It has served as a stage for people to gather, share personal and communal stories, and engage in an overall discussion.

The Ethiopian culture also emphasizes communal and shared values among people at different stages of the society. This may contribute to a culture that values dialogue and cooperation. Considering the values of dialogue in Ethiopia, researchers are curious to find out the modern challenges the country is facing today.

Despite the positive aspects, Ethiopia has faced political and social challenges. These include ethnic tensions and conflicts in different parts of the country. These tensions are caused by alien forces that intend to divide, weaken and impoverish the country. Such evil strategy allows these forces to freely exploit the natural resources of the country. This strategy also embraces Ethiopians that aspire for grabbing power for embezzling these resources jointly with the alien forces.

Addressing these issues related to conflicts requires open, positive and constructive dialogue at various levels of society. It is important to recognize that the cultural and political situation in Ethiopia can be solved through dialogue provided that there is honesty, integrity, sincerity and candor to serve the Ethiopian people in achieving freedom from poverty, hunger, scarcity and deficiency in the land of plenty.

The primary condition in achieving fruitful dialogue and results is commitment to liberty, equality and fraternity as the French desired to do centuries ago. In the absence of these political commandments and other requirements, dialogue would be politically invalid. In a situation of social conflict, it is confirmed that dialogue among parties to the conflict is critical for maintaining peace, law and order in Ethiopia.

However, there are Ethiopians who lost their lives and properties due to conflicts, clashes, hostilities, battles and skirmishes about which they have no idea. These social crises are caused by political groups who aspire for power, authority and leadership in the country. The burden of these crises has fallen on the impoverished people of Ethiopia. They should not, therefore, be left without reparation for lives and properties they have lost and that should be based on dialogue and peace.

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

Editorial

Honest discussions for durable peace, serenity

Keeping in mind that soliciting a range of inputs from the entire society flowing upward would add value and help come up with viable avenue for lasting peace, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (Ph.D) recently discussed too many issues with a variety of segments of the society drawn from different parts of the country including academicians, religious leaders, opinion leaders, the business community, students, the youth and the likes targeting at indicating ways to restore peace, consolidate government-people ties, rehabilitate the displaced people and the way forward.

Undeniably, planning and executing development feats without durable peace and security is quite unlikely and ridiculous. This priceless communal asset—peace and serenity—has to be well nurtured with a view to helping Ethiopia attain its set targets.

The government of Ethiopia is arduously working to ensure peace and security across the nation in a bid to create a peaceful nation suitable to live and work in. It has also been doing all its best via devising all possible mechanisms that help ensure peace and serenity.

Everyone in Ethiopia is now looking forward to seeing the epoch when dark days will be seen off for good and the nation would be in a position to emancipate itself from the vicious circle of recurrent conflicts and abject poverty.

No doubt, either all the blessings or evil deeds have all the time emanated from the society as nothing could be beyond or out of the sight of citizens of a given nation. Ethiopians have been known for their doable conflict resolution mechanisms and traditional approaches to redress grudges and senses of resentments against one another. Such an age-old mechanism has to be well maintained and widely exercised as well as wholeheartedly followed to amicably deal with the hurdles from which all walks of life has been suffering.

Hence, close talks, heartiest dialog, honest and open discussion that help raise cardinal concerns have to be widely held for beefing up peace, stability and cooperation among citizens thereby helping the nation come out of the trap pronouncing insecurity and mayhem.

The most invaluable thing that needs to be taken into serious account in this regard is that ensuring peace and serenity across the nation should not be left solely to the government, the Ministry of Peace, National Dialog Commission or anybody working on the area; instead it highly demands the combined effort of all.

Therefore, all actors have to continue the active participation in due course of ensuring durable peace in the country. Any question be it governance or other constitutional issue should be dealt with round the table. Recently the Ministry of Peace reiterated commitment to engage in a dialog with any group or individuals on matters of national significance.

If this is so, all efforts exerted at national level could be made feasible and translated into practical actions to make a difference. It helps us unite our purpose and face the main enemy—poverty.

Yes, holding close discussions with every segment of the society helps sort out the root causes of disagreements, raise public awareness about the significance of bridging gaps and disagreements, bolster peace and tranquility in a bid to help the country hit the set target—making poverty history via declaring meaningful economic sovereignty and ensuring lasting peace.

Since the latter is of course an incomparable avenue to head to all roads leading to prosperity, growth and momentous change in all aspects, the government along with the whole society at every corner of the nation had better work towards confidently seizing it.

In a nutshell, the long heaped, accumulated, unknowingly or calculatingly orchestrated mishaps in the country so far would never be cleansed overnight, but addressing problems and disparities in a manner full of civility is the call of the day. That is why it is repeatedly heralded that wider discussions, close talks and nationally held dialogs are immensely presumed to be means to address problems.

Opinion

The unnecessary sacrifice landlocked, developing countries pay to develop their economy

BY ZEKARIAS WOLDEMARIAM

The Memorandum of Understanding that Ethiopia and Somaliland signed on 1 January this year has been one of the top news makers regionally and globally. Among the reasons for the topic hitting the interests of many global media and geopolitical institutions could be the misinterpretation and/or misunderstanding of the nature of the agreement which some entities want it to be.

“much of the discussion is just poorly informed, and not helpful to the Horn of Africa to any of the nations in the Horn of Africa. The problem is the countries are reacting in a very less than informed manner. If they understood physical economic growth, they would understand that Ethiopia needs multiple port access for growing economy” says Lawrence Freeman, the American Political Economic Analyst for Africa.

As Freeman indicated a careful look at both the agreement as well as the current economic growth trend of Ethiopia, a land locked country of about 120 million people, will show vividly why Ethiopia has to seriously look for an access to a sea port with a long term agreement, as well as an option to multiple ports that are modern and of good capacity. “The main thing, from my standpoint as a physical economist is Ethiopia should have a modern port. And, and without a long term agreement, they’re not going to make the investment in a modern board, nobody would.”

The adverse effect of being landlocked for the economic growth of a country is not a new topic in the world. It has been an issue well supported by research conducted by international financial and economic institutions like World Bank (WB).

Several studies and reports indicate that at times of economic crisis, landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) face many complex challenges that are even worse than what the whole world faces. Due to their geographic remoteness, their lack of direct access to the open sea and the high transport and transit costs they face, they are at a significant economic disadvantage compared to the rest of the world. The Euro-Asian region hosts about 1/3 of the world’s landlocked countries, including some of the largest landlocked countries as well as some of those furthest from the open sea.

For instance, a World Bank statement of 2008 indicates that while high prices have hit many countries around the world, landlocked developing countries bear an extra burden. It further elaborated that Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Burundi, and other countries without a port pay more and wait longer for imported oil, food, and other goods.

And they have an equally hard time exporting, with the result that they trade less and grow more slowly than their coastal neighbors.

Being landlocked is a major reason why 16 of the world’s 31 landlocked developing countries are among the poorest in the world, a study by three economists of the Bank shows. Their 2007 study, “The Cost of Being Landlocked: Logistics Costs and Supply Chain Reliability,” says that the condition of roads isn’t the main reason for inefficient and costly transport. Infrastructure improvements

alone won’t solve the problem, they say.

“Many people said for many years that better infrastructure would solve the issue of the cost of being landlocked,” said one of the economists. “But now we know we have to work more and more in coastal countries because the most important problem lies in ports and how to get goods out of them.”

Other problems include border delays, cartels in the trucking industry, multiple clearance processes, and bribe-taking, all of which keep transport costs artificially high.

It can take “twice as long” for imports to exit ports than to actually travel from port to destination. In all, it can take four to six weeks for goods for goods to reach some landlocked countries from coastal countries, the study indicates.

Goods destined for landlocked countries sit longer in ports than domestically bound goods, and they also are subject to “multiple lengthy clearance systems on most corridors.”

“From what we have seen, the uncertainty in ports is extremely high, and it affects the whole rest of the trip,”

Goods bound for Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi spend an average of five days more (25 versus 20 days) in Tanzania’s Dar Es Salaam port than domestically bound goods. The same is true for goods shipped through Mombasa, Kenya, says the study.

Inefficient port processes in Douala, Cameroon, contribute to the delays and high cost of transporting goods to N’Djaména in Chad, 2,000 km from the sea.

The five-week journey over rail and road requires seven documents and suffers from poor and fragmented trucking services, widespread “rent-seeking resulting in many checkpoints,” security problems, and weak customs administration in Chad, according to a 2006 diagnostic trade integration study.

In Africa and Central Asia, goods bound for landlocked countries face at least three “clearance” processes, while coastal countries face only one. The first one is the Port.

The second happens at borders. It usually takes more than 24 hours to cross the Kenya-Uganda border. In Southern Africa, border delays between South Africa and Zimbabwe reached six days in 2003. In Central Asia, trucks can face a delay of three days at the Uzbek border.

A final delay occurs when goods are finally cleared in the capital city in the landlocked country. “Ultimately, transit goods will have gone through three to four clearance processes, while coastal countries face only one,” says the Landlocked Countries study.

Shipping costs are also a key component of food prices, and are “generally far higher” for many low-income countries than for industrialized OECD countries, according to a World Bank paper on rising food prices released during the IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings earlier this month.

The Landlocked Country study finds that uncertainty forces companies to turn to more reliable expensive transport, such as planes, or invest in large inventories—as much as a year’s supply.

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



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Business & Economy

Illegal trade nation's worrisome challenge: What should be done?

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Illegal trade which is growing from time to time and going on various forms is critically affecting the nation's economy. Absence of formal border demarcation with the neighboring countries and inability of control the border properly have created loop holes to the illegal traders. As a result, the nation is losing huge amount of revenue from import and export trades.

According to Musie Mindaye, Director of Trade Relation and Agreement under the Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration, illegal trade in relation with import and export trade is aggravating. He mentioned that thousands of live animals and huge amount of pulses are exported illegally to foreign markets through none regulated border crossing lines.

On the other hand, various industrial products are illegally imported and critically threatening the local industries' market. Therefore, as to him, the problem is worrisome and needs immediate remedial action.

Amin Abdela, a macro economist said that illegal trade has manifested itself in various forms. The nation has lost huge amount of money both through illegal trade and money laundering and it is getting worse from time to time. Only in the last five years, the nation lost 70 billion USD by fraud documents manipulated both in export and import trade. In relation with import and export trade, providing documents which explain less profit and increased expenditure are among the cheating practices. Capital flight is also harming the nation's economy.

As to Amin, cyber businesses are also undergoing without knowledge of the government and because of these and other malpractices; the illegal trade volume is surpassing the legal form of trade. Particularly, bulky amount of commodities are imported and exported through contraband but the arrested illegal goods explained by Ministry of Revenues have very small portion of it.

He further said that the Ministry inspects contraband items in selected check points and focuses only on used closes which are carried by ordinary citizens but ignores contraband goods transported by containers. This implies that how the inspection is conducted arbitrary.

Amin further said that in the past, many worried that if Ethiopia joined the free African Trade and abided by the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) agreement, it will be put in the disadvantageous position because the local industries would be unable to compete with the incoming of excessive products to the market which sell their commodities with cheap price.

But now it is proved that above all illegal trades is a threat to the nation's economy and in the long run, it may make the country run out of industry. From time to time, closing down of the number



Illegal trade costs Ethiopia billions of dollars in lost export revenues

of manufacturing is increasing because they are unable to compete with products excessively availed in the market through illegal trade. In addition to electronic items, basic necessities such as medicines are imported illegally. Hence, the matter is not only an economic issue. Rather, it touches the whole aspect of the society's day to day life.

In the import sector, more goods enter to the country illegally than the legal ones. Therefore, some are coerced to incline towards engaging in illegal trade than the formal one. While the manufacturing sector is struggling to survive due to shortage of hard currency which would be allotted for importation of inputs used for production, industrial products with better quality imported by illegal trade are engulfing the local markets. As a result, the industries are found themselves in a precarious situation.

When local manufacturing faces crises, the impact on the whole economy is not an easy and in the long run, the government might lose huge amount of income which it gets in the form of revenue.

Currently, the capital flight in Ethiopia and in Africa at large is exacerbating and reached to the highest level. The huge gap in the exchange rate of Birr against the Dollar in parallel market proved this. Currently, one Dollar is exchanged by 52 Birr in banks while 115 Birr in the parallel market.

Yohanes Woldegebrel, a lawyer was asked whether the private sector is involved in the illegal trade, its implication and what the solution would be. In his response, he said that illegal trade is not simply an illegal act rather it shows the morale decadence prevailed in the society. Traders who are in low moral level intentionally are creating man made disparity between demand and supply. Some of these traders are legal and by creating gap between demand and supply, they create conducive situation to dump their illegally imported commodities in the market and benefit a lot.

When there is high demand and shortage of

supply, consumers do not bother whether the goods are legally imported or not and just simply purchase it. As a result, more traders involve in illegal business and some government officials also collaborate with them.

The involvement of corrupted officials in such illegal practices aggravates the situation. The involvement of officials on illegal acts; the provision of trade license in corrupted manner; weakening boarder security; distorted tax payment and others critically harms the nation's economy.

It is the government that has the mandate to control and manage immoral acts. Therefore, the institutions must be organized by people with high esteem and free of corruption and with professional integrity. Unless and otherwise the situations reformed and structurally changed, illegality might damage the existing social fabric.

As to Yohannes, unreasonable tariff imposed on commodities also pushes legal traders to involve in illegal trade.

Amin on his part said that the managerial malpractice witnessed in the border areas facilitates illegal trade. "Frankly speaking, the border areas' administrations are heavily indulged in corruption. Hence, resolving the problems should be a priority agenda," he stated.

He further said that the port services that the nation purchases from neighboring countries are vulnerable to corruption and illegal activities. For example, most of the commodities imported through port of Berbera are illegal and very few of them are legal. The absence of peace in the neighboring countries and doing business without trade agreement are responsible for the growing illegality.

He also said that even though there is special status agreement between Ethiopia and Kenya, it is not implemented as intended. So that illegality has become rampant. There is special agreement with Somalia but it is not fully implemented as well and this again, aggravates the situation. As compared to

other countries, boarder administration of Ethiopia is very weak. The other thing that makes the border trade inspection hard is that Ethiopia has vast territory bordering the neighboring countries. Various efforts are exerted to resolve the problem but still unable to reach to the long lasting solutions because mostly the measures are tentative carried out in the form of campaign.

As to Amin, how contraband trade is conducted is known by the officials but due to the rampant corruption prevailed in the government structure, the problem remains untouched. Therefore, resoluteness is essential in the part of the government. He also said that corruption and illegal trade have positive correlative relation and breaking it is very critical.

In order to control illegal trade, utilizing the Information Network Security Administration (INSA's) and Ethio telecom's technology to the maximum level is essential. Illegal traders and money launderers have connection with other bodies locally and outside. Hence, taking measures based on investigation against the matter should be taken as a way out. Had it not been the transportation costly, the nation would have been overwhelmed by excess illegally imported commodities.

Malpractices and immoral activities rampant in check points make the controlling system very weak. Thus, appointing responsible persons by removing the corrupted ones and applying accountability principle is vital. In order to reach on a durable solution, it is essential to make accountable the staffs working in the first check point where the contraband item is found hidden after it passed through the check point.

Illegal traders are well aware of which check points put strong inspection in place. Therefore, when illegally transported commodity is caught, punishing the staffs working in the check point is vital. There are also bribed staffs let the items pass through negotiation. But to resolve the problem commitment on the part of the government is essential.

Art & Culture

Dancing with the wind

Part II

BY YACOB BERHANOU

"Did you ask me where am I going? Well I know nothing, sir... I don't know. I don't know if I could give you sufficient response. I swear in the name of Shembekuma Michael! I am on this journey for about two months without sufficient food, rest, and even sleep. I never slept well since then. How could the nightmare allow me to sleep? People don't dare to offer me a single bite to eat. Do you know what I wish now sir? Travelling... venturing ... Only venturing in accordance to the will of the wind. I want to venture towards the east. I want to forget the whole thing. I want to forget my comrades, the terrible sound of victims of the war, the whole thing as if it has never happened. People didn't dare to come closer to me. They don't wish me to sleep nearer to their residence either. Why do you think that sir? If it is because of this rifle, I will drop it right here and proceed bare handed. I wish to discard my soldier uniform too. Do you know, my lord? It is better to be disdained than feared."

Every sentence, every phrase, every word what he said was like a confession. The sigh of being human, the shaky will. I can see that he is in a subtle process. I didn't want to interfere with his pain. Interference would lead to spoiling his soul's purification process. I just wanted to let him speak to me, befriend me.

We spoke like best friends who have known each other for ages. He told me that he came from the Gojjam Finote-salam area, studied up to fifth grade, and did not pursue it seriously. He spent three years in military duty. For the past two months, he's been on an endless journey after receiving his sacred calling. He spent the night in the barns, stables and slept on lambskins on the floor with the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian students (የቆሎ ተማሪዎች) and shared their alms. It was a charming story to hear; yet all this made no difference.

After a few moments of silence, we exchanged another round of conversation again...

This time I became the initiator,

"As you said, it is better to be disdained than feared. But tell me, how did you dare trust the wind? Wasn't it written in the bible, that 'indeed, all is vanity and grasping for the wind?'"

He replied to me in lower voice.

"I never know what is written, my lord. I was handled a soulful vocation in the midst of a raging war. I swear in the name of Shembekuma Michael, there is no single lie in my confession. I have no idea what has happened that night. I thought I heard a whisper. It drags me out and left me in the middle of nowhere. How? I don't know. I really don't know. Though it wasn't my wish to abandon my comrades, I was obliged to obey. Two months have passed since I surrender to my destiny of following the evanescent traces of the west wind."

"It is true that you have been summoned." I



said in an amused voice.

"Everyone has a vocation to accomplish, even though the initial revealing may not necessarily be as sudden as yours. But it seems that everybody ignores the voice and fire of his soul's inner guide, which resonated and flamed deep in the roots of his being. And you were truly brave to trust and follow the wind. In the mystical teaching of Christianity, they say, 'God made man from soil, wind, fire, and water.' It is in us. It is part of us. You did well to trust the wind. Follow it. But never forget that you can only conquer and alter yourself, not the wind. And then, are you going to follow the wind forever?"

"Ah... I already told you sir. You are the only one with whom I shared my story. My fate isn't in my hands. I am willingly venturing towards the east following every twist and turns of the west wind."

"Huh... You are truly dedicated man! Following the wind must be an indication of one's sincere zeal. And of course as I have told you, you cannot chase or transform the wind, but yourself. It rather entices and immerse you into the reality. When the west wind blows, it starts as a wave from the depths of the sea. I believe the wind is pure, perfect, nourishing and destroyer, the subtle whisper, the breath of the existence. And then there will come a time when it will no longer be necessary to follow or chase the wind. The wind has no physicality to grip and arrest. When you realize it so, inevitably, surrendering will follow. Then afterwards, you will never be your prior self - you will become something greater than yourself, the wind, the holistic nature."

However, following the wind will never be easy. Someday, somewhere, following eddies of the wind you may have to climb to the summits of mountains or descend into the depths of seas. You should become Obedient to the wind until one day it blows you away like the ashes or dust everywhere, and intermingles you with everything and transform you completely."

Suddenly quietness engulfed us. We listened the night as classical music. There was a

hymn in every murmur of the night's wind. Even the occasional sounds of a fox, an owl, a cuckoo, a nightjar or even a hoopoe bird blended with this subtle natural rhythm. All these really made difference.

I asked the stranger if he knew about this mysterious hoopoe bird which sang repeatedly on a tree behind us.

His response was precise...

"Ah... my lord, what else does a soldier know but gunpowder? You know."

I responded to him with a hint of irritation...

"Sorry, but I disagree with you. Rather a soldier is believed to be savvy on many things! Living and dying is hard reality for him, not a choice like most of us. Like a mite that crawls deep into the ground and wears dirt, a soldier becomes intimate with the earth, the soil and the entire nature. A soldier is like the Messiah, who dares to die for others than assassinate or subordinate them. The ultimate intent of a soldier is not to kill, but to rescue. Anyway, this one is called hoopoe bird. It has a distinctive conical beak, its neck is wrinkled, and its wings and tail feathers are black and white brown. It can be found in many places in our country."

According to the verses of the Holy Qur'an, by the order of King Suleiman (Solomon), this hoopoe bird brought a letter of invitation to the Queen of Sheba to abandon worshiping the sun god and accept the path of Allah. This bird is also mentioned in the Book of Leviticus, chapter 11, verse 19 of the Holy Bible."

"Sir, please forgive me, but I have a single question for you. Are you mystic or an erudite?"

"That makes no difference, does it?" I said.

He had no response. He just simply kept quiet and gaze at the scenery. In fact, what response could he deliver other than silence? Now after exchanging many conversations with me, his hoarse voice seemed to get better.

After a while I said to him...

"But let me tell just this one... The acacia tree right behind us is 'Adbar' tree. It is believed that Noah's wife Emete Aykel was buried under this tree. The Qemants tribe deliver scarifies to this spirit consecrated tree twice a year. We are sitting in the place where Aykel Michael church and Emete Aykel are worshiped equally."

"Listen sir, I don't know what was written in the bible. I don't even care about it. Someday I wish I could read it written on the scenery of the entire phenomenon. I just told you that I am not a literate man. I'm not an erudite or a mystic like you. I am rather a destitute. I just follow my instinct - the wind! If you ask me where I am going forth, my response will be simple. I don't know. I really don't know. I simply follow the west wind's will. As of now, I know that I will follow it for perpetuity. I will ignite and illuminate as a vigil light, or as a cultural candle, until I burst and vanish"

This person was really dedicated! He had a clarity of the soul and sincerity for existence. He moves toward nothingness, by following the subtle urge of nature that cannot be expressed in words. I don't know anything sincere more than being willing to be nothing and no one!

Again and again he looks back at the tree. I myself was contemplating Emete Aykel adbar tree like never before. Was Herman Hesse thinking of such trees as Emete Aykel while he wrote the following paragraph?

«Trees have always been for me the most intense preachers. I revere them when they are alive in the forests and groves. And I revere them even more when they stand alone. They are like solitary people. They are like hermits. Who because of some kind of weakness left society, but are like a great, lonesome people, like Beethoven and Nietzsche... nothing is more sacred, more exemplary than a beautiful, strong tree.... Trees are temples. Whoever knows how to talk to them will understand the truth.» (The Seasons of the Soul: The Poetic Guidance and Spiritual Wisdom of Herman Hesse)

Ever since I was a child, I have been amazed by the state of the trees I saw around. They are pure creatures that abundantly embellish vanishing memories of nature's evanescence. We usually mention water as holy: is there anything holier than trees? Trees are steadfast creatures that provide, contribute, shelter, nurture every being and yet expect nothing. As Ethiopian laureate Tsagaye Gebremedhen said, 'when human beings stormed out from the depth of ignorance into consciousness, trees were the first to welcome, shelter, and feed them.' Even today!

Gradually, as man sought a symbol that would carry his spiritual emblem, the closest he found were those sturdy trees. He worshiped them. They became his Adbar.

Trees preserve more stories than all of us. They watch over us all in silence. They listened to the cruel deliberations of mankind under their shadow for thousands of years. They observed human beings cowering and fluttering aimlessly beneath them.

Indepth

Education cannot wait Professor Mohammed Belhocine, AU Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation

Professor Mohammed Belhocine is an Algerian national. Former Head of the Department of Internal Medicine, he held various positions in Algeria, at the Faculty of Medicine and the Ministry of Health, before joining the international civil service in 1997. Former Director of the Division of Non-Communicable Diseases at the WHO Regional Office for Africa (in Harare, then in Brazzaville), he was also WHO Representative in Nigeria and Tanzania. He ended his career as UN System Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Tunisia from 2009 to 2013. From June 2015 to February 2016, at the request of the WHO Regional Director, he returned to duty as WHO Representative in Guinea, playing an active role in providing technical support and expertise to the country's response to the Ebola epidemic. In October 2021, supported by his country, he was elected to the position of Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation within the African Union. Professor Belhocine is the father of three children and has six grandchildren.

ECW: 2024 is the Africa Year of Education. How can African Union Member States work with donors, civil society partners and multilateral organizations to transform and accelerate the delivery of education for girls and boys impacted by armed conflicts, forced displacement and climate-induced disasters in Africa?

Professor Mohammed Belhocine: The AU Theme of the Year 2024 is dedicated to Education, and it presents a crucial opportunity for African Union Member States to collaborate with various stakeholders to enhance education delivery for children affected by conflicts, displacement and climate disasters.

Leveraging existing frameworks like the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25), countries can embark on policy alignment, ensuring the alignment of national education policies, prioritizing inclusive and quality education for all, particularly in crisis-affected areas.

In addition, AU Member States can embark on work with civil society partners, multilateral organizations such as UNICEF, UNESCO, WFP, Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and Education Cannot Wait, and multilateral or bilateral funding partners, to mobilize resources for education programs in conflict zones and areas affected by displacement and climate disasters; and they can advocate for increased attention and investment in education in crisis settings at regional and global forums, while forging partnerships with governments, NGOs, and international agencies to amplify impact and reach. Many examples can be drawn, throughout the continent.

For example, on education delivery for girls and boys impacted by armed conflict, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has established the "Children, Not Soldiers" campaign in collaboration with the United Nations, advocating for the release and reintegration of child soldiers and prioritizing their education and rehabilitation.

In Somalia, GPE has partnered with the government to support the rebuilding of its education system, providing funding for teacher training, school construction and curriculum development in conflict-affected regions.

On displaced children, civil society organizations play a crucial role in engaging communities, advocating for children's rights, and providing education services in hard-to-reach areas. They can work closely with communities to identify needs, mobilize resources and implement education programs tailored to local contexts.

In South Sudan, for instance, organizations like Save the Children and UNICEF have established temporary learning spaces and community-based education programs to reach children affected by conflict and displacement, ensuring continuity of learning in challenging environments.

The Education Cannot Wait (ECW) fund has supported countries like Nigeria in providing education for internally displaced children affected by the Boko Haram insurgency, focusing on building inclusive and resilient education systems. Likewise, in the Western Sahara refugee camp of Tindouf (Algeria) UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR and NGOs are supporting children's education.

On climate change-induced disasters, following the devastating impact of Cyclone Idai in 2019, Mozambique has been working with international partners to rebuild and strengthen its education infrastructure. The intervention includes constructing cyclone-resistant schools and developing early warning systems to protect schools from future disasters. Kenya is implementing a climate change curriculum in primary and secondary schools to educate about climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies.

By leveraging the expertise, resources and collective efforts of African Union member states, donor organizations, civil society partners and multilateral organizations, it's possible to transform and accelerate the delivery of education for children impacted by crises in Africa, ensuring they have access to quality education and opportunities for a brighter future.

AU Member States can foster innovation in education delivery, such as leveraging technology for remote learning and establishing temporary learning spaces in refugee camps and disaster-affected areas; enhance the capacity of education systems to respond effectively to crises, including training teachers and education personnel in trauma-informed pedagogy and psychosocial support; and engage communities, including parents, local leaders and affected populations, in the design and implementation of education programs to ensure relevance and sustainability.

For instance, through Japanese funding, the International Institute of Capacity Building in Africa (UNESCO-IICBA) supports the African Union International Centre for Women and Girls Education (AU-CIEFFA) in two main projects. The first one aims at creating safe, supportive, and resilient learning environments to safeguard children's right to education amid conflict and crises in the Sahel, Central and East Africa with a budget of US\$1,155,000. The second relates to capacity-building of teachers to promote continuous and inclusive access to safe and quality education for girls in west Africa with a budget of US\$3,260,000.

ECW: Approximately 98 million children are out-of-school across sub-Saharan Africa. In areas impacted by armed conflict, forced

displacement, climate change and other protracted crises, girls are especially at risk of dropping out, being forced into child marriage, and being denied their human rights. Why must we redouble investments in girls' education?

Professor Mohammed Belhocine: Redoubling investments in girls' education is imperative, especially in areas affected by armed conflict, displacement and climate crises, considering the Safe Schools Declaration. It is believed that girls in these contexts face heightened risks of dropping out, child marriage and human rights violations. This adds to the fact that even in "normal" times, less girls attend school than boys.

Against this backdrop, the African Union Commission established the African Union International Centre for Girls and Women (AU-CIEFFA), to coordinate the promotion of girls' and women's education in Africa, with a view of achieving their economic, social and cultural empowerment. The Centre works closely with AU Member States and government, civil society, and international partners to keep girls' education as a priority concern. We all know that education is a driver for peace and stability. By ensuring that girls have access to safe and quality education, we can help prevent conflict, promote social cohesion and contribute to long-term peacebuilding efforts which, invariably, will promote gender equality and women's empowerment. It will protect girls from social abuses: child marriage, human trafficking, sexual abuse, child labour and so on. We must redouble investments in girls' education to implement the Safe School Declaration, which has been ratified by 35 AU member States and which reaffirms the commitment to protect education from attack during armed conflict. Redoubling investments in girls' education should include implementing measures outlined in the declaration to ensure safe learning environments for all children, especially girls, in crisis-affected areas. COVID-19 exacerbated those vulnerabilities.

ECW: There is a massive funding gap for education across Africa, particularly for girls and boys impacted by emergencies and protracted crises. Why should donors, the private sector and high-net-worth individuals invest in education in Africa through dedicated funds such as "Education Cannot Wait"?

Professor Mohammed Belhocine: Donors, the private sector and high-net-worth individuals are encouraged to invest in education in Africa, through efficiently dedicated funds, such as Education Cannot Wait.

One of the reasons here should be for long-term stability and peace. We all know that education plays a crucial role in fostering social cohesion, promoting peacebuilding and preventing conflict. By investing in education in Africa, donors can support initiatives that provide safe and inclusive learning environments, promote tolerance and understanding, and empower young people to actively participate in building peaceful and stable societies.

On the other hand, education is a key determinant for economic development. Education is a powerful catalyst for economic growth and poverty reduction. By investing in education, donors can help equip young Africans with the knowledge and skills they need to participate in the workforce,

start businesses, and contribute to their communities' development. This, in turn, can have positive ripple effects on Africa's overall economic prosperity. Experts teach us that the mid-term return on investment in education is one of the highest.

In addition, education is closely intertwined with health outcomes. By investing in education, donors can support initiatives that provide children with essential health education, promote positive health behaviours, and contribute to better health outcomes for individuals and communities. Furthermore, education can also serve as a protective factor against issues such as child marriage, early pregnancy and other harmful practices.

Therefore, investing in education in Africa through dedicated funds such as Education Cannot Wait is not only a moral imperative, but also a strategic opportunity to build a better future for millions of children and youth, unlock the continent's potential, and contribute to global progress and prosperity.

ECW: As seen by droughts in the Sahel, flooding in Libya and East Africa, and other climate-induced disasters, climate change is a major threat to sustainable development across Africa. How can we better connect the dots between climate action and education action to build a more sustainable future for Africa?

Professor Mohammed Belhocine: Connecting climate and education actions is better done within existing African Union's Frameworks, aligned with Agenda 2063, for a more sustainable future in Africa.

One of the steps to take is to implement initiatives to make schools more environmentally sustainable, such as smart water management, incorporating renewable energy sources, promoting waste reduction and recycling, as well as integrating environmental themes into school activities and infrastructure development. This can also be done by engaging local communities in climate education and action through outreach programs, community-based projects, and partnerships with grassroots organizations, fostering a sense of ownership and collective responsibility for climate change resilience and environmental stewardship.

These actions cannot go without providing training and support to educators, policymakers and community leaders on climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience-building strategies, empowering them to lead effective initiatives at the local, regional and national levels. This can also lead to investment in research and innovation to develop context-specific solutions to climate-related challenges in education, leveraging indigenous knowledge and technology to build resilience and promote sustainable development.

Lastly here is the need to foster collaboration between education and environmental ministries, as well as other relevant sectors such as agriculture, energy and water resources, to develop holistic approaches in addressing climate change through education and policy integration. The need to raise awareness about the interconnectedness of climate change and education, calls for increased funding, policy support and international cooperation to address both issues effectively and equitably.

(SOURCE:INTER PRESS SERVICE)

Women in Focus

A nation will remain the land of the free only as long as it is the home of the brave

BY STAFF REPORTER

Throughout history, the role of women within the family, community and society is multilayered. From shouldering household responsibilities to taking care of children and the elderly, from promoting the well-being of their families; to shaping and building a community, women play an integral role in society.

However, the contribution of women was often neglected or less appreciated for various absurd reasons. As a result, many women who have exceptional capabilities and multiple skills were compelled to confine at home merely restricted in home chores. As a result, women's skills and knowledge that have a potential to contribute something important to the world was undermined and was lost.

Fortunately, thanks to the ongoing efforts exerted to address challenges- such as gender-based discrimination, violence, and systemic biases- to ensure the equal benefits of women and enhance women's

See A nation will.. Page 14

Mentioning that women are successfully completing the challenging and tiring commando and airborne training, Colonel Alemayheu said that commando and airborne trainers and staff professionals are still expected to further develop and improve their skills through training



Brigadier General Huluageresh Deres

Law & Politics

Building strong institutions based on laws

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

Ever since modern states have been built their strength and efficiency has always relied on the existence of strong, neutral and efficient institutions. Whenever there were no reliable institutions the treatment of all clients on an equal basis risks existing. If leaders are not checked by effective laws, rules and regulations equal service to all begins to be conditioned and compromised. Every decision of the leader or head of any office relies on their preference or even some would say mood. The leaders tend to be arbitrary unless he or she is checked by the confines of the law. The personal choices of the head affect deeply the clients. This opens the doors wide to corruption and other malpractice.

The efficiency of any state administration or government is weighed against the efficiency and strength of institutions. The existence of strong institutions is a guarantee for effective judiciary, effective government without any allegations of personal and discriminatory treatment among citizens. We have seen that strong democratic states are characterized by effective and reliable institutions. The more these institutions are well known and respected by citizens, the more efficient the government becomes and citizens have trust and confidence in their government.

In weak democratic states, particularly in the less developed countries, there are always doubts about how citizens are treated when they have some business with the state. Many people allege that the exposure to corruption and discriminatory treatment is often high. Complaints are day to day occurrences. The unpredictability of the behaviour of the official leaves the citizen in eternal doubt and approaching the official with gifts and money the citizen hopes to carry out his or her business promptly and positively. If for instance it is about the payment of taxes, the official may find a way of discounting the amount due in exchange for personal financial benefits or advantages. If however the citizen is not ready to have a special relationship with the relevant office or official, the amount to be paid could be unfairly staggering and this clearly damages fair competition in business circles and that reflects badly on the economy.

Preferential treatment of certain business persons as opposed to others means that healthy and fair competition is compromised and the damage to economic growth becomes inevitable. Countries especially developing ones cannot afford to have similar scenarios and it has been found out that such occurrences are highly damaging to growth. The non existence of strong institutions that are governed by clearly visible and understandable laws and directives is a handicap to growth and this means people will continue to lose confidence in government and go their way to resolve their issues with certain offices.

That is why we see throughout the world that the most advanced nations are characterized

by strong institutions. And this reduces to the minimum the personal decision of officials. The private choices of individuals and the bias and prejudices of people vis a vis certain clients. The equal treatment of every citizen in front of the law should be guaranteed so that people have confidence in their government. Whenever the confidence in government is eroded, the efficiency of administration is curtailed and this has a clear influence on the economic performance of the country.

Academics have always insisted that democracy is well characterized by strong and reliable institutions. The existence of a strong and independent judiciary, an efficient and law abiding executive, the carrying out of free and fair elections to choose the peoples representatives in the legislature who in turn brings about elected persons to power, a credible and independent well qualified media all means that people will have confidence and trust in their state institutions and are willing to do as told. There are no gaps between the government and the governed and this is a huge blessing for any country especially for a developing country such as ours which can then embark on a growth trajectory away from internal controversies and disputes over power.

The turnover of personalities in offices does not compromise the efficiency and the good delivery of the institutions who ever may be at the head of the institution. In weak democracies, weak states changes in personalities affect deeply the performance of the institutions. Relying on certain personalities rather than the well organized and efficient institutions is a liability because whenever personalities change the efficiency of the organisation is compromised and citizens are negatively affected. In strong democracies on the other hand, the turnover of staff in the administrative institutions does not affect so much the overall performance of the institutions.

People know what to expect even if the heads of offices or leaders are changed for whatever reasons. Even weak leaders are compensated for in strong institutions with clear directives and manners of executing the activities of the state in general or the specific department in question.

Governments that rely on strong personalities rather than institutions are exposed to discriminatory practices, unfair treatment of certain citizens over others. This is a characteristic of authoritarian states and governments not democracies. In the past decades many African countries have been run by such personalities and the struggle to build strong institutions has been going on. The excessive power exercised by certain personalities has been a sad feature of many African states. That is why we always talk about rampant corruption and inequalities among citizens. The basis of unequal treatment could be political affiliation, ethnic factors as well as social or economic status. When people feel that they have been treated unfairly due to their beliefs or affiliations, their social status including may be their

gender that is where you see the weaknesses of the system, the frailty of institutions.

The issue of transparency and accountability is raised and several questions arise. People tend to lose confidence and trust in the laws and they do not hope that they could be redressed with the wrongs rectified if they bring the case to a court of law demanding that the relevant personalities or officials account for their actions. These officials turn out to have influence on the efficiency of the institutions because of their unfettered power or influence. This is in other words an expression of one form of corrupt practice that affects the state apparatus. In all countries where the boundaries of personal power are not well defined by strong and clearly established institutions, the space for corrupt practice is dangerously big. Well defined and clearly set laws and rules are the only remedy for such wrongs.

Countries such as Ethiopia hence need to work a lot on strengthening democratic institutions such as the judiciary who are free to exercise their duties without being threatened or conditioned by the creation of officials or personalities with some influence. Citizens' confidence on strong and neutral institutions is a must and it should be nourished by clear and applicable laws in independent courts of law.

The flourishing of democratic states relies on strong institutions. When people trust the government that is when going ahead with long term plans becomes realizable and uncertainties wither away. Human beings are always susceptible of changing moods or behaviour but if laws and directives put to run institutions are clearly put in place the personal attitude of any official could be checked before stepping on the legitimate rights of citizens.

Every activity of any official that wields a lot of power must be checked to operate only within the bounds of the law and this is a result of strong institutions with clearly devised mandates. The chances of committing injustices are very narrow and this is a source of great confidence among citizens. There are no irreplaceable officials if the institutions are strong and efficient and taking over on an official or any person of responsibility becomes relatively simple without and gaps and disruptions.

If we agree with the saying that power corrupts, what we need to do is circumvent it within the confines of strong checks and balances in a set of clearly put laws. When some countries say that 'they are a country of laws and not personalities' they mean the supremacy of the law is paramount over any kind of personal attitude. Everybody is equal before the law and every person is accountable for what they do, especially in positions of high responsibility. The guarantee for the continuation of the existence of a state is the existence of strong institutions that always operate freely based on the laws of the state. There is no alternative to this and peace is guaranteed only when there is justice for all based on laws.

The
existence of strong
institutions is a
guarantee for effective
judiciary, effective
government without
any allegations
of personal and
discriminatory
treatment among
citizens

Society

Uniting against a global health threat: TB

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

Kitaw Teklemariam was among those Ethiopians who once suffered severely from tuberculosis (TB) and stigma from the people around him which resulted in his loving wife and daughter leaving him because of the disease.

However, with the help of God and the treatment he received for several months, Kitaw is able to regain his health and now he is supporting other patients who are passing through the same challenge he had experienced.

When Kitaw's health was affected by TB some years ago, he did not expect it to be such a serious disease. For that reason, he was taking traditional medicines that brought him no solution. However, after taking the proper examination at the health center, he realized that he was affected by TB and started taking proper medicines for about six consecutive months which still did not bring him change. When Kitaw consulted medical practitioners about his health situation and the medicines he had been taking for months did not make any progress, he was examined again; the result showed it was a Multi-Drug Resistant TB type that needed further treatment. Thus, he started taking various types of medicines and injections for about 18 months.

Luckily, he regained some of his strength but the medical result still showed a new variety of TB (Extensively Drug Resistant) was developed in his body. For this reason, he started further treatment for the 19 consecutive months in Bishoftu Town and finally he got cured from the disease.

According to Kitaw, besides the actual pain most TB victims are experiencing, the stigma they experience from the people is the hardest to bear. This includes family members, spouses and friends. "Whenever I coughed, those who knew I was a victim of TB did not want to contact me freely. My wife, the mother of my beloved daughter, also left me thinking that I would not have any hope of recovering from the illness."

The psychological, economic and physical challenge incurred by the disease affected not only the TB victims but also the whole family. This challenge is even serious among those TB recovered patients. Seeing this burden, Kitaw and his friends have founded a local NGO- Organic Health Service- to support those people affected by the bacteria and those who are recovered from the disease with major and minor physical injuries that may happen in the medication process.

Using the organization that Kitaw and his friends founded, several TB infected individuals and those who are recovered from the disease but still need psychological treatment and economical support are getting help.

According to Kitaw, besides the financial challenges at the national level, knowledge gap and absence of proper information among the society is one major factor that aggravates the transmission of the diseases.



In this respect, the media, the government and other stakeholders are duty bound in creating awareness among the mass.

TB is world's deadliest infectious disease. Due to the illness, a total of 1.3 million people die every year and 10.6 million people will be infected with TB.

Because of the infectious nature of the disease, one fourth of the world's population is infected with Mycobacterium tuberculosis, which is a species of pathogenic bacteria in the family of Mycobacteriaceae and the causative agent of tuberculosis in humans. Here, in Ethiopia because of lack of awareness about the transmission of the disease, limitation in having proper equipment and medicine coupled with financial constraints to effectively treat the disease, hundreds and thousands of people are affected by the disease.

Presenting challenges and Ethiopia's achievements in the area of TB, Head of National, TB, Leprosy and other Lung Disease within the Ministry of Health Taye Letta said that Ethiopia is among the 30 high TB and TB/HIV burden countries globally. Out of 100,000 people, 126 people will be infected by TB yearly. This indicates that hundreds and thousands of people will be vulnerable to TB. What is more, 21,000 people will die in Ethiopia because of TB.

In a field training, "Training Experience on Healthcare System Modernization and Digitization Program" organized by Addis Ababa University School of Journalism and Communication in collaboration with the U.S Embassy in Addis Ababa, Taye said that 17,500 community based health posts, 3,700 health centers and 353 hospitals are providing services to control and treat TB and leprosy.

Taye also indicated that drug resistant TB (MDR/RR-TB) prevalence is the other challenge facing the society. Out of the total population not less than 2,000 people are expected to be affected by drug resistant TB. "As a means to halt the spread of the disease, the Ministry of Health is working aggressively. USAID, which is one of the main stakeholders in the fight against TB, is supporting Ethiopia's project in various ways.

This includes projects such as Technical support through the implementation Partners (USAID Elimination TB project, GHSC-PSM, DHA) including TB Program supply chain, digitization and others."

What is more, Taye said, the USAID has also financed directly the procurement of GeneXpert Machines which is a molecular diagnostic system, an advanced and versatile platform used for rapid and accurate testing of various infectious diseases.

The issue of TB should be the concern of every individual. Since the disease is transmittable by its nature, no one could boast about his/her health. He/she might contract the disease accidentally. For this very reason, everyone should join hands.

What is more, the contagious nature of the disease has also made the disease more dangerous for it will incur economic challenges for individuals infected by the disease as well as the families living with him/her.

According to Taye, international organizations like USAID in this regard are discharging responsibilities by providing necessary support. But, seeing the magnitude of the disease and its contagious nature, there is still a gap in areas of service provision.

As to him, several strategies and programs implemented by the government have brought positive impact and to decline the rate. This includes the "End TB Strategy" that is targeted to lower transmission and death rate. And the year 2015-2022 has seen a decline in TB mortality rate by 38.4 percent. This number has increased after 2022 because of conflict, war and other related factors.

However, Taye indicated that Ethiopia's effort towards preventing TB cases between 2018-2022 was more than the expected target which was set by the UN High Level Meeting (UN HLM) where leaders have set targets to achieve goals.

Mentioning that Ethiopia's case was in a better position in global standard he added that trends of TB treatment cases were improved between the years 2017-2023. TB treatment cases that were registered 60 percent in 2017 have increased to 92 percent by the year 2023. Four months of treatment coverage of regions for this fiscal year is more than 100 percent.

Regarding the distribution of the disease in states, Taye said, areas in the Sidama, Borena, Guji, Gedeo, South West, Gondar, Afar, Eastern Bale and Western Harerge are areas vulnerable to TB cases. Age group, which is found in the working group, is more vulnerable to TB cases. This is due to their mobility.

In his message, Taye urged the media to give more coverage to TB related issues by producing and disseminating TB awareness programs. He said, absence of proper information concerning TB is one reason for its transformation. This is especially true among the rural community. In this regard, proper informative reporting about the disease creates awareness among the society.

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HU Law Students Win Lex: lead Writing Competition

Two Haramaya University College of Law 5th year LL. B students, Ana Hassen Aliyyi and Ahmed Mohammed Genna, have been chosen as winners of the 2023 Lawyers for Economic Advancement and Development (Lex: lead) Annual Writing Competition on the topic: "How effective have laws protecting children's rights been to reduce poverty and support economic development? How could they be improved?"

Lex: Lead is a US-registered organization comprised of international lawyers that promote economic growth in the world's least developed countries. Lex: lead was founded with financing from the International Bar Association Foundation (IBAF) and is a partner of the World Bank-supported Global Forum on Law, Justice, and Development. Lex: lead's main activity is an annual essay writing competition available to all law students registered at institutions in developing nations.

It provides 500 USD scholarships to the best fifteen essays globally. Essays must be five (5) pages long and be an original, well-articulated article demonstrating a strong comprehension of the problem and providing innovative answers. Hundreds



of essays were submitted internationally by December 31, 2023, with only the top fifteen (15) chosen as finalists by an international panel of judges in March 2024.

Accordingly, Ana and Ahmed won the essay competition and are now awarded as Lex: lead Ambassadors for the 2024 academic year. Besides, Ana Hassen is sponsored by the UK

global legal firm Allen and Overy LLP, while Ahmed Mohammed is sponsored by the US multinational law firm Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner LLP.

More importantly, the selection of these students as winners of the 2023 Lex: lead essay competition, as well as their appointment as Lex: lead Ambassadors, opens the door



to further international summer internship opportunities after graduation. Their hard work, determination, and great analytic writing abilities have earned them these accolades.

HU, especially College of Law students continue to win national and international essay contests. Hence, the university is proud of its students and gratified that they continue to bring a good international reputation to the College of Law and HU.

Source: Haramaya University (HU) Public & International Relations Directorate

A nation will remain the land of the free...

roles in society, remarkable achievements are seen though much more assignments remain undone.

Despite the numerous challenges they face in their strides, these days, several women have proven their potential and competence by registering remarkable achievements in every sector they may engage in. Breaking the invisible barriers that prevent them from, more women are coming to the frontline and appearing to be role models for others -to envision and pursue their own paths

As a result, the visibility of successful women in various fields, such as in the business, politics, science, arts, armed forces among others has become a common trend.

Recently, at a graduation ceremony held at Hurso Contingent Training School for members of the Ethiopian Defense forces who got trained for a peacekeeping mission, the valiance and determination of women in the army was appreciated.

Speaking at the event held in Dire Dawa City Administration, Brigadier General Huluageresh Deres said that the involvement and role of women soldiers in the army is increasing meaningfully and they are carrying out their duties in the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission effectively and remarkably.

In her interview with ENA, Brigadier General Huluageresh said that the participation and effectiveness of women in joining the National Defense Forces and defending the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the

country is increasing significantly.

Further than this, they are contributing substantially in increasing the reputation and the eligibility of the nation in the United Nations peacekeeping mission.

She also stated that the number of members of the female army and leaders who have been prepared for the peacekeeping mission in South Sudan has increased more than ever before.

This, in turn, is demonstrating the growing acceptance and braveness of women in Africa, especially in East Africa, by creating partnership and collaboration between and among countries and peoples to make sure that peace and security prevail.

The graduates will continue representing the nation at the global arena. Being ambassadors of their country, on behalf of their country and their people promote the image of Ethiopia by carrying out their national and institutional duties competently in the areas where they may recruit to maintain peace.

Brigadier General Huluagaresh, who attended the ceremony, also shared her experiences and encouraged the graduating female army members participating in the campaign to fulfill their peacekeeping missions accordingly and achieve better results.

"Following the footsteps of our mothers and grandmothers whose femininity did not restrict them from defending the territorial

integrity of their country and its sovereignty, above all realizing the price they paid, I have joined the army honoring the greatness of my country," said Frehiwot Girma, the other member of the army and preparing to travel to peacekeeping operation.

Frehiwot also confirmed her readiness to perform her duties with greater honor, determination and with a sense of enthusiasm at the peacekeeping operation in a manner taking into account the army's civility and professional humbleness.

Lieutenant Dejyitnu Ayalew also said that being engaged in a peacekeeping mission representing the country and the great Ethiopian defense forces indicates the increasing participation and acceptance of women in the army.

Dejyitnu also said that she will strive to increase the acceptance of the army by effectively carrying out her duties in the peacekeeping operation she is engaged in.

In his discussion with female trainees, trainers and civil servants, Deputy Commander of the Training Center Colonel Alemayheu Chewaka said that involvement of women in the social, political, economic and other issues of the country is increasing from time to time. Women are actively participating in every aspect and in any training or in the conscription zone where they are deployed; the women are doing exemplary deeds, FDRE Defense Force reported.

During the conflict that the country

entered, women were able to overcome the challenges and testified their commitment, dedication and braveness by travelling long distances, enduring the difficult terrains and climatic conditions.

Mentioning that women are successfully completing the challenging and tiring commando and airborne training, Colonel Alemayheu said that commando and airborne trainers and staff professionals are still expected to further develop and improve their skills through training.

Commando and Airborne Training Center Women's Affairs Team Leader Major Tikdem Worku also said that no matter how hard and complicated the military career is, it can be learned from history that Ethiopian women soldiers have fulfilled their mission unwaveringly concurrent to shouldering their manifold responsibilities

In order to sustain this glittering history, female members of the army are discharging their duties in accordance with the institution's guidelines and regulations to be active and competent in all fields, she said.

It was also stated at the graduation ceremony that 17 percent of those who received training to engage in the peacekeeping mission of the United Nations in South Sudan, are women.

The Ethiopian National Defense Forces beyond defending the sovereignty, peace and security of Ethiopia, they have been contributing significantly to peacekeeping activities in Africa and the rest of the world.