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Ethiopia, Switzerland seek to scale up commercial ties

• *President Sahlework to visit Bern*

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopian Foreign Minister Taye Atskeselassie (Amb.) and his Swiss counterpart Ignazio Cassis expressed their respective countries' desire to expedite the bilateral relations particularly in trade, investment, and peace-building areas.

In a joint press conference the parties gave here yesterday, FM Taye noted that it is in the interest of Ethiopia to expand the already-in-good-shape trade and investment relations with Switzerland. "In recent years, the trade and investment cooperation between the two countries has been significantly progressing and Switzerland is the fifth largest destination for Ethiopia's exports. Indeed, the amount of trade is fairly good."

He added, "A growing number of Swiss companies are operating in Ethiopia and we

See Ethiopia, Switzerland .. page 3



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Institute mulls undertaking studies on repatriated artifacts

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – The donation of various historical and cultural artifacts and records from foreign and domestic sources would be a great help to the study of Ethiopia's long history, the Addis Ababa University Institute of Ethiopian Studies said.

The institute recently received various historical and cultural artifacts and records, including the documents of Emperor Haile Selassie I as well as three long-aged photo albums containing more than 1,300 photographs

See Institute mulls .. page 3



Yohannes Chala (MD)

Bureau toiling to make metropolitan medical tourism hub

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA – Apart from making the metropolis health tourism center, efforts are being exerted to improve health service delivery, Addis Ababa Health Bureau announced.

Bureau Head Yohannes Chala (MD) said

See Bureau toiling.. page 3

Somaliland reaffirms resolve to effectuate sea access deal

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

ADDIS ABABA- Somaliland is not just dedicated but unwavering in its commitment to implement the sea access deal it entered with Ethiopia recently, reiterated Mohamed Hussien Jama Rambo, member of Somaliland house of parliament.

In exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, the MP slammed external intervention while vowing that Hargeisa will not bow down to any pressures.

"We are accustomed to pressures from entities that do not appreciate our development. Yet, we resist these pressures, demonstrating our resilience. We honor agreements. Somaliland will not bow down to any pressure."

Commenting on the statements of some entities like the Arab League, he said



that the agreement between Somaliland and Ethiopia does not concern the Arab League, and they should not waste their

time on such issues.

Previously, Somalia objected Somaliland's

See Somaliland .. page 3

Towards augmenting economic growth

Page 6

Energy Diplomacy: Ethiopia's new frontier in regional integration

Page 7

Steady commitment to fully implement Pretoria peace deal

Page 8

News



Forum urges cities to apply advanced management system

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopian cities ought to apply advanced system and technology to solve construction management problems, Ethiopian Cities Cooperation Forum urged.

In an interview with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Forum Director General Andualem Tenaw said that, resolving problems related to construction management, municipal services and infrastructural facilities in cities requires the construction of smart cities through implementing modern technologies.

Andualem, who participated in the 9th Ethiopian Urban Forum that held in Wolaita Sodo, Southern Ethiopia, noted that various researches, reports and guidelines on urban management were presented on the event.

He added the services provided in the cities are not up-to-date and have huge gaps in terms of using the modern construction management that stipulated in the national strategies as a necessary scheme to ensure good governance.

Cities should modernize their service delivery by using a skilled manpower and technology and special emphasis needs to be given to municipalities' services to solve the problem of good governance and use modern working systems based on urban constructions, he pointed out.

“The preparation of the Cities Forum will enable cities to exchange experience with each other those who have similar problems to seek common solutions to their common problems,” he said.

In order to strengthening cooperation, he mentioned that, four cities have inked an agreement to work together.

Ministry optimistic about agri insurance virtues

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – A well-planned and streamlined agricultural insurance scheme is the spring board to ensure resilience and transform Ethiopia's agricultural sector into the next level, the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) said.

MoA Agriculture Investment and Product Marketing Lead Executive Officer Dereje Abebe told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that, the government has been structuring and revising insurance policies at all levels to ensure resilience in the agricultural industry.

The officer also stated that, a well-aligned agricultural insurance scheme would have paramount importance in rescuing any crisis witnessed in the sector since Ethiopia's rain-fed agriculture is vulnerable to natural disasters.

The agricultural insurance system has been launched across the country at a pilot level and the MoA focuses on formulating agricultural frameworks and strengthening the pre-initiated projects.

Also, the ministry is working with international development partners to improve the agriculture insurance penetration and the livelihoods of the farming community.

“Moreover, we have planned to engage in awareness creation programs to forge new



pathways toward a safer, resilient, and productive agricultural system. The Oromia State pilot project, which streamlines stakeholders' inclusive role, would be a spring point for the similar activities that would be held in different parts of the country.”

Dereje further highlighted that, the MoA has given prime attention to maximizing foreign currency earnings, creating more jobs, supporting the farming community among many others.

UNDP-Ethiopia's Resident Representative Samuel Doe on his part said that, insurance risk financing is an ideal and promising initiative that is very much in need in Ethiopia.

Mentioning multiple of challenges that

Ethiopia has been facing, Samuel reaffirmed UNDP's unwavering commitment to support and strengthen the insurance sector towards ensuring resilience.

Lack of viable policies and strategies, awareness and financial related setbacks as well as undeveloped infrastructure and absence of advanced technology are the major bottlenecks that hampered the development of agricultural insurance, he remarked.

It is to be recalled that the MoA has recently launched an insurance risk financing facility to ensure the provision of accessible, affordable, and innovative insurance products for farmers and businesses. Also, the ministry's engagement aims to withstand socio-political and climatic hazards.

MoH pushes for associations' support to achieve universal health coverage

• EPHA holds 35th annual conference

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – The Ministry of Health (MoH) has urged health sector associations to collaborate to ensure universal health coverage and quality services.

The 35th annual Ethiopian Public Health Association (EPHA) scientific and general assembly meeting is being held under the theme “Universal Health coverage.”

Speaking at the occasion, Health State Minister Dereje Duguma (MD) said that, the EPHA widely contributed to improve public health over the past 35 years through effective community advocacy activities and others.

It also immensely helped to the health sector improvement and development by working in collaboration with MoH and partners, he noted.

He mentioned that, EPHA has contributed in developing policy inputs, expanding family planning, conducting researches and studies, performing advocacy works and others.

Still, there is a strong need to maximize health investment towards universal health coverage and quality healthcare services, Dereje said.

Health sector associations like EPHA should play a critical role by bringing new working systems and ideas to the health sector to ensure universal health coverage



and quality services, he added.

In Ethiopia, over 52% of mortality is resulted from non-communicable diseases such as cancer, HIV, blood pressure, kidney, mental health and other related diseases, therefore, the State Minister said that, the special emphasis is needed for this sector to improve quality of services and coverage through mobilizing health associations, partners and other stakeholders.

He appreciated association's effort to address public health crisis following northern Ethiopia conflict in collaboration with partners noting that the support of the association is highly critical to build resilient health system in the future.

For his part, the EPHA President Agonafer Tekalegne (MD) stated that, with more than 9,000 ever-registered members, the association is dedicated to enhancing its intense contributions and substantial roles for health sector development.

It has been engaged on various public health

agendas in close collaboration with different strategic partners including government, civil society organizations, both local and international and private organizations, he stated.

The ongoing public health crisis in the conflict and post conflict affected areas demanded interventions of professional associations more than ever, he said, stressing that the Universal Health coverage is unthinkable unless issues of quality, equity and healthcare financing are addressed in conflict affected areas and beyond.

He called upon government to do its level best to resolve the revealing conflicts surfacing in different parts of the country as this will help to address to responding to public health emergencies.

“We need to exert additional efforts to continuously develop institutional capacity and strengthen members' base at all levels, to the advancement of public health,” Agonafer said.

News



Photo: Gebabo Gebre

Institute mulls...

from German families.

Of the donations from local individuals, there are ancient coins, more than 300 books, photographs, films and other materials, including the documents of Emperor Haile Selassie I.

According to local media reports, the albums were taken by German photographers from 1883 to 1946 and they depict different events and places.

Following the handover of the heritages, Institute Director General Takele Merid (PhD) said that, the heritage donated from Germany is a great resource for researchers as it portrays the history of Italy's invasion of Ethiopia.

The 22 coins donated from different bodies indicated which countries Ethiopia had strong relations and what kind of economy it had, he added.

For a German citizen Jurgen Klein (PhD) who handover the heritage to the institute, the fact that the photographs kept in the archives for long demonstrates the two countries' long-standing and closer relationship.

Klein indicated the photographs portray Ethiopian cultures, tourist attractions, historical places, portraits of leaders, and diplomacy at the time.

Hassen Seid (PhD), one of the donors of heritage, said, "I get the coins when a farmer plows his field in Rassa locality, North Shewa Zone of the Amhara State, when the farmer digs out the clay with his plow and he breaks it, he gets the coins."

The director general further highlighted that, the institution is discharging its duties by conducting research on Ethiopian history, culture and multi-identity.

Bureau toiling...

that, the city administration is undertaking various activities to make health services accessible to citizens and enable the capital becoming medical tourism hub.

"We are working with the Ministry of Health to improve the health service delivery process to make Addis Ababa a health tourism center, based on the direction set in the health sector," he said.

He stated that, construction and expansion of standard hospitals are being done in some sub-cities that had not have such hospitals.

The construction of new health centers is

being undertaken in selected districts to increase the number of health facilities and to expand accessibility of the service, he mentioned.

One of the various activities to make Addis Ababa a health tourism center, according to Yohannes, is the training which is given to trainers and qualified health professionals.

Regarding health insurance, the number of beneficiaries has been increasing through years, he said, adding health insurance coverage has now reached 2.3 million beneficiaries from the 75 thousand that it was

USAID offers over 80 mln USD worth humanitarian assistance to Ethiopia

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDISABABA - USAID has announced over 80 million USD an additional humanitarian assistance to help people affected by the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia.

As to the Press Release issued for *The Ethiopian Herald*, the support came after the visit of USAID Assistant to the Administrator for the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, Sonali Korde to the country.

According to the UN, over 21 million people are estimated to require humanitarian assistance in Ethiopia in 2024 due to the compounding effects of conflict, climate shocks, and insecurity across the country.

This funding is said to support USAID humanitarian partners, providing urgently needed assistance to the most vulnerable communities. Through UN and non-governmental organization partners, this USAID assistance will support agriculture and nutrition activities, as well as gender-based violence prevention and response services.

In response to significant nutrition needs, USAID will treat and prevent acute forms of malnutrition for more than 1.5 million children under five years of age and more than 600,000 pregnant and nursing



mothers this year. With ongoing Fiscal Year 2024 assistance, USAID continues to support food security, health, and other activities, reaching at least 4.5 million people across eight regions of Ethiopia.

The United States remains committed to delivering life-saving aid to those in needs across Ethiopia. While USAID's humanitarian assistance has helped save lives and alleviate suffering of the most vulnerable, the humanitarian needs in Ethiopia are staggering.

As the largest bilateral donor of humanitarian assistance to the country, USAID will continue to call on others to join in delivering desperately needed aid to help save lives, it was stated.

Somaliland...

deals with DP World and the U.S., but the objection did not work. It did not impact how these deals were implemented, he added.

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

Ethiopia, Switzerland...

discussed ways of strengthening the investment inflow. Period consultations have been underway between relevant stakeholders to advance our bilateral cooperation."

Ambassador Taye further revealed Ethiopia's desire to cooperate with the Swiss government on regional issues of mutual interest. "We discussed how Sudan is critical for the region, and agreed that direct consultation between Sudanese warring parties would bring stable peace as Sudan has to be led by its sons."

The minister also stressed the need to wage international support (including

from Switzerland) for Ethiopia's desire to alternative ports and its long-held aspiration to a sovereign access to the sea.

For his part, Swiss Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis said that his country is seeing the way to take commercial relations with Ethiopia to a new height. "Almost 20 Swiss companies including the world-famous Nestle, ABB, and Novartis are operating in Ethiopia's market. Yet, the potential of the economic ties is much bigger than of the existing."

Swiss -based businesses are exporting chemicals and pharmaceutical products to Ethiopia. In turn, local companies are

five years ago.

According to the Head, the city administration is subsidizing health insurance by allocating more than half a billion Birr every year, and covering all the expenses for those who are unable to afford medical treatment.

The works that have been done in the past two years with regard to overcoming obstacles and formulating a better health has enabled the Bureau to boost the participation of senior physicians in the health centers and increment in the level of the assistance of patients, he highlighted.

exporting coffee and some other agricultural products to the European country.

Historically, Ethiopia was a central part of Swiss diplomacy and the latter has been playing an important role in innovation and science [in Ethiopia] since that time. Trade, science, and migration are important issues for both Switzerland and Ethiopia.

Noting the two countries' consensus to reinforce trade relations including the avoidance of double taxation, FM Cassis indicated the implementation of the avoidance of double taxation agreement by Bern.

In multilateral cooperation, the two

countries have been working on migration and peace-related affairs, and Switzerland, as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, could elaborate on topics where decisions [of the UNSC] are affecting Ethiopia.

The minister further pointed out that, Ethiopian President Sahlework Zewde will pay a state visit to Switzerland next month and is scheduled to meet with the Swiss President to discuss peace building cooperation.

The Swiss Foreign Minister will visit Djibouti and Kenya in the next few days, *The Ethiopian Herald* learned.

Opinion

Ethiopia's path to sustainable energy with GERD

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

It is important to note that the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) or Abbay Dam has long been a serious controversial issue among the downstream nations. Notwithstanding the fact that Ethiopia has been ready to get to the bottom of predicaments on the subject of the flagship project, the downstream nations have been giving the cold shoulder to the honest truth time and again.

Since the laying of the cornerstone for the construction of the dam, Ethiopians standing in unison have been playing a huge role for the realization of the colossal project

In actual fact, the calumnious stories and the conspiracies geared towards Ethiopia's monumental project have proved unproductive on account of the coordinated efforts of the people of Ethiopia and the commitment of the federal government. Though the worrywarts have sustained smearing the existing reality on the ground with their usual cooked up stories, the federal government has been working around the clock to turn the dream of Ethiopians into a reality.

It is true that since time immemorial Ethiopians have been working in concert for the development of their motherland in the face of a wide spectrum of challenges. As nothing makes them happier than taking their country to the next level of development, they do not bat an eye to give their all and achieve the desired goal in the shortest possible time. It is evident that they have been time after time demonstrating this honest truth to the wider international community.

The efforts of internal and external challengers to twist Ethiopia's arm and encumber fully the construction of the dam have ended up providing nothing except bringing the people of Ethiopia together against their opponents. Although the flagship project has been accompanied by a considerable amount of scuffles from the downstream nations, the dam has been making progress in the right direction to finale of the tale.

Though Ethiopia's adversaries have been endeavoring to blacken its image with a wide spectrum of layers of conspiracies, they failed to bring about the intended target as they expected.

It is generally acknowledged that since the laying of the cornerstone for the construction of the torchbearer project, Ethiopia has passed through many highs and lows. The whole caboodle was not a low-hanging fruit or a walk in the park. In spite of the fact that Ethiopia's adversaries every so often go to the ends of the earth to put a damper on the construction of the dam with the object of halting the construction of the flagship



project, the project has sustained heading in the right direction and reaching the objective.

In the face of the propaganda of some international print and electronic media outlets campaign against the dam, the game changer project is on the way to the final lap. Despite Ethiopia's opponents know the fact that the country is building a hydroelectric dam that make available regulated water volume to the downstream nations, Sudan and Egypt are not in the position to bring the international community with unvarnished truth into light.

Throughout the years, Ethiopia in various instances has conveyed the fact that the deliberate target of the country is to connect millions of Ethiopians residing in the blackout to the power grid. However, the downstream nations have not been in the position to lend their ears again and again.

Ethiopia's opponents make every possible effort to obstruct the construction of the dam. On top of that, the country's adversaries have not ever dedicated themselves to resolving the delinquent in a peaceful setting except endeavoring around the clock to rub salt in the wound.

Though Ethiopia at different points of time has gone the extra mile to acquaint the GERD issue with the downstream nations, the latter have sustained turning their back on the issue making use of inflammatory language. In point of fact, since the laying of the cornerstone, Ethiopians from all walks of life have been vigorously taking part in the construction of the dam with zeal.

In the current state of affairs, following the consecutive water filling of the dam, Public euphoria has reached high as water filling saw a successful completion at different time periods. This milestone proved naysayers wrong and Ethiopian causes justified.

As things stand at present, the government of Ethiopia has been bending over backward to bring the flagship project which serves as a means of cooperation for the region to a

conclusion. In fact, when the project sees the light of day the dam will connect millions of Ethiopians to the power grid.

In addition to holding negotiations with the downstream nations, creating transparency, and reaching a win-win approach, Ethiopia has been constructing the dam without causing any harm to the downstream nations. Reasoning from this fact, Ethiopians residing at home and abroad and the federal government of Ethiopia deserve huge respect for their unreserved efforts and commitment.

It is worth recalling that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) witnessing GERD's 4th round filling said, "I want to congratulate all Ethiopians on the successful completion of the fourth round filling of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), Africa's largest hydropower plant. This is the outcome of the cooperation of all Ethiopians.

The cooperation we Ethiopians demonstrated in building the dam should be replicated in other national projects. The unity of citizens must be replicated once again in due course of emancipating the nation from poverty and underdevelopment.

There were a lot of challenges. We had been dragged backwards. We had encountered internal challenges and external pressures. We have overcome all these and managed to arrive at this stage. However, we have not yet completed climbing the uphill though we have just arrived at the top of the hill. By completing the fourth round filling successfully, we show to the generation Ethiopia's power to achieve its intended plans."

Other than that regarding the fourth filling of the dam, various government officials expressed their feelings, ideas and thoughts.

"The fourth filling of the GERD is a huge success Ethiopia has registered withstanding diplomatic pressures. The pressure was so immense on Ethiopia since the beginning; the successful completion of the fourth filling has fully reversed the pressure

against Ethiopia," Yaacob Arsano, Associate Professor, GERD Negotiating Team Member and Hydro Politics Researcher said when commenting on the dam.

It is a big diplomatic victory for Ethiopia to complete the water filling according to the plan set. The success is the outcome of the contribution of the Ethiopian people.

Ethiopia has always taken into consideration the mutual benefit of the neighboring downstream countries in its water development and the fourth round filling of the dam without any harm on the downstream countries proved Ethiopia's stance.

The successful completion of the fourth filling of the Abbay Dam is a confirmation of Ethiopia's position not to cause harm to Egypt and Sudan. Ethiopia has once again declared beyond any doubt that the country is only seeking development, after many speculations about the danger of filling in its various stages. The fourth filling of the dam is a critical stage in which Ethiopia confirmed the fact that the country is moving in the right direction. Egypt and Sudan should share the joy with Ethiopia over the success of the fourth filling of the GERD since it has not brought any significant harm so far," Mohammed Al-Arousi, Member of Parliament and Advisor to the Minister of Water and Energy said.

Egypt has never attempted to solve its problem related to Nile peacefully with Ethiopia or any other upper basin countries. Rather it strived to fulfill its interest destabilizing Ethiopia. Since ancient times the issues of Nile and Ethiopia have been means of solutions to the problems of internal politics in Egypt, Tilahun Erduno (PhD. Eng.) in a previous interview with The Ethiopian Herald said.

The same way, today's government of Egypt is politicizing Nile issue and attempting to cover the face of its people by instigating "water war" against Ethiopia. As usual, today Egypt is trying to use Ethiopia and its river as first aid for its internal political disease. It should be noted that Egypt and Sudan experienced no democratic election.

Truly speaking there is no Nile problem as such, the problem they propagate each time is simply a vague problem fabricated by Egyptian officials themselves. Instead of sitting together and play win-win game they always gamble with Herodotus say "that Egypt is the gift of the Nile" and the agreements of colonial periods. They know very well that Ethiopia never dreams to let the Egyptian and the Sudanese people without water, except that it insists for equitable use of water from Nile.

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

Editorial

Opinion

A path to economic freedom

Ethiopia has delivered on a promise of self-financing the Abbay hydro-dam (the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam). The Dam's overall construction has reached 95%. Thirteen years have lapsed since the country rolled up its sleeves to fully fund the 4-billion USD hydro dam from the national coffer and using other innovative models.

The feat remains to be a scalable lesson for ourselves as well as for the entire Africa.

Recent news coming out from Guba Woreda of Benishangul-Gumuz State, site of the Dam's construction, has it that the construction of power stations that consist of 13 Francis turbines would see finalizations well ahead of the end of 2024. Only one percent of concrete filling work is remaining at the main dam and the installation of turbines stands at 78%. Two of the Francis turbines have already been commissioned, with each of them generating 375 megawatts of clean energy.

Though a complex process in terms of financing and managing the project, the courageous decision of constructing the Dam with own finance is a textbook example to the growth trajectory that should be replicated elsewhere in Africa.

The hydroelectric dam is purely a development project. But, to anyone's dismay, creditors and donors alike lacked the guts to support Ethiopia. This is not to downplay the machinations of downstream adversaries in pressuring financiers. In the process, it is important to understand the fact that development that hinges on a third party is far-fetched. The sole responsibility of developing one's country, particularly in Africa, rests on the shoulders of committed people and their governments.

There is a bitter pill that we, Africans, must swallow. Unless we are ready to pay the needed sacrifices to realize projects of critical importance, the abject poverty surrounding our people will continue to linger. Ethiopia, in practice, has set the example of paying dear sacrifices for the good of the society.

For Ethiopians, the Abbay hydro-dam is an achievement that amounts to the Victory of Adwa. The Abbay hydro-dam is a victory over neo-colonialism. The neo-colonialists do not directly snatch the land for it is not possible in the current world order. The characteristic feature of the modern-day hegemony and institutions they control is that they act as the high priests of development but set barricades on economies that are on the right track. They do not help cure the ills, but they make painkillers available to get rid of symptoms.

Credits and donations help tackle critical problems; there is no arguing about this. Ethiopia has built and is building key infrastructure by securing funds from creditors and donors. But, policy freedom will become far-fetched if one completely depends on external financiers. As the saying goes; "There is no free lunch." There are strings attached to the amount of finance accessed from such sources.

The government's commitment compounded by Ethiopians at home and abroad, has brought the Abbay Dam project to a decisive stage. The public has been actively involving in the process by purchasing the GERD bond, contributing money and the like. The volume of the public's contribution has expanded to 18 billion Birr.

The Abby hydro-dam can therefore serve as a launching ground for efforts to achieve economic freedom.

Leaders play big role in conducting successful national dialogue

BY STAFF REPORTER

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) is holding series of dialogues with representatives of people from different regional states as well as religious leaders. During the meetings the Premier and the representatives have raised diverse issues that are burning, timely and need the quick and strong actions of the government.

While the realization of the conversation between the Premier and the people's representatives depends on the commitment of both sides, the effort to hold the dialogue should be appreciated. In addition to addressing the quests that the representatives raised such dialogue can serve as a good step towards holding a successful national dialogues which is highly anticipated to address the decades old problems of the nation.

According to United States Institute of Peace (USIP), National dialogues are becoming an increasingly popular tool for conflict resolution and political transformation. In the past several years, national dialogues have been proposed or carried out in a diverse group of countries and circumstances.

Various tasks have been carried out to involve all concerned parties in the national dialogue and respond to their quests in most of the states of the country. So far, it is believed that important inputs were gathered.

The national dialogue, which is expected to be held in Ethiopia, would incorporate various segments of the society including youth, women, community leaders, government workers, teachers and others. And the commission has prepared criteria for that.

Council of Ethiopian Civil Association, Council of Ethiopian Political Parties, Council of Ethiopian Religious Institutions, Ethiopian Teachers Association and other institutions should be cooperative to make the national dialogue process effective.

Same kind of agendas collection strategy is expected to put in place at federal level. Likewise, various tasks have been carried out to involve Ethiopian Diaspora and Second Generation Diaspora in the national dialogue.

Transforming itself from one stage to the other, the commission begins to collect agendas or talking points. They are now identifying present and accumulated evils that forced people in the country to internal conflicts which results in local displacement, injury and death and after that it would organize a platform to find solutions. The commission is expected to identify the possible issues which lead the

people to endless disagreement, quarrel and mistrust as well as endless conflicts before it organizes discussion forums that would bring solutions.

Though, the commission has made fruitful tasks, the conflicts broke out here and there is a daunting challenge for it to perform its tasks according to the schedule. In order to solve the problems, conflict brewers and/ or others who striving day and night to bring chaos should refrain themselves from such deeds. They instead make themselves ready to provide response for public queries.

The commission has now transforming itself from chapter of identify taking points to selection of participants in the dialogue. Though this is considered as a positive measure, in order to engage in the main chapter i.e. dialogue and solving the problems observed in the country, it requires having the engagement of the society at large and the due support of political parties as well.

The national dialogue would create an opportunity for the people to discourse on its problems. The political parties and others with untold grievance would have a chance to deliberate on their problems and come up with pertinent solutions for the country in general. With no doubt, the dialogue would be a remedy for the disagreement and mental or physical damage. As the solution of the problem is found at the hands of all people, all parties should contribute their share for its success.

By and large, the successful accomplishment of the national dialogue requires to have the due participation and engagement of the society at large. The political group, who takes armed struggle as the only solution, must show their readiness just before the dialogue begins. As they eagerly expect the day that the consultation begins, the people at large should contribute its role for the successful accomplishment of the dialogue.

It is likely that national dialogues will continue to be a prevalent tool in the coming years. As such, they merit further study and consideration. Of particular importance for future analysis is the relationship of national dialogues to other governance processes, including elections and constitution making. In recent national dialogue processes, the interplay between the dialogue and other governance institutions has ranged from mutually reinforcing to ambiguous or even counterproductive. In identifying best practices for the timing of national dialogues vis-à-vis other processes and the relationships between national dialogues and permanent institutions, we will increase the likelihood that a dialogue can achieve meaningful conflict transformation and strengthen existing institutions.

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

Towards augmenting economic growth

BY MENGESHA AMARE

It is well recognized and widely heralded that developed countries have all the time been on the track of prosperity and incessant development following a well defined and productive working culture.

Developing nations comprising the African continent and some parts of the Far East, on the contrary, have shown a sluggish pace of economic growth, development and change despite their abundant resources, tillable land, excessive workforce and inviting ecosystem and biodiversity. Ethiopia is not the exception in this regard as it has lacked nothing but is still struggling with a range of hurdles and bottlenecks that have highly attributable to its slow economic growth and being incapable of defeating poverty for good.

What matters here is the contribution of productive working culture and societal commitment thereby pushing the country steps forward.

Keeping all this fact in mind, *The Ethiopian Herald* approached Woldie Melese, an agro-economist graduated from Haramaye University, to have a piece of information for the sake of substantiating ideas about the significant contribution of good working culture to economic growth and work loving spirit among the general public.

He said, “Undeniably, our country, Ethiopia, is highly endowed with remarkable natural resources, tangible and intangible heritages, mineral resources, fertile land and so forth. However, the rationale behind its being incapable of conquering poverty and scarcity within the shortest time possible is lack of amalgamating what is expected of all walks of life in due course of carrying out activities and discharging responsibilities and timely completing undertakings though not limited to.”

As to him, the working culture of all Ethiopians, though there are exceptions of course, have been through is not that much inviting as too many people have overlooked some sorts of engagements and shown inattention and recklessness in due course of dealing with activities.

The very important thing that needs to be well acknowledged in this regard is that citizens have to be highly engaged in any work no matter what they earn, he said adding as every drop of activity counts and contributes to the national economy when cumulatively calculated.

According to Woldie, Ethiopians have to draw important lessons from many countries which have been recording astonishing economic as well as social dynamic change like China for instance to be a nation of its dreams at the end of the day.

“Work is life. It gives people mental stability and healthy communication. When work or any engagement is accompanied with good working culture, in which citizens can willingly be engrossed, making a difference, individually, in groups, company or organization wise, and even at national level, most definitely, would be easy,” he

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PAYS
OFF**

Promoting good working culture, enhancing firm societal coordination, effectively utilizing the reasonably priced labor ... help the nation meet its desired target at the end of the day-making poverty history

underlined.

As to Woldie, societal coordination, proper policy implementation, meticulous follow up at any level, at very sector office, ranging from menial works to senior spots have to be in a positive position entertain a livable working culture and diligent loom.

According to Woldie, good working culture is not necessarily limited to the attempt to develop a spirit of overlooking work types and choosing jobs, but it is highly tied with not to be willing to effectively rendering services to the general public, citizens of all segments, at each and every action in the world of work.

In principle, and as has been attested from practical actions, economic growth emanates from a multitude of aspects including the working culture what we are discussing here, he said.

He said, “A number of mechanisms have to be devised to help the nation and its people emancipate from the socio-economic problems they have been suffering. Basically, bringing about change and real difference is as simple as managing things under someone’s reach if coordinating forces or human capital is done well, running activities keeping their natural course as effectively as possible is made viable and awareness raising about the significance of time management and work loving spirit is well inculcated in the minds of citizens.”

For example, he said the initiative the ministry of industry commenced earlier called ‘let Ethiopia produce,’ is of paramount importance in boosting the economic growth as it is instrumental in substituting import apart from fostering the move towards promoting homegrown economic trajectory.

As to Woldie, undeniably, revenue can be obtained through coordination, meticulous follow up of activities; relentless support of runners or bodies working for fueling the campaigns like this as well as enhancing good working culture among the entire community.

“Coordinating activities, prioritizing

them, putting them into effect as lawfully and adequately possible and translating promises into practical actions have to be well focused on as any means, be it feasible policies, good working culture or firm coordination, would be made fruitful and help the country and its people bring about meaningful difference in all aspects,” he said.

The very important point that needs to be taken into account in this regard he added is sense of belongingness that matters the most since every wealth of the country belongs to every citizen and would benefit all accordingly.

As to Woldie, the availability of locally produced harvest would be of significantly useful in catalyzing the growth of domestic industries, and it has to be well intertwined with work loving spirit of all walks of life.

He said the secret behind Ethiopia’s being underdevelopment and labeled as a poor country has to be dug out and possible remedy needs to be devised since the country has been through a state of paradoxical circumstances for years: abundantly endowed with innumerable wealth and is regarded as one of the underdeveloped nations in the third world. What a paradox it is!

Frankly speaking, said Woldie, such an antagonistic episode has to be dramatically reversed via improving the working culture of the society, employing the firm commitment of senior officials ranging from the prime minister’s office incorporating line ministries, to companies, be they are private or state owned, organizations, several public offices up to the lower arrangement of the government structure.

The assignment of further strengthening Ethiopia’s economy and lifting its people out of the scarcities and sufferings resulted from high cost of living and other related push or pull factors should not be left only to the governmental bodies like the aforesaid ones, instead it requires the combined effort of all, Woldie underlined.

Collaborations with international partners

and suppliers, he added, have allowed the country in general and many organizations working along this line in particular to adopt advanced production techniques, modern working approach, efficient processes, and the workable working culture they have been utilizing to make a difference.

He said, “True, knowledge transfer, technological adaptation, duplicating the culture of working and the way how to effectively utilizing human capital are the most viable lessons the country has to draw, in fact, and the knowledge exchange between international experts and local professionals would also be of significantly useful in bolstering the overall growth and competitiveness of Ethiopia’s economic sector drivers.”

Advanced nations have garnered the benefit out of resources through dramatically altering the working culture they have been through for years. That is why it is recurrently heralded that good working culture would drive the growth and prosperity wheel quite well.

As to Woldie, the public and private sectors have to provide their workers with significant awareness of the importance of good working culture, customer handling and genuinely serving, exerting efforts towards benefiting the nation at large when everyone is diligently discharge their respective responsibilities.

In a nut shell, identifying the proper location of resources, assigning proper human power to each and every activity, raising awareness of citizens about the irreplaceable role of good working culture for augmenting economic growth needs to be well embarked on thereby helping citizens in particular and the nation at large bring about meaningful change in all aspects.

Besides, promoting good working culture, enhancing firm societal coordination, effectively utilizing the reasonably priced labor and combining resources are the remarkable weapons to change the game and help the nation meet its desired target at the end of the day—making poverty history.

In the Sphere of Diplomacy

Energy Diplomacy: Ethiopia's new frontier in regional integration

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

In many frontiers, Ethiopia has continued to be the linchpin in its region and continent. The country has been spearheading efforts to expedite regional and continental integrations through sovereign and collective infrastructural projects.

And as Mother Nature gifts the country hydro potential abundantly, the country is currently working to unlock its blessings and benefit not only just itself but the entire region.

Ethiopia has started the journey of becoming the powerhouse of Africa, especially the Horn. It is important to remember that Ethiopia has built a number of electric dams including the soon to be inaugurated Abbay Dam. However, the country is doing its level in order to export the generated electric power to the region and neighboring states.

In recent times, the government has started to sell its power to its neighboring nation Kenya in addition to the previously agreements with Sudan and Djibouti. On November 2023, Ethiopia has officially started exporting its power to Kenya. According to reports, the long-awaited power sale to Nairobi came true after Ethiopia conducted a successful test run of electricity supply to Kenya via the 500KV cross-border transmission power line built to link power grids of the two neighbors. The Ethiopian Electric Power (EEP) stated that Ethiopia has completed activities to ensure uninterrupted and reliable transmission of power to Kenya while noting that Kenya will similarly execute and implement pending activities on its part.

The government sets a long-term plan to generate adequate income from its electric power exporting scheme. For instance, Ethiopia, as to reports, plans to earn around \$100 million annually from electricity exports to Kenya. Kenya also signed a 25-year power purchase deal with Ethiopia to import 600 megawatts of electricity from Ethiopia.

The deal, which runs until 2047, between Kenya and Ethiopia is a kind of a deal that approves mutual benefit for both nations. The deal makes Ethiopia Kenya's second biggest source of hydropower.

The report noted, "Kenya has turned towards cheaper sources of electricity in a bid to edge out the expensive electricity from independent power producers and ensure buffers to meet peak demand. Dubbed Ethiopia-Kenya Transmission Interconnection Line, the 1,045km long electricity highway has the capacity to transmit up to 2,000 megawatts. The project is part of the Eastern Africa Power Pool (EAPP), a regional institution established in 2005 to coordinate cross-border power trade



and grid interconnection among nations of the Eastern Africa region."

The report further explained that Ethiopia is exported a cheaper hydro-processed electricity to Sudan and Djibouti in the previous year and earned \$95.4 million from electricity exports to the two countries, according to EEP.

"Ethiopia, has been investing billions of dollars in building hydropower plants in a bid to become the region's leading power exporter. The country is preparing to start selling electricity to Eritrea, South Sudan and Somalia. Addis Ababa has also signed memorandums of understanding with Somaliland, Tanzania and other African countries to supply them electricity," as to the report.

On another report, while paying a visit to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) has signed two agreements with his counterpart on cooperating on aviation and the selling of electric power. Ethiopia has agreed to sell 400 megawatts of energy to Tanzania. As to Ethiopia Electric Power (EEP), Ethiopia hopes to generate revenue worth around 30 billion birr from its electric power selling to domestic and abroad customers in the current fiscal year.

By the same token, in an exclusive interview with a local media, Habtamu Itafa, minister of Water and Energy stated that Ethiopia has earned more than 1 billion USD from electric power export to neighboring countries in 18 months. The revenue was generated during the months up until the end of 2015 Ethiopian fiscal year.

According to him, the performance underscores the nation's burgeoning role as a regional energy powerhouse, catalyzing regional integration. While acknowledging fluctuations, Habtamu highlighted the

growing demand for Ethiopian electricity, with recipient countries witnessing a 15% annual surge.

"We are successfully supplying energy to Sudan, Djibouti, and Kenya, the minister noted, lauding the pivotal interconnection between Ethiopia and Kenya's power grids that extend the possibility of exports as far as South Africa via the East African Power Pool," the minister added.

He further pointed out that "Ethiopia is blessed and conveniently positioned to provide clean, inexpensive electricity without harming the environment, fueling escalating demand."

The minister revealed that the nation has also made significant strides domestically, with 4.5 million customers connected to the grid in the past six months alone. However, challenges persist due to the scattered population with only 52% accessing power at present.

The remaining 48% residing off-grid necessitates a concerted push towards decentralized solutions, the minister said, adding to bridge the gap, the ministry is actively implementing off-grid projects by harnessing solar, wind, biogas, and geothermal energy while promoting clean cooking technologies.

Habtamu disclosed that ambitious initiatives have been underway in Oromia and the Somali regions to leverage solar power until grid connectivity is established in remote localities. As Ethiopia forges ahead in optimizing its diverse energy portfolio, the nation's electricity exports emerge as resounding testament to its pivotal role in fostering regional cooperation, economic development, and sustainable growth through renewable energy leadership.

In fact, Ethiopia has been a major actor in

any activities in Africa and put its finger print on major achievements of the continent. From the time of colonialism to the present day, Ethiopia has been playing the role of protagonist both in the continental and regional issues. Ethiopia has always been introducing new and vital action to the continent and the Horn. It is the focal point in relation to economic, political, and social affairs of the continent.

In good truth, Ethiopia, as the sole nation that was not colonized, did everything to liberate its sister African nations from the shackles of colonialism. The country has also done a notable deed in the realization of the continental organization, the African Union. Ethiopia was and still is operating in the modern fashion to sustain the gained successes of the continent.

The country is still trying to be the voice of Africa in numerous occasions including the call for equal representation in the world's major blocs and high tables. Ethiopia is playing as a catalyst regarding the whole movement for the Africa's permanent representation in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). As the country had done in the time of colonialism to be the voice for the voiceless in many international scenarios, the country is still doing the same in maintaining the benefit of the continent.

Similarly, the nation has been doing everything to ensure the peace and security of the Horn as the country has been providing the necessary provisions to the cause. As the area is very volatile and attracts the attention of many superpower countries across the globe, Ethiopia is still trying to play its role to secure the region's peace. It has also been working to connect the nations of the region through economic, political and social aspects. And, energy has become the new frontier.

Law & Politics

Steady commitment to fully implement Pretoria peace deal

BY EYUEL KIFLU

The African Union (AU) has announced that the parties involved in the northern Ethiopia conflict have reiterated their commitment to implementing the Pretoria Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA). In a first strategic review held on March 11, 2024, the AU highlighted the progress made and identified areas that require further joint efforts to fully implement the agreement. The review was attended by negotiators, both sides' representatives from the federal government and Tigray interim Administration, as well as the United States and the European Union.

During the review, Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the AU Commission (AUC), outlined several key achievements since the signing of the agreement. These include the immediate cessation of hostilities, the handover of heavy and medium weapons, the resumption of essential services, and the reopening of schools and economic activities in most parts of the Tigray region. The commissioner also commended the establishment of the Interim Regional Administration in Tigray and the National Commission for Reintegration, with the AU's support to the working group on transitional justice.

However, the commissioner emphasized that important issues such as political dialogue, transitional justice, and Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) still require urgent attention. He urged the parties to continue collaborating and compromising, underscoring the significance of their commitment to achieving lasting peace in the region. He reiterated the AU's role in supporting Ethiopia-led efforts and expressed readiness to provide further assistance.

The commissioner further emphasized that achieving durable and lasting peace in Tigray not only benefits Ethiopia but also the entire Horn of African region. He urged all stakeholders to remain steadfast as the process reaches a crucial point, highlighting the need to consolidate the gains made thus far. The AU remains determined to support efforts aimed at restoring lasting peace, stability, and development in Tigray.

The G7 countries, along with the European Union delegation, jointly issued a statement following a strategic review conducted in Addis Ababa. They expressed their support for the discussions held to review the implementation of the peace agreement.

The statement emphasized the positive outcomes resulting from the signing of the peace agreement, stating that the sound of bullets has ceased, thereby creating an



environment conducive to the unrestricted provision of humanitarian aid and the resumption of basic services in the region. Additionally, the statement highlighted the importance of establishing an interim administration for the region.

To facilitate a favorable situation going forward, the statement emphasized the need for a budget to facilitate the reintegration of ex-combatants into society, urgent support for war-affected individuals, reconstruction efforts, victim-centered transitional justice, and accountability measures. The statement also assured that the return of internally displaced persons to their villages is both safe and voluntary.

Furthermore, the G7 and the European Union commended the activities of the monitoring group established by the African Union to oversee the agreement. They also called for a resolution of conflicts in the Amhara and Oromia regions through dialogue.

After days of the strategic review Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed engaged in a discussion with representatives from the Tigray regional state. The prime minister acknowledged the successes achieved following the Pretoria peace deal, including the absence of casualties due to gun violence, improved stability in the region, the establishment of interim administrative structures, and the removal of the TPLF name from the list of terrorist organizations. The prime minister also highlighted the provision of substantial financial and material support to Tigray.

Regarding prisoners, Prime Minister Abiy stated that many have been released, and members of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) who were

suspended during the conflict have resumed their duties following the peace pact. He emphasized the government's commitment to facilitating the return of displaced communities to their homes based on the agreement. The prime minister stated that once stability is restored and all displaced persons have returned, a referendum will be held to address the border dispute with the Amhara regional state.

Prime Minister Abiy further encouraged investors who left during the conflict to return, assuring resolution of any outstanding issues. He denounced the politicization of hunger-related matters and reaffirmed the government's support in addressing such challenges. Regarding reports that lands occupied by Eritrea, he mentioned the establishment of a joint committee to assess the situation in collaboration with Tigray representatives. The prime minister emphasized adherence to the Algiers Agreement and pledged to make the findings public.

In his stay with EPA Gebrehiwot Gebre Egzabiher (PhD), Commissioner of Disaster Risk Management of the Tigray Region Interim Administration, noted the relative peace prevailing in most areas of the region following the Pretoria Peace Agreement. He highlighted the cessation of war and the provision of limited humanitarian assistance, particularly related to food and nutrition. He thanked the federal government and other humanitarian organizations for their support in this regard.

He highlighted that humanitarian aid was provided to 15 cities a fortnight ago in regions that lacked support from other partners. Currently, the partners are only able to support 20 percent of their

capacity, but there are plans to increase this support. At present, there is an urgent requirement for food aid for approximately 4.5 million citizens. The commissioner emphasized that around 1.1 million citizens are displaced in various camps and efforts should be made to facilitate their resettlement.

It is recalled that the conflict in northern Ethiopia began in November 2020 when forces loyal to the TPLF launched an attack on federal military bases. In response, the Ethiopian government initiated a military offensive, resulting in widespread violence, displacement of civilians, and the destruction of infrastructure. Also, the war has had biting economic, and political ramifications, triggering national instability and beyond. Accordingly, many innocent people were massacred and raped including women, and children. The conflict also displaced millions of people.

With various internal and external actors throwing their full weight behind the war to impose their interests, the misinformation campaign was intense that it besmirched the image of the country. The barrage of misinformation also triggered unwarranted pressure against the country. Some countries even slapped the country with sanctions including the suspension of the African Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA). So, it is apparently clear that the war cost the country dearly.

However, owing to the resolve of the incumbent, on Nov. 2, 2022, the federal government and TPLF inked an AU-brokered peace deal in Pretoria, South Africa. The accord silenced the guns and turned hostilities to relative normalcy as the ceasefire holds.

Society

Abbay Dam: Symbol of national pride and unity

BY TEWODROS KASSA

The Abbay Hydro Dam project stands as a testament to Ethiopia's ambitious vision for harnessing hydroelectric potential and transforming the nation's energy landscape through the utilization of its water resources. Currently, with active participation from Ethiopians at all levels, the project has reached significant milestones, drawing international attention and sparking diplomatic discussions.

Every Ethiopian from all walks of life has played an irreplaceable role and contributed significantly to reach the Dam project to its current position. And the effective completion of the Dam will have tremendous long-term future implications and benefits for Ethiopia. Not only this, the Dam will have substantial economic, environmental, and social impact which finally led to strengthening economic integration and building robust diplomatic ties with neighboring countries and beyond.

From the very beginning, the dam project was designed and developed with a vision of harnessing the potential of the Abbay River; and bringing prosperity to Ethiopia and its people through generating the much-needed electricity. The Dam aims to provide a stable supply of electricity, reduce poverty, and propel Ethiopia towards becoming a regional powerhouse in energy production. It also holds the promise of enhancing water security for the nation and enabling sustainable flow to the downstream countries.

That is why all Ethiopians from all walks of life have rallied behind the project and started backing the construction of this transformative project in every possible way—be it by contributing financially and resources or through purchasing bonds, sharing expertise and manpower, and fostering a sense of national unity and pride.

Recently, Abbay Dam National Coordination Office Deputy Director Fikirte Tamir said that the construction of the Dam has been executed carefully, responsibly and without interruption. Accordingly, the dam has been transferred from water filling to power generation phase in the last four consecutive years.

According to her, some 95 percent of the construction of the Abbay Dam is completed,



the coordination office said, urging Ethiopians and foreigners of Ethiopian origin to reinforce their support.

The government has given top priority to the project, which would be an engine to the industrialization of the country. The successful execution of the dam has also created a great enthusiasm among the community in replicating such noble achievement in political, economic and social arenas, she said.

“Apart from generating power, the project, which is also Ethiopia's policy landmark, is now on the final stage of completion and becoming a means for the society's social cohesion and common legacy.”

During the briefing, it was indicated that the Dam managed to amass over 42 billion meter cubic water in the past four consecutive water filling phases.

Through holistic participation and support of Ethiopians and foreigners of Ethiopian origin living at home and abroad, the Office has managed to collect over 18.9 billion Birr since the inception of the iconic project, she added.

In this regard, the Office plans to collect 300 million Birr in the 13th year anniversary of the laying of the foundation of the Dam and a total of two billion Birr the current Ethiopian fiscal year. “So far, two turbines have been generating power and others are on the pipeline to produce more.”

“Having graced various income-generating programs including bond week, exhibition, public campaign, and resource mobilization among others, this year's anniversary is slated to be commemorated under the theme: “Together we can.”

Lauding the unwavering commitment and support made for the project, the Deputy Director urged the public to maintain their support for the best finalization of the mega dam.

Accordingly, the Dam has been a monumental undertaking, progressing through various phases with remarkable speed and efficiency. Despite challenges, significant milestones have been reached, bringing the project closer to completion.

In terms of applying the latest technologies, the project showcases cutting-edge technology and engineering feats, with innovative designs and construction techniques pushing the boundaries of what is achievable in the realm of dam construction.

Moreover, as the construction nears completion, attention turns to assessing the environmental and social impact of the Dam. From implementing eco-friendly practices to ensuring sustainability measures, mitigating the Dam's footprint on the ecosystem is essential for long-term environmental stewardship.

On his part, Water and Energy Minister

Habamu Itfa told local media that the national reform has made the Dam successful by bringing it out of the complex construction process.

In particular, he elaborated that the funds raised by Ethiopians for the Dam had been managed by incompetent contractors and the funds embezzled, he revealed.

The Minister pointed out that the improper project management and deliberate malpractice had a negative impact on the overall construction process and that was a sad moment.

The Minister underscored that the project is a major national project that has taught Ethiopians “we can do miracles” when they stand together.

In sum, the Dam project is a monumental project that has been in the making for over a decade. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, which is constructed on the Abbay River in Ethiopia, is set to be the largest hydroelectric power plant in Africa and will have a significant impact on the region's energy security and development.

In addition to its economic benefits, the project is also a source of national pride for Ethiopians. The project represents a symbol of unity and resilience for the country, as it has been built entirely with the active participation of Ethiopian engineers, scientists, and workers.

The active participation of Ethiopians in the construction of the Dam has not only accelerated the project's progress but also fostered a sense of ownership and pride among the local population. By being directly involved in the construction of the Dam, Ethiopians have been able to witness firsthand the impact that the project will have on our country's future. Above all, to realize the successful completion of the Dam, which is a hallmark and an emblem of our unity and identity, we, Ethiopians should further strengthen our support and fulfill our responsibility.

The construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) started in April 2011; and the contract was awarded to Salini Costruttori, an Italian industrial company specializing in construction and civil engineering.

Center conducting...

and fulfill the need for lime among the farmers, he underlined.

On the other hand, the government's introduction of irrigation projects is expanding to significantly boost wheat yields. Negash stated that, by providing a reliable water source for wheat cultivation, these projects mitigate the impact of seasonal droughts, ensuring a consistent supply of water throughout the growing season. These initiatives involve the construction of irrigation canals, reservoirs and dam systems to capture and store water for controlled distribution to farmlands.

The availability of water through irrigation systems offers several advantages for wheat production. For instance, it allows for a more efficient use of water resources, reducing waste and increasing overall water use efficiency.

This is especially crucial in regions where water scarcity is a significant concern, and it facilitates better crop management by enabling farmers to control the request for water, ensuring that crops receive an adequate and timely water supply. It helps to optimize growth, prevent water stress, and minimize the

risk of yield losses due to water shortages, he noted.

Negash further stated that, the summary of irrigation projects reduces the dependence on rainfall as the primary water source. It is particularly important in areas where rainfall patterns are erratic and unreliable. By providing a stable and controlled water supply, irrigation systems offer farmers greater control over their agricultural practices and reduce the vulnerability of wheat production to climatic fluctuations, he said.

He mentioned that, by ensuring that the crops receive sufficient water throughout their growth stages, farmers can expect higher productivity, improved quality, and reduced losses due to drought-induced stress. Additionally, the controlled water supply allows for better nutrient uptake by the plants, leading to healthier crops and enhanced yields.

He also stated the benefits of organizing farmers into clusters and providing them with wise use of modern equipment in cooperation. Through working together and utilizing shared machinery, farmers can maximize

their productivity. The government's delivery of modern equipment further aids in efficient production practices, contributing to improved agricultural outcomes, he added.

As Negash remarked, to explore innovative solutions for improving wheat production, the Kulumsa Research Institution's work serves as a beacon of hope for Ethiopian farmers. With his research and the government's commitment to agricultural advancement, the nation is poised to enhance its wheat productivity, ensure food security, and contribute to the well-being of its citizens.

Collaboration efforts are underway to support and promote these initiatives, with a focus on advancing agricultural output and empowering farmers. Through investing in research and development, encouraging collaboration, and providing necessary resources, Ethiopia aims to strengthen its position as a key player in wheat production in the country, not only in Ethiopia but also across the world.

The Ethiopian government is actively supporting and promoting initiatives that enhance wheat production in the country,

identifying the significance of agriculture and the benefits of ensuring food security, and overcoming the challenges of boosting wheat cultivation.

The Ethiopian government facilitates access to agricultural inputs for farmers, such as quality seeds, fertilizers, and some of the necessary machinery for wheat production. However, government support for farmers is not enough; hence he stressed that the government should provide financial services, like loans, subsidies, and grants, to help farmers obtain pesticides and other chemicals, as well as various trainings for farmers. By easing financial constraints, the government enables farmers to invest in their operations and enhance productivity.

He further stated that, the government will provide training programs and capacity-building initiatives for farmers. These programs equip farmers with the necessary skills and knowledge to implement modern agricultural techniques, use advanced machinery, and adopt sustainable farming practices. Through enhancing farmers capabilities to boost the productivity of wheat production, ensuring food security across the country.

Planet Earth

Center conducting research to assist nationwide wheat productivity

BY FIKADU BELAY

Wheat production in Ethiopia plays a crucial role in the Ethiopian agriculture landscape, contributing significantly to the country's food security and economic development. With its diverse agro ecological landscape and vast agricultural potential, Ethiopia has been striving to enhance its wheat production to meet the growing demands of its population.

However, the wheat production sector in Ethiopia faces numerous obstacles that impact its productivity and potential. Crop diseases, weeds, seasonal droughts, and soil acidity are among the key challenges that farmers encounter, leading to decreased yields and compromised quality. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that combines scientific research, technological advancements, and government support to enhance wheat production practices.

In an offer to tackle the challenges faced by wheat production in Ethiopia, the Kulumsa Agricultural Research Center at Arsi-Bale zone is undertaking problem solving research and studies. Negash Geleta (PhD) who is Coordinator of National Wheat Research Program with the Center says crop diseases, weeds, seasonal droughts, and soil acidity are among the key obstacles faced by wheat farmers.

However, the Coordinator who is a



Negash Geleta (PhD)

prominent researcher in the field and has been diligently studying various factors that contribute to the decrease in wheat yields and production, he remains hopeful that by enhancing agricultural output and productivity, the Ethiopian government can

ensure food security.

He told the Ethiopian Press Agency that the research institution has been focusing on identifying wheat varieties that are resistant to diseases and droughts. Out of the numerous wheat varieties currently

under study, he promotes selecting those that display robust resilience against these challenges.

This research initiative is part of the institute's commitment to providing farmers with access to high-quality wheat seeds, which have benefits for pasta and bread production. He also stated that the initiatives are underway to improve soil health and fertility, optimize irrigation techniques, and strengthen post-production processes to ensure better wheat yields.

In nature, wheat crops needed a colder climate zone for booming, but wheat is currently being cultivated in Ethiopia's lowlands through summer irrigation.

In the highland areas of the country, the level of soil acidity is very high; it is estimated that about 40% of the total arable land in Ethiopia is affected by soil acidity. Of this land area, about 27.7% is moderately acidic, and about 13.2% is strongly acidic. The problem of soil acidity is very severe in the southwestern parts of Ethiopia, which receive high rainfall, according to Ministry of Agriculture data.

Negash emphasized the significance of acidity in the soil for the country, saying that applying lime to the soil and improving the yield of other cash crops, in addition to wheat, would be imperative in ensuring long-term food security. So the Ethiopian government will strive on lime manufacture

See Center conducting .. page 9