



# The Ethiopian Herald

Vol. LXXX 162 17 MARCH 2024 - Megabit 8, 2016

SUNDAY EDITION

Price Birr 10.00



## Int'l community must heed Ethiopia's seaport demand

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

**ADDIS ABABA** - The East African region port deal should be given global emphasis considering its greater significance to the entire Horn of Africa (HoA) region, the former US diplomat said.

Former Assistant Secretary of State for

Africa and currently Texas Tech University Professor Emeritus Tibor Nagy said that Ethiopia's port quest and reached agreements should be supported by the global world as it would have a great potential to spur economic development and safeguard peace and security in the entire region.

The diplomat further remarked that the pact

is also a significant monumental milestone towards addressing security related issues in the neighboring as well as in the Red Sea routes.

He said: "Ethiopia, with close to about 130 million people, is the world's most populous

See Int'l community ... page 3

## Private operators vow to modernize transport, logistics

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** - Private operators expressed commitment to apply a game changing approach to ensure modern transport and logistics service.

Recently, the Ethiopian Maritime Authority (EMA) awarded licenses to three privately-owned operators namely Tikur Abay Transport, Panafric Global PLC and Cosmos S.C.

Panafric Global Logistics CEO, Elizabeth Getahun told The Ethiopian Herald that the private sector involvement would play a pivotal role in ensuring efficient logistics service in the country.

As to her, Panafric will help modernizing and increasing quality of the logics sector to improve customer satisfaction through joining hands with concerned bodies.



Elizabeth Getahun

Apart from saving time and cost, multimodal transport service would help to share experience, technology, and knowledge, she stressed.



Seid Endrie

"We (the Panafric) are proud to receive the award and join in the multimodal transport

See Private operators ... page 4

**AGI** CONSTRUCTING THE FUTURE AFRICA  
Abyssinia Group of Industries

Manufacturer of Rebars, Angles, Channels, Flat Bars & Round Bars. Introducing cut & bend service for rebars.

**Contact & Address**  
Tel: +251 116 63 97 55/ 251 116 63 51 22/25  
Mob.: +251 962 009 072/ +251 949 440 868  
+251 911 45 9790  
E-mail: sales@agiethiopia.com  
4th Floor, Dabi Building, Bole road Addis Ababa Ethiopia

**Medhin Decor**

የተገጣሌ ደንቅ የሰርግ ለላሪክ ከነ ሙሉ የውበት ስራ የተወለደ የምግብ ዝግጅት ከሙሉ ሙስተግግራ ጋር

ለሥርግ ለላሪት ለገንዘብ ለላሪ ለገንዘብ ለላሪ ለገንዘብ ለላሪ

አድራሻ 1ኛ ቦሌ ገብ ኮሚርሻል ጀርባ 2ኛ ከቃሊቲ ማሰልጠኛ ስራ ብሎ ቆርኪና ጣሳ ፋብሪካ ገባ ብሎ

Contact Us 0911222993/ 0911208918

## MInT striving to make digital strategy accessible, inclusive

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

**ADDIS ABABA**—The government is striving to make digital 2025 strategy more accessible, inclusive and attainable, Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MInT) said.

Speaking with *The Ethiopian Herald*, MInT Senior Advisor

See MInT striving ... page 4



## Ethiopia's water projects benefit over six mln citizens each year

**ADDIS ABABA**—Over six million citizens are benefiting each year from the ever expanding water projects since the reform, Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE) announced.

In a presser, MoWE Minister Eng. Habtamu Itefa (PhD) said that the government is doubling water projects each year considering the limited accessibility of potable water.

"Five years ago, the capacity to reach [new beneficiaries] of clean water was limited to two or three

See Ethiopia's ... page 4



Prof. Mesfin Araya

## Nat'l Dialogue in position to implementation

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

**ADDIS ABABA** - Having conducted extensive agenda collection, representatives' identification and other preliminary activities, the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) revealed its procession to the implementation phase.

The ENDC held a consultation forum yesterday with various stakeholders to brief the latter on preliminary activities it has been conducting thus far.

Speaking at the occasion, the ENDC Chief Commissioner Prof. Mesfin Araya stated that the council is at the stage to pass to the critical dialogue that is expected to address the longstanding and contentious issues. The National Dialogue is also expected to create consensus on national agendas among Ethiopians.

To this end, the commission has been conducting the agenda collection, representatives' identification and other preliminary activities which, according to Prof. Mesfin, accompanied by strong public involvement. "The participation of different actors to take the National Dialogue at this implementation phase is immense and worth recognition."

The Chief Commissioner further highlighted that they have been applying check and balance mechanisms to ensure inclusivity during participants' identification and other preliminary activities. Moreover, the commission has made extensive awareness creation programs starting from the public to the Diasporas community and others.

"The ENDC has been pushing armed groups to be part of the dialogue and encouraging them to cease hostilities. The National Dialogue would be truly implemented through give and take approach and in tolerance and in collaboration. The agendas would be addressed based on criteria or different tools."

According to him, the commission has been finalizing agenda collection and district level participants identification in most areas for preliminary discussion. Efforts are also underway to finalize the process within the schedule.

For his part, ENDC Commissioner Ambaye Ogato (PhD) said that the National Dialogue is believed to bring trust among Ethiopians and help them to reach consensus on major agendas. The agenda inputs have been collected in person and email, from discussions and other mechanisms.

The commission proceeds to a critical chapter of conducting the dialogue and it has made every effort to make the process participatory, inclusive and credible, Ambaye emphasized.

## Bureau working to conserve Dandi Lake, benefit local community

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

**ADDIS ABABA**- The Oromia Agriculture Bureau said consolidated basin development works are being done with a focus on protecting Dandi Lake from natural disasters and ensuring the local community's benefits.

Some 136 West Hararghe model farmers shared their experience in watershed development with fellow farmers living near the Dandi Lake in the West Shoa Zone.

Speaking at the occasion, the Bureau Head Getu Gemechu noted that consolidated efforts are underway to protect Dandi Lake from natural hazards and to maximize the local community's benefits from the natural splendor.

By giving special attention to the area around the lake, West Hararghe farmers were present at the place and shared their experiences. The exchange of experience was very fruitful.

Noting the impact of soil erosion on soil acidity and putting pressure on water bodies, Getu indicated strong watershed development activities are underway to protect the lake from natural disasters and ensure large-scale developments around it.

"Various vegetables and fruits will be planted in the terraces and basins built around the lake. The vegetables that will



be planted can be a source of income for the local community besides protecting the natural appearance of the lake and the local ecosystem."

The bureau head also said that beekeeping activities will be done, which is a way to increase the lake's tourism income and extend the tourist's stay. "Farmers used to sow barley only once a year in the lakeside area and if the current development projects can be realized, it will benefit the farmers in doubling the income they get before."

At the state level, Oromia is planning to construct 1.2 million km of terraces in 6,465 watersheds, and so far 1.1 million km of terraces have been constructed.

Watershed development not only increases the production and productivity of the farmers, but also helps to protect water resources and to find areas free of contact for cattle grazing.

Having been created by a volcano, Dandi Lake and the surrounding area are vulnerable to soil erosion, the West Shewa Zone Agriculture Office Head Terfe Ararsa stated. He added, "To develop the area and protect the lake from destruction, strong watershed development is being done."

According to Terfe, the basin works will help to protect the natural beauty of the area and make the shore of the lake more attractive to tourists.

## Medical College graduates 202 health professionals

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

**ADDIS ABABA**- Yekatit 12 Hospital Medical College graduated yesterday 202 medical professionals trained in various health fields for the 7th round.

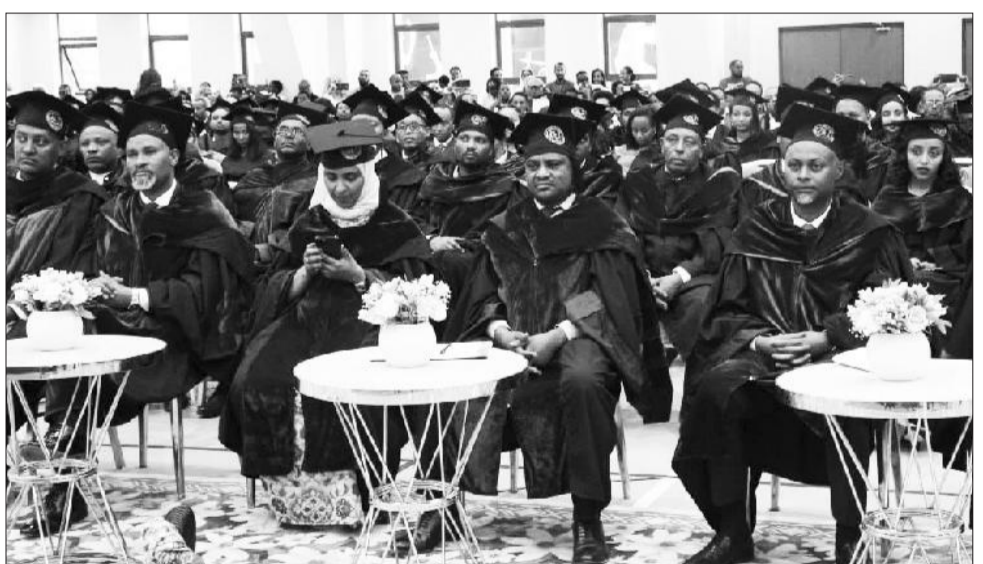
It was indicated during the occasion that, out of the 202 graduates, 65 are medical doctors, 49 specialist doctors and 88 public health professionals.

Congratulating the health professionals, Health State Minister Ayele Teshome (MD) said that the government is doing a commendable job in designing different health policies to make quality health services accessible to all.

To materialize such policies, the role of health professionals, who stand in forefront during the pressing challenges that Ethiopia has faced at various times, is immense, he added.

"A country is made by its people. In order to be successful in all fields including health, citizens' health is crucial for the growth and development of a given country including Ethiopia."

Health services delivery in a country where everything is not fulfilled will be a challenging task; however, a lot is expected from the graduates to turn problems into good opportunities and renew their commitment to serve the public, the state minister



emphasized.

Ayele also called on the graduates to serve their country and their people and professional sincerity.

Addis Ababa Health Bureau Head Yohannes Chala (MD) said for his part that the city administration has been doing extensive work to provide appropriate health services delivery in the metropolis in the reform years.

Consolidated efforts are also underway to make Addis Ababa a health tourism hub, to improve the health professionals' capacity and equip their skills with different programs.

Apart providing medical service, the college

has been hugely engaged in producing problem-solving professionals; Yekatit 12 Hospital Medical College General Provost Elias Tewabe (MD) stated.

Elias acknowledged the Addis Ababa City Administration, the City Administration Health Bureau and the Ministry of Health for their relentless support to the college's engagement in producing competent health professionals.

Having begun offering health education some 13 years ago, the Yekatit 12 Hospital Medical College is teaching up to 1500 students every year from undergraduate to sub-specialty levels.

# Editorial

## Representatives getting complaints off their chest for solutions

Peace and development feed on each other.

The absence of peace poses logjams on a development vehicle of a nation that is aspiring to break away from poverty at the same time striving to spur the nation's march towards affluence. Clashes that surface here and there and time and again along ethnic, religious or political lines in a given nation result in the laying waste of resources, time and manpower essential to spearhead development. They dampen the mood of citizens to embrace development roadmaps wholeheartedly.

On the flipside, if the perks of development are in short supply or across-the-board development is nowhere in sight the road towards a democratic nation will certainly be lopsided creating a reason for resentment which could ultimately invite conflicts. Development could warrant affluence or prosperity that has a potential to ensure peace.

Hence, checking the two ingredients of nation building go in tandem must top a nation's vision.

Accordingly, therefore ironing out differences through brainstorming and reaching on consensus immensely helps achieve the required balance between the aforementioned key ingredients for nation building.

Whenever when we think of ways forward on a vowed development avenue, it must be taking into account burying the hatchet. Even if it is difficult to forget wounds inflicted in the past, we must learn to stop licking wounds or forget them.

Ethiopia is a nation that comprises a broad array of ethnic groups and different religions. Though its citizens are marked for their time-old chemistry and resilience, it must not be strange if conflicts erupt for some undercurrent factors. There could be internal and external reasons that beg for addressing task.

The country has its home-grown culture of resolving conflicts. Harnessing such viable assets and drawing lessons from countries, which faced such challenges to get the hurdles behind their backs through discussion and forgiveness, is essential. History teaches us that the presence of big nations that fought for over hundred years before attaining amicability. Similar trends were witnessed in the unification history of nations.

It is out of the aforementioned general strategy the National Dialogue Commission, in which hope of better days is vested on by citizens, is born. It is bracing up to troubleshoot the problems that threaten to rock Ethiopia. The sooner the commission starts the ball rolling the better.

In a related mindset, recently, the prime minister is holding an open and free discussion with a cross-section of the society pursuant of solutions to fracas and dissensions that are stirring unrest in some pockets of the country. Representatives from the north, south, southwest part of Ethiopia and religious leaders have discussed with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) getting grievances off their chests. The discussions that are believed to mellow objections and answer some concerns are believed to pave ways and catalyze the national dialogue.

Current day Ethiopia that is tackling flagship projects ill afford to let its developmental thrust suffer setbacks for want of peace. Mindful of this fact, we Ethiopians must keep our peace as the apple of our eyes and also, we must all-out back mega projects aiming at dragging the country out of the quagmire of poverty. Top government officials must also head the heartbeat of citizens unstintingly.

Closing ranks and with convictions as we Ethiopians emerged victorious on different fronts, let us show commitment not to nurse a grudge and to water our development tree.

# Opinion

## The need to avert the harms of digital political funding

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Digital fundraising is an ongoing process to start with online outreach techniques using websites, emails, and social media. After donors have made their first donation, you can create an automatic response where your organization stewards their gift and moves the donor in the direction of your choosing.

Digital fundraising helps to consistently drive more donations by broadening your online presence and converting more people to become donors. And, when you prioritize giving these prospects a great online donation experience, you'll be able to get more donations online.

Addressing threats from political online fund raising and financial insecurity in Ethiopia requires a multi-faceted approach that involves strengthening digital infrastructure, enhancing cybersecurity measures, promoting financial literacy, and implementing robust regulatory frameworks to safeguard individuals' financial well-being in the digital age. Collaboration between government agencies, financial institutions, technology providers, and civil society organizations is essential to address these challenges effectively and promote inclusive and secure digital financial ecosystems.

The total dependence of so called armed movements in the northern part of the country on online fund raising is a threat to their own desires as they can exist and function as long as funds are siphoned from abroad. This gives an ample opportunity for those who are opposed to peaceful development of the country by giving them a ground to meddle into the internal affairs of the country.

Attempting to destabilize Ethiopia through political fund raising is the last ditch for opponents of the unity of the people of Ethiopia to try their best in attempting to take power from elected leadership of the country by the barrel of a gun.

Political fund raising by the proponents of extremists and narrow nationalists is never free from financial fraud in Ethiopia, like in many other countries, poses significant challenges to individuals, businesses, and the economy as a whole.

Various public and private banks in Ethiopia have already been warning the public against identity theft involves the unauthorized use of another person's personal information, such as their name, social security number, or bank account details, to commit fraudulent activities, including opening accounts, making purchases, or accessing financial services

Payment card fraud occurs when criminals use stolen or counterfeit credit or debit card information to make unauthorized transactions, withdraw cash, or conduct fraudulent online purchases.

Phishing scams involve the use of deceptive emails, text messages, or phone calls to trick individuals into disclosing sensitive financial



information, such as login credentials, passwords, or account numbers. Fraudsters often impersonate legitimate organizations or financial institutions to deceive victims and steal their personal data.

Investment scams target unsuspecting individuals with promises of high returns or lucrative investment opportunities. These scams often involve Ponzi schemes, pyramid schemes, or fraudulent investment schemes that lure victims into investing money with false or nonexistent ventures

Advance fee fraud, also known as "419 scams" or "Nigerian scams," involves the solicitation of upfront payments or fees from victims in exchange for promised rewards, prizes, or financial benefits that never materialize.

Forgery and counterfeiting involve the creation or alteration of documents, checks, currency, or financial instruments with the intent to deceive others and unlawfully obtain money or assets.

Employee fraud occurs when individuals within organizations misuse their positions or access to financial resources to embezzle funds, manipulate accounting records, or engage in other fraudulent activities for personal gain.

Addressing financial fraud in Ethiopia requires a comprehensive approach involving collaboration between government agencies, law enforcement authorities, financial institutions, and the private sector. Strategies to combat financial fraud may include:

Implementing robust regulatory frameworks and enforcement mechanisms to deter fraudulent activities and hold perpetrators accountable.

Enhancing cybersecurity measures and fraud detection systems to safeguard financial transactions and protect individuals' personal information.

Raising public awareness about common types of financial fraud, red flags, and prevention strategies through education campaigns, workshops, and community outreach initiatives.

Strengthening collaboration and information-sharing networks among stakeholders to identify emerging fraud trends, share best practices, and coordinate response efforts effectively.

By implementing proactive measures and promoting a culture of vigilance and accountability, Ethiopia can mitigate the impact of politically motivated fund raising, the impact of financial fraud and protect the integrity of its financial system.

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



## The Ethiopian Herald

Established in 1943

Published daily except Mondays  
By The Ethiopian Press Agency

### Office of the CEO

Tel. 011-126-42-22  
Fax. 251-011-156-98-62  
email- epa@press.et

### Advertisement and Dist. Department

email: etpresspromotion@gmail.com  
Tel. 011-156-98-73/011-811-13-15  
Telegram :- 0976084707 - press  
Editor-in-Chief: Worku Belachew  
email- workubelachew@press.et  
Address- Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-city  
Woreda - 05, House No----  
Tel- +251 111 26 41 98

Managing Editor: Wakuman Kudama  
Email: wakuma220@gmail.com

### Deputy Editors-in-Chief:

Alem Hailu  
Elizabeth Mengistu  
Zekarias Woldemariam  
Desta Geberehiwot  
Daniel Beyene

Website: www.press.et  
email: ethiopianherald@press.et  
Fb//Ethiopian Press Agency/  
The Ethiopian Herald

## African leadership magazine honors Addis mayor for profound leadership

**ADDIS ABABA (ENA)** - The UK-based African Leadership Magazine has honored the Mayor of Addis Ababa City Administration Adanech Abiebie for the profound impact of her leadership on the city and the broader Ethiopian context.

Adanech received this 12th African Leadership Magazine (ALM) Female Leader of the Year Award last night. Similarly, Commissioner of Customs Debele Kabeta was also honored for his effective leadership contribution.

According to the organizers, the award given to the mayor is recognition for her remarkable accomplishments as the first woman to assume the mayor position in Addis Ababa since 1910.

Most importantly, Adanech has been awarded for her achievement in combating corruption, and derives substantial reforms in Ethiopia.

It is also an acknowledgement of the Mayor's contribution to good governance, transparency and resilience in the face of adversity as well as the profound impact of her leadership on Addis Ababa and the broader Ethiopian context.

Receiving the award from former President of Tanzania Jakaya Kikwete, Adanech said: "we



African leaders need to join our hands to bring the best future for our generation."

Addressing the occasion, Minister of Revenues Aynalem Nigussie on her part said that honoring the most successful persons is inspiring for the new generation who aspire to success.

"As we honor the most successful persons of the year, we are not only celebrating their individual achievement but also recognize them as a beacon

of inspiration," she noted.

Similarly, Chairman of African Leadership Organization and Publisher of African Leadership Magazine Ken Giami noted that recognizing successful persons is a crucial platform as they are the architect of the continent's progress.

As we celebrate excellence, vision and transformative leadership across our beloved continent, this annual event has become

instrumental to recognize successful individuals, the chairman further elaborated.

The 12<sup>th</sup> African Persons of the Year Awards 2023 includes former President of Tanzania Jakaya Kikwete, Justice Martha Koome Chief Justice of Kenya, Minister for Health and Wellness of Mauritius Kailesh Jagutpal, and other notable political and business leaders from Africa.

The African Leadership Persons of the Year, 2024 ceremony held with the theme "Building Resilient African Economies".

The African Leadership Magazine Persons of the Year Ceremony is a flagship annual event of the magazine, which has been held consecutively over the past 12 years, convening policymakers, private sector leaders, civil society leaders, thought leaders and all stakeholders from across Africa and the rest of the world to discuss issues bothering on Africa's socio-economic growth and development.

The event has also become a prestigious platform for honoring people-centered leadership and Africans who are pursuing a pan-African agenda in their chosen fields of endeavor, it was learned.

## Int'l community must heed demand...

landlocked nation has long been struggling for access to holding ports."

Besides Eritrea and Djibouti, he said that the country (Ethiopia) also borders four other coastal polities which include Sudan, Kenya, Somalia, and Somaliland. Unfortunately, it has long been depended on Djibouti as its single port with one road and railroad to move imports and exports.

He also indicated that the proposed port deal between Ethiopia and Somaliland is still at the aspirational Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) stage with many details to be defined, the general framework will benefit both.

"If the project is realized, it would have far-reaching security and economic benefits," he emphasized.

Moreover, he illustrated that the presence of a professional Ethiopian navy to the Red Sea would improve stability in a critically important waterway jeopardized by piracy and other disruptions.

In a similar vein, some other coastal countries would benefit economically if more shipping transits their water way, he asserted.

The diplomat expressed optimism on diversifying ports and an efficient transit corridor that would be a significant economic boost to the region and offer additional ways to bring relief supplies into countries that frequently suffer from humanitarian disasters.

## Private operators vow...

system certified by the Ethiopian Maritime Authority. It is taking huge responsibility to put endeavor in modernizing the logistic system through closing infrastructure gap and online service limitations with combined effort," she added.

Elizabeth further stated that her company has ties with foreign institutions which

helps to boost business intelligence and coordination in the sector.

Tikur Abay Transport and Logistics CEO, Seid Endrie said that his institution has over 30 years of experience in the field.

Seid added "We have adequate skilled human power, machines, and structure to facilitate the logistics service. The company

provides shipping, forwarding and terminal services. For instance, the company has 700 vehicles to run the business."

He underscored that the multimodal system will play a pivotal role in reducing high cost of living, ensuring competitiveness, and bringing significant impact to the country's development.

## MInT striving...

Abiyot Bayu(PhD)stated that building digital ecosystem is one of the major areas given special priority in the digital 2025 strategy.

Despite the promising implementation phase, he said that the number of people that are engaged in digital system is limited given the total population.

Mentioning inaccessibility of digital infrastructure and lack of adequate digital knowledge, Abiyot indicated that applying digital skilling strategy is crucial to curb these major challenges.

As part of the digital skilling strategy, the government has been undertaking activities to sensitize students, employees and those who are out of both schools and jobs through implementing various strategies.

While the Ministry of Innovation is closely working with the Ministry of Education in implementing the national digital skill framework, other concerned institutions have

also already started supporting startups and workers, he noted.

However, he underlined that addressing those members of the community who are out of school and job is a bit challenging and MInT is striving to engage them using various means.

Despite the challenges, the implementation of digital Ethiopia 2025 is at promising stage, he said.

One of such indicators, as to him, is the building of huge digital infrastructure which led the increase in digital payment, telecom infrastructure (two telecom operators), and the expansion of E-commerce.

Data and internet users of Ethio-telecom have reached 36million. Digital payment has reached over 30,000 while 40 e-commerce digital platforms have been made available, he added.

Similarly, Abiyot stated majority of public

services such as public procurement, trade licensing, revenue and tax collection services are being delivered through digital platforms.

On the other hand, the Advisor emphasized that the more digitalization is expanded, it comes with costs. Thus, addressing its side effects like disinformation, cyber-attacks, defamation, among others is vital.

Hence, besides sensitizing the society, ensuring the proper implementation of computer crime and other related laws is also essential. Given the number of total population, those who are engaged in digital platforms are very limited, thus it needs huge financial investment.

He further highlighted that apart from engaging majority of the community and making the digital system more inclusive, MInT is performing various activities to embrace all societies to benefit from digital economy.

## Ethiopia's water...

million in a year. Now, we have reached at the capacity of benefiting about 6.2 million people per year,"he said.

For him, the government endeavor is to resolve the paradox between the abundant resources and limited potable water supply.

The government is expanding pure water supply by improving its project executing

performance and cooperating with partners including NGOs, he emphasized.

Country's water development projects have seen remarkable progress since the last five years. "The water development is not relied only on building new projects, but we are also restoring damaged infrastructures too," Habtamu noted.

In spite of the progress, the number of people in need of access to clear water is still high, he said, adding that ten millions of citizens are demanding clean water in urban areas alone.

Considering this demand, he stated the Ministry is coordinating all concerned public and private sectors to build water

projects.

"Potable water development projects are among top priority of the government."

He further said that hydro-electric and irrigation dams, which are also part of water development projects, are being constructed with better performance than that has been experienced before the reform.

# Opinion

## Effects of credit rating on Ethiopia's economy

BY GETACHEW MINAS

A credit rating is a financial evaluation and appraisal of the creditworthiness of an individual, business firm, or government enterprise. It is a numerical and statistical depiction with an illustration of the creditworthiness of the enterprises. It indicates the probability that they will be in a position to pay back the money they borrowed. In other words, they fulfill their financial obligations on time. Credit rating agencies such as Standard & Poor's, Fitch, or Moody's assign rates for credit ratings. The credit rating is communicated through a letter that reveals the risk associated with lending money to the entity or borrowing country.

Higher credit ratings show lower credit risk, suggesting a higher likelihood of timely repayment. On the other hand, lower ratings imply higher risk and a greater possibility of default. Credit rating agencies appraise various factors when deciding on a credit rating, including the financial stability of the borrower, its history of payment, debt levels, and general creditworthiness. Such ratings are widely applied by investors, lenders, and financial institutions to decide about lending money. These ratings are also used when issuing bonds, or investing in financial instruments.

Credit rating plays a crucial role in the economic development of developing countries, including Ethiopia. It influences various aspects of their financial health. It has some potential effects on these countries in relation to their access to capital. A higher credit rating normally makes it easier for a country to have access to international capital markets.

Financial investors are more interested in lending money to countries with favorable credit ratings. They may also offer those loans at more favorable interest rates. Countries with higher credit ratings are generally entitled to lower borrowing costs. This means that they can issue bonds and other debt instruments at lower interest rates, thereby reducing the cost of debt servicing. Such a record also entitles them to rounds of borrowing money from the international capital markets. In the past, Ethiopia used to enjoy borrowing money at reduced cost or paying lower interest rates due to favorable credit rating.

A favorable credit rating can attract foreign investors and this attracts foreign direct investment (FDI) into the country. Investors are more likely to put their money into countries with stable and positive economic outlooks. They avoid investing in countries where there are rampant social unrest, strife, conflict, disturbance and war. These situations impede economic improvement, including currency stability. A favorable credit rating may contribute to the stability of the currency of a country. It builds confidence in the economic policy makers of a country. This reduces the chance of depreciation of the currency of a country.

Moreover, a higher credit rating provides the chance for governments to finance their budgetary needs more efficiently and effectively. It allows for flexibility in terms of spending on economic infrastructure, including roads, dams, irrigation canals, and storage facilities. It also provides resources for implementing social programs and project including health, education and training of the youth. Countries with higher credit ratings may also undertake other developmental projects.

Higher credit rating may boost economic confidence among investors, businesses, and consumers in all sectors of the economy. This confidence can lead to increased economic activity, job creation, and improved living standards. However, currently investors may not have such confidence in Ethiopia due to its economic instability caused by social conflicts and war. They do not seem to have credible policy that applies to all sectors of the economy leading to low credit worthiness of the country.

Maintaining a good credit rating indicates to the international markets that the country is committed to sound economic policies. Such credibility may build trust in the government's ability to manage its financial responsibly. On the other hand, a lower credit rating may have a negative and opposite effect, leading to higher costs of borrowing. It also leads to reduced access to capital that discourages further investment. Low credit rating reduces confidence of investors in the economy. It is, therefore, important for countries to manage their fiscal policies effectively.

They should also address structural economic issues such as deficit that implies that borrowing becomes increasingly unsustainable or expensive. They may also implement reforms to maintain or improve their credit ratings through time. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) may provide financial and technical assistance to member countries. They require austerity policies and programs to be implemented by governments with heavy credits. These governments have to collaborate with the financial institutions in meeting their requirements. They do require the governments to reduce budget deficits and stabilize the economy.

Austerity measures normally involve reducing government spending on purchase of luxury goods that contribute nothing to economic growth. They also require the government to increase taxes and raise its revenues. Of course, the implementation of structural reforms is also an issue. Both the IMF and the WB may advise and recommend austerity measures as necessary conditions for financial assistance to countries, including Ethiopia, facing economic challenges.

Generally, the IMF provides short-term financial assistance to member countries facing balance of payments problems or economic crises. Balance of payment (BOP) is the record of all international

financial transactions made by the residents of a country. There are three main categories of BOP and these are the current account, the capital account and financial account.

When a country such as Ethiopia requests assistance from the IMF, it often comes with conditions attached. Austerity measures may be among these conditions, requiring the borrowing country to implement policies with the goal of reducing budget deficits and restoring economic stability. Common austerity measures include reducing public sector wages, cutting social spending, eliminating subsidies, and implementing tax increases. Some of these conditions are difficult to meet for the government of Ethiopia. Reducing wages in the face of galloping inflation, including imported inflation, is like encouraging corruption in the civil service. Similarly reduction in social spending and subsidies will definitely make the life a civil servant intolerable.

The WB focuses on long-term economic development and poverty reduction. To this end, it provides loans and grants for development projects in Ethiopia. In line with the IMF, the WB may attach conditions to its loans that involve economic reforms and policy adjustments. The WB prescribes austerity measures that may include structural reforms to improve the efficiency of public services. It also encourages privatization of government owned enterprises. These measures are believed to enhance the overall economic environment in the country.

However, critics believe that austerity measures may have negative social impacts, as they may lead to inefficient public services. This policy direction leads to increased unemployment in the face of rising labor force and income inequality. Also, some economists have argued that stringent and severe observance of austerity may deter and hamper economic growth and development in Ethiopia that is facing social unrest, conflict and strife practically in most of its regions.

It is useful to note that the effectiveness and appropriateness of austerity policy is influenced by situation on the ground. It is argued that this policy may vary based on the specific conditions and circumstance observed in Ethiopia. Credit rating may be influenced by the level of conspicuous consumption displayed by a few political entrepreneurs in Ethiopia. But, this group does not represent the large majority of people who may not afford to cover the cost of living due to inflation.

Actually, conspicuous consumption refers to the public display of wealth through the lavish spending of money on goods and services that are not essential for survival. While it is a phenomenon often associated with more developed economies, elements of conspicuous consumption can be observed in various societies. In Ethiopia, a country with a diverse cultural and economic landscape, conspicuous consumption may be manifested in different ways by the emerging middle class. This

may influence the modality of credit rating in Ethiopia.

In major urban centers, there is a rising middle class with increased purchasing power. This group may engage in conspicuous consumption by purchasing luxury items such as fashionable and expensive cars, and modern houses with impressive furniture and household facilities. Flaunting and displaying of wealth through these luxurious items becomes a way to display a social status. Added to these are celebratory events taking place in different parts of Ethiopia. The country has a rich cultural heritage with a variety of customary and fixed ceremonies and festivals. In these events, there is an emphasis on presenting oneself in the best possible situation. This may result in conspicuous consumption through the purchase of sophisticated clothes and expensive jewelry. These are displayed by hosting lavish festivities mainly in the urban residential areas. The construction of modern and lavish houses may be taken as a display of conspicuous consumption. It is observed that persons who have accumulated wealth do invest in luxurious items. In so doing, they contribute to the ostentatious display of wealth within their communities.

These consumers give a wrong picture to those institutions engaged in credit rating. These consumers use borrowed money for the purchase of modern imported items. Their demand for luxury goods and services such as high fashion goods and services may be seen as a form of conspicuous consumption. A few wealthy individuals may use these items to signal their social status and success in Ethiopia where the majority of the people suffer from inflation.

What is amazing is the rise of social media that has influenced consumption patterns in Ethiopia. A few individuals may engage in conspicuous consumption to display their lifestyles, achievements, and possessions. However, there is no research on how these persons have accessed wealth in an ocean of poverty. It may be necessary to note that conspicuous consumption in Ethiopia may vary from one region to the other based on cultural practices, and economic disparities.

It is possible that some individuals may actively engage in showing of their wealth, while others may spend on modest and conservative manner. Moreover, social and cultural values play a major role in determining and influencing the pattern of conspicuous consumption within Ethiopian society. These factors may mislead financial appraisal of the creditworthiness of the country. Therefore, the credit raters have to see beyond figures.

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

# Business & Economy

## Improving agricultural production, productivity to ensure food security

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), five major cereals (teff, wheat, maize, barley and sesame) are contributing to ensuring food security. There has been substantial growth in cereals in terms of area cultivated, yields in the last three decades. However, compared to the international standard, yields per hectare are low and overall production is highly vulnerable to extreme climate conditions. Thus, mitigating their vulnerability and improving production per hectare is essential. It helps ensure adequate food availability and increases rural household incomes.

Currently, the Ethiopian government is striving to transform the agricultural sector through various measures. It is doing its level best by assisting the sector with the provision of extension services and mechanized tools. Further to this, it requires generating more from the sector to meet the demand of raw materials along with the on-going industrial plant expansion across the country. Following this, the overall performance of the agriculture sector is showing good progress year after year.

The Ministry of Agriculture said that more than 15.8 million hectares of land have been cultivated during the crop season, with a cluster form of cultivation countrywide focused on market-oriented crops such as sesame, wheat, maize and barley.

Sufficient agricultural input supply, active engagement of sector professionals, and new agricultural technology utilization were sought to realize the target production.

Accordingly, the introduction of new agricultural technologies and agricultural inputs will raise production and productivity. Reports show that the country's crop production is growing year after year following the application of the latest agricultural technologies and the availability of untapped suitable land, among others played a crucial role.

In addition, the coordinated environmental protection activities undertaking across the country is also a plus to the on-going agricultural productivity through contributing its part to curb soil degradation and flood damage.

On the other hand, inconsistent weather condition, some sort of conflict in the northern part of the country, pest occurrence on crops and low level



*Wheat farms in the central highland part of the country*

of new agricultural technologies expansion and accessibility throughout the country are some of the sector's bottlenecks.

More importantly, the ministry prioritizes that harvesting should be done in a way that minimizes agricultural production waste. In most areas, harvest is expected to begin in early November. Leaders and experts at all levels are working hard to mobilize farmers to harvest ready crops.

During this crop season, the supply and utilization of agricultural inputs needed for crop development, as well as the technical support provided to farmers, were better done by the ministry and other pertinent stakeholders to compensate the reduction in production in insecure areas. Moreover, the favourable distribution of rainfall created better conditions for improved crop production and productivity.

Accordingly, since the harvesting is highly dependent on human labour, each farmer should coordinate his own and his family's labour as well as coordinate with other farmers to ensure that the harvested crops are kept dry and reduced waste. When crops are harvested in the field, load carefully and use a variety of precautionary measures against pests, animals and unseasonal rains. Agricultural professionals need to pay close attention to the efficient use of time by connecting service providers

and consumers and mobilizing the farmer so that harvest mechanization can be widely used in areas where agricultural mechanization can be used.

In case of unseasonal rains, the ministry highlighted that mobilizing the local human resources, including students, government employees, urban residents, etc., helps to harvest the crop timely. Similarly, in areas where there is a security crisis, the contribution of farmers said important to the well-being of the country parallel with harvesting their crop. It is also necessary to strengthen the support and monitoring activities of the farmers, from the federal to the kebele level, to strengthen the support and monitoring activities of the farmers by recognizing the positive effects of reducing the expected harvest during the production season by coordinating the harvesting process.

Experts recommended that controlling post-harvest waste is also fundamental to ensure sector's competitiveness in the national economy. Post-harvest loss is one of the concerns of ensuring food security and poverty reduction strategies in many developing countries. Thus, the ministry should work hand in hand with pertinent stakeholders and improving farmers' awareness helps enhancing national capacities in post-harvest management, building and strengthening public-private partnership linkages and developing

regulatory guidelines for post-harvest practices. Improving pesticide, herbicide and other agricultural inputs supply is expected to advance production and productivity in the upcoming crop season.

According to the 2024 study conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Ethiopia, post-harvest loss of maize, wheat, haricot bean, and sorghum is 25, 18, 19 and 27 % respectively. Losses occur between productions at the farm level up to the dining table. As part of the implementation of the Post-Harvest Management Strategy in Grains, the government of Ethiopia approved duty-free tax for post-harvest handling technologies and raw materials such as galvanized sheet metal for fabricating metal silos.

It is obvious that Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa and the main stay of the nation's economy is agriculture in which more than 80 % of the population is engaged in this sector. However, due to less utilization of technology, inputs such as fertilizer and pesticides and herbicides, the yield per hectare is very small even by the sub Saharan African countries standard. Worse to these, in time of severe weather condition induced by climate change and global warming, the sector faces uncertainty.

**continued to page 8**

# Planet Earth

## Further attention to environmental protection laws helps to realize a green, pollution-free Ethiopia

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Ethiopia faces various environmental issues. The decline of forestation, soil erosion, biodiversity loss, air pollution, climate change, and soil fertility and water quality are among the most pressing issues.

Due to various factors, Ethiopia's economy and ecosystem are weak and susceptible to climate change. Climate change, soil degradation, deforestation, biodiversity loss and ecosystem services, and pollution of land, air, and water are some of the environmental issues that challenge the country's economy.

Ethiopia's economy relies heavily on natural resources. In the short term, using these natural resources might result in significant economic gains. However, in the long run, unsustainable exploitation of these natural resources contributes not just to environmental deterioration but also to reduced economic growth and employment possibilities.

Ethiopia has thus prepared laws and rules to combat climate change and safeguard the environment. For example, Ethiopia's environmental policy offers a framework for the nation's sustainable growth and environmental conservation. Additionally, before projects are executed, developers are required under the nation's environmental impact assessment declaration to evaluate and mitigate any potential environmental repercussions.

Another proclamation, the Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy, seeks to encourage sustainable growth while lowering greenhouse gas emissions in critical sectors such as agriculture, forestry, and energy. The Forest Proclamation Law governs forest management and protection in Ethiopia, preventing deforestation and promoting sustainable forest management.

Furthermore, Ethiopia's Wildlife Conservation Proclamation aims to save threatened animals and their natural environments. To provide water security and safeguard ecosystems, the Water Resources Management Proclamation simultaneously sets out rules for the sustainable management of the nation's water resources. To encourage the development and use of renewable energy sources to lessen dependency on fossil fuels and combat climate change, the country has drafted the Renewable Energy Proclamation. These rules and regulations are enforced by federal government organizations and regional environmental bureaus that are established to protect and conserve the environment, forests, and so on.

However, while these laws, proclamations, and regulations are necessary to safeguard the environment, conserve biodiversity, and reduce climate change, their implementation faces some problems. For example, insufficient ability and resources, particularly financial resources, technical experience, and institutional capacity, restrict the



Ethiopian Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) Director General Engineer Lelise Neme

effectiveness with which environmental laws and regulations are implemented and enforced.

Additionally, there are still issues that need to be addressed to increase the general public and policymakers' understanding of the significance of environmental preservation and climate change mitigation strategies. These issues include a lack of education and awareness. Besides, the successful implementation of environmental laws and regulations is hampered as a result of the gaps in enforcement, careless enforcement methods, and poor monitoring and evaluation systems.

Apart from the adverse effects of climate change, droughts, floods, and irregular rainfall patterns which complicate environmental conservation efforts further, persistent deforestation and land degradation represent a major issue in several regions of the nation. Improved coordination and collaboration between government agencies, civil society groups, and other parties involved in environmental protection and climate change mitigation is necessary to address the problem of institutional coordination.

Taking these problems into account, the national environmental protection sector held a half-fiscal year plan implementation assessment meeting in Hawassa City. In the forum, officials and experts of the sector from all regions attended the meeting.

Ethiopian Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) Director General Engineer Lelise Neme said that efforts have been made to ensure that proclamations and regulations enacted to rid Ethiopia of environmental pollution are being followed.

To achieve a pollution-free and environmentally sustainable Ethiopia, the government has directed its emphasis on coordinated public participation in the implementation of environmental protection laws. As a result, residents may live in a clean and unpolluted environment, public health is guaranteed, and sustainable national economic growth is strengthened.



Sidama National Regional State President Desta Ledamo,

environment, protect against natural resource depletion, and incorrect solid and sewage waste disposal.

More significantly, it's critical to improve waste management and disposal in the city, boost green growth, and improve cooperation. In addition, collaboration is required to put the legislation passed for this purpose into effect, he said.

Sidama Regional States Forestry and Environmental Protection Authority Director General Shetaye Yumura elucidated that the region, by paying attention to environmental protection, ensuring green and sustainable development is being done actively and widely.

Thus, effective work is being recorded and to continue the results obtained in the future, it is appropriate to widely implement the laws issued in the field of environmental protection in the country, he explained.

Despite the various challenges, Ethiopia has made considerable steps in enacting laws and regulations to safeguard the environment and combat climate change. Currently, the government has made some progress, such as reforestation through the planting of billions of trees, sustainable land management, the development and implementation of renewable energy, and the design of climate change adaption strategies.

The country also establishes international relationships and collaboration with significant stakeholders, fostering community engagement in environmental protection and climate change adaptation programs while also allowing people to take ownership of sustainable development methods. These accomplishments show Ethiopia's dedication to reducing climate change and protecting the environment. Therefore, Ethiopia should strengthen its efforts to protect the environment and advance sustainable development for future generations through stringent law enforcement procedures by building on these accomplishments and resolving the remaining challenges.

**It is critical to enforce laws and proclamations while also working together to minimize environmental pollution and land degradation**

In this context, efforts have been undertaken to raise public awareness of environmental concerns in addition to bolstering monitoring and control to guarantee compliance with environmental legislation in the middle of the fiscal year. She clarified that they were also assisted in creating and carrying out an integrated solid waste disposal strategy in the cities.

Furthermore, waste management and disposal in many manufacturing companies and service facilities have been closely regulated to ensure that they do not endanger people or the environment. This enabled the institutions to develop and implement an integrated waste disposal and chemical management strategy. She stated that the forum was designed to reaffirm the successes achieved in each area and to urge everyone to participate in future efforts to close the gaps.

Sidama National Regional State President Desta Ledamo, for his part, stated that it is critical to enforce laws and proclamations while also working together to minimize environmental pollution and land degradation. Because one institution's efforts are insufficient to mitigate climate change, maintain biodiversity, save the

# Art & Culture

## THE MAN AND THE SNAIL

(A Short Moral Story)

BY NIGERIAN AUTHOR (Chima Dickson)

One day, a snail saw a man walking into the woods, then he began to scream for attention, "Mister! Mister! Come over here! Please, do me a favor! Mister!"

The man suddenly stopped and walked towards the snail, asking, "What's the matter with you?" The snail whistled, "Get me out of my shell, please. I'm so uncomfortable inside it. Please, get me out!" The man stood, wondering for a short moment, then asked, "But why?"

Isn't that funny? Why do you want to come out of your protective shell?" The snail snapped his teeth together, and turning abruptly, said, "I told you I feel very uneasy inside it! It's a heavy burden for me to carry all alone! I want freedom! Please, pull me out of this nasty shell!"

The man leaned forward, and then whispered, "You're not serious, are you?" The snail hollered suddenly, "Well, I am very serious! I want to be free like other creatures, such as: the slug, the worm, the squid, the octopus, the snake, etc. I want to move around



freely, but I feel so trapped inside my cursed shell!"

The man paused for a moment, then uttered silently, "Listen, while you seek freedom, you should understand that your shell is a gift from God to you. A unique gift. It protects you from the environment and even from predators.

However, if you choose to come out of it, you will lose that precious gift forever and you will never be able to get back inside it." The snail began to wail, unable to keep the impatience out of his voice, "O, Mister... I don't care about that, with all due respect. I just need you to do what I told you. Get me out

of my shell, please. Now, please!" The snail persisted, until the man agreed to his request. He picked him up and gently pulled him out of his shell. Although, the process was a bit painful, the snail was happy to have finally gained freedom. However, as the snail began to crawl away, a hungry bird suddenly flew down, grabbed it and swallowed it immediately. Having witnessed that, the man shook his head in pity and walked away. How easy it is to take our blessings for granted! We find it easy to complain and be ungrateful for what we have. We have been blessed in so many areas, yet so often, we dwell on what we don't have and strive to be someone else. We compare ourselves to others, forgetting our innate ability that makes us unique or stand us out from others. We shouldn't be too desperate. We shouldn't be selfish. And we shouldn't be cruel to ourselves. The truth is, when we don't understand our worth and value our lives, we tend to lose something special. We need to cultivate a culture where we count our blessings more than we complain. If we sat still and started counting our blessings and naming them one by one, we would never have time to complain or try to be like someone else.



**There is no night without a dawning**

BY HELEN STINER RICE

*No winter without a spring*

*And beyond the dark horizon*

*Our hearts will once more sing ....*

*For those who leave us for a while*

*Have only gone away*

*Out of a restless, care worn world*

*Into a brighter day*

### Improving agricultural production,...

In order to change the situation to better, the government has tried its level best by providing small-scale farmers' extension services, supply inputs and supporting the creation of a viable value chain. In addition to these, the government introduced new farming technology by doing the farm work through clustering. In such a system, small-scale farmers who grow similar crops instead of growing fragmentally are fostered to plow and grow by combining their plots to produce in a large-scale manner. In such a way, farmers coordinate their labour, knowledge, skill and capital for a better outcome. It is proved that such an approach could enable farmers to raise their productivity and production.

In the highland parts of the Oromia, Amhara and Southern Ethiopia, Southwest Ethiopia, Sidama and Central Ethiopia regions the practice of cluster farming proved that it is feasible in enhancing productivity. The 10 years perspective home grown economic growth plan stipulates clustering farm to be scaled up. The production of wheat and maize through such practice proved to bring better result. If it is continued, it is predicted that at least substituting the importation of some agricultural

products by local products could be possible.

As mentioned above, Ethiopia is the second populous country in Africa but it is not self-sufficient in ensuring food security which is embarrassing. While it has excess arable land with sufficient water resources, it is unrealistic depending on foreign aid for food. Therefore, working hard to raise agricultural productivity for self-sufficiency is vital.

As Ethiopia is one of the largest populous nations in Africa, feeding the current and the future generation is a priority agenda of any government but the agriculture sector which has the responsibility to supply food to the population is still utilizes less modern inputs.

Therefore, enhancing the utilization modern agricultural technology and necessary inputs by any means is essential. The government in its 10 years economic perspective plan underlined to boost the supply of inputs by producing inputs locally through mobilizing investment both locally and from abroad. Hence, upholding the pledge is essential.



# Society

## Creating better future for Down syndrome children in Ethiopia

BY TEWODROS KASSA

Most Ethiopians believe that Down syndrome is a curse from God. They wrongly perceived that children are born with Down syndrome and other mental and physical disabilities to reveal God's punishment on the parents for their wrong doings. However, this is totally a myth; and the science uncovers the truth behind the case and explains it clearly and differently supported by verified facts.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald* Fundraising and Research Expert at the Deborah Foundation Yohannes Fiseha (MD) said that Down syndrome is a chromosomal condition which occurs because of an extra copy of chromosome. It is totally a genetic disorder. A child born with an extra copy of chromosome will be exposed to genetic disorder. Therefore, his/her different organ systems might be affected. For example, the heart and endocrine system will be affected. In addition to this, they will face concerns with ear, nose, and throat conditions.

Moreover, children born with Down syndrome might have from mild to moderate intellectual disability.

In Ethiopia, there is no sufficient data that show the prevalence of Down syndrome. Therefore, there is still a lot of work that needs to be done regarding the issue. That is why it necessitates establishing such a foundation to brighten the future of Down syndrome children in the country, he said.

In Ethiopia, parents in both rural and urban areas tend to hide their Down syndrome children fearing stigma-related outlooks and negative thinking from the society due to their children. It is obvious that there are still many children with Down syndrome who are kept in a room, hidden from the sight of other people.

Parents locked up their children behind closed doors to hide them from society until their adult age. The reason why most of the parents are compelled to do this is because they do not know how to manage and interact with children born with Down syndrome and the negative attitudes the community has developed toward children with Down syndrome as a consequence of lack of awareness and misunderstanding about the case. This scenario is another traumatic situation that might lead the Down syndrome children towards more complicated psycho-social problems.

At the same time, religious fathers also



*Yohannes Fiseha (MD), Fundraising and Research Expert at the Deborah Foundation*

associate such issues with the devil and try to take various measures to exorcise the evil spirits.

Currently, persons with Down syndrome are facing different challenges in Ethiopia due to various reasons. They face difficulties in acquiring quality education, having effective healthcare services, among others due to the lack of an implementable and inclusive policy framework.

Accordingly, the Deborah Foundation was established to support children with Down syndrome and guide policymakers on this issue through generating evidence-based data.

There are various initiatives and commitments at institutional and individual level to create a better future for children born with Down syndrome. However, the only problem is its implementation. Even though there are various policy frameworks that recognize the rights of persons with disability, it is not satisfactory.

Thus, the Foundation is striving to work in the areas of education and healthcare accessibility as well as policy advocacy.

As to him, widespread negative attitudes, stigma and discrimination, as well as minor sentiments among the public are still the major challenges that obstruct children with intellectual disability not to become more competitive in Ethiopia.

"If someone has a child with intellectual disability, it is not the child only that will be suffering. The family will also undergo a lot of problems, among others, economic, social, and cultural challenges."

Keeping this in mind, it is important to undertake multi-sectorial advocacy efforts towards creating a better awareness among the public to ease the burden of children born with intellectual disability, Yohannes said.



**It is important to undertake multi-sectorial advocacy efforts towards creating a better awareness among the public to ease the burden of children born with intellectual disability**

Down syndrome.

The specialty clinic will provide Early Intervention Care (EIC) and various therapy services; including occupational therapy, behavioral therapy, physiotherapy, and speech and language therapy for children with intellectual disability, Yohannes elaborated.

Moreover, the Foundation has signed Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, higher education institutions as well as other governmental and non-governmental organizations to facilitate the necessary preconditions for children born with intellectual disability.

At present, the Foundation has about 1,900 families registered under it; and it provides various support to the families under its family support program. In addition, those children with Down syndrome are welcome to access free healthcare services by the Foundation in collaboration with local and international partners.

Regarding inclusive education, the Foundation has its own inclusive education facility under the Deborah Academy located in Legetafo. Currently, the Academy is offering education from KG up to 4th grade. Vocational and life-skill training are also given in this facility. So far, the Academy has enrolled more than 150 children with Down syndrome and other forms of disability. Thus, the Academy is providing state-of-the-art education and training to the children through integrating various professionals.

The Foundation has also plans to expand its branches out of Addis in different parts of the country to address the problems that children born with Down syndrome are facing.

The Foundation has finalized preparations to celebrate the annual March 21st World Down Syndrome Day. The day will be marked in Addis Ababa through various programs including mass walk, awareness creation events, and transmitting messages of advocacy for their rights.

According to him, the Deborah Foundation was established on June 24, 2019 by the former House of Peoples' Representatives (HoPRs) Speaker Abadula Gameda. His 4th child Deborah was born with Down syndrome and established the foundation that is dedicated for supporting Down syndrome children under the name Deborah.

The establishment of the foundation mainly targets to create a better and more inclusive future for children born with Down syndrome, it was learnt.

"We need to have a unified voice to advocate for the rights and inclusion of children with intellectual disability through formulating inclusive policy frameworks and increasing government commitment to the issue," he added.

Currently, Deborah Foundation is undertaking pediatric specialty clinic construction aimed at providing sustainable and easily accessible healthcare services for children with

# Law & Politics

## The battle of Adwa: An Ethiopian victory that runs against the current of colonialism

On the first day of March 124 years ago, traditional warriors, farmers and pastoralists as well as women defeated a well-armed Italian army in the northern town of Adwa in Ethiopia. The outcome of this battle ensured Ethiopia's independence, making it the only African country never to be colonised. Adwa turned Ethiopia into a symbol of freedom for black people globally. It also led to a change of government in Italy.

The town of Adwa is located in Northern Tigray, closer to the southern border of Eritrea. Yeha, the capital of Ethiopia's ancient empire from 980-400 BC, and the monastery of Aba Garima, which was founded in the sixth century AD, are located near the town.

The battle between Ethiopia and Italy took place in the mountainous terrain of the area.

Adwa still stands as witness to what ordinary Africans can do when they come together as farmers, pastoralists, women and rural people, workers and artists. They are able to score a decisive victory against global colonialist forces.

### Ethiopia's place in the world

Since the beginning of slavery and colonialism in the 16th century, similar battles had occurred around the world. The outcome of every war was the same. Europeans ended up ruling the native peoples of the Americas, Africa, Asia and Australia.

Ethiopia stood as the antithesis of the colonial worldview. Regarded as the origin of humankind, it was, according to Harvard professor Ephraim Isaac about 10,000 years ago, one single nation or community of a single linguistic group.

The people spoke an Afrasian language, which is the origin of almost all languages currently spoken in Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia.

Ethiopians developed the Geez or Ethiopic writing system. From the fourth century, an indigenous Christianity, Orthodox Tewahido, developed through the synthesis of belief in the Ark of the Covenant, the gospel and ancient traditional practices.

The Kebra Nagast, the national epic that elaborates this belief, provided the basis for the emergence of a Solomonic dynasty that incorporates diverse lands and cultures into one country. Muslim immigrants were welcomed and protected by the Christian king in the seventh century.

In the 19th century, the three successive kings, namely Emperor Tewodros of Gondar, Yohannes of Tigray and Menelik of Shoa, sought to centralise power.

### The road to Adwa

A decade before the Battle of Adwa, European powers had decided the fate of Ethiopia. At the Berlin Conference of 1884-5, 14 European countries divided



Africa among themselves. Before the conference, only about 10% of Africa was controlled by Europeans; the remaining 90% was ruled by indigenous and traditional rulers. Italy had a colonial possession over Assab port since 1882. At the Berlin Conference, European colonial powers agreed that Italy could take over Ethiopia as its future colony.

Italy expanded its presence in the Red Sea, an area that had become important since the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. With British support, Italy took control of the port city of Massawa in 1885. From Massawa, Italy moved slowly inland, leading to a number of clashes with locals, which culminated in the battle of Adwa. Italy suffered heavy defeats but this didn't deter them.

Italy's expansion across Ethiopia was facilitated by the devastation caused by rinderpest – an infectious viral disease – that killed up to 90% of the country's livestock. Famine and disease wiped out a third of the population between 1888 and 1892. This period is regarded as Kifu Ken, evil days.

Italy took advantage of the devastation. It sought to divide and conquer Ras Mangasha of Tigray and Nigus Menelik of Shoa. The Italians eventually signed the Treaty of Wuchale with Menelik in May 1889. The treaty was written in Amharic and Italian. The treaty would later be the trigger for the battle of Adwa. Menelik was to discover that the language in the two versions of the treaty differed. The Italian version effectively made Ethiopia Italy's protectorate, in contrast to the Amharic version.

### Preparing for war

As the tragic devastation of the Kifu Ken eased, Menelik began preparing for war against the Italians. On 27 February 1893, he renounced the Treaty of Wuchale. He then ordered the creation of food depots at major towns along the way to Adwa

for the upkeep of his army. The Italians fortified their positions in Tigray, attacking Mangasha at Coatit on 13 January 1895.

On 17 September 1895, Menelik declared a total mobilisation of war against Italy. He called on all Ethiopians to defend their country, family and religion. He ordered every capable person to fight and those incapable to pray for Ethiopia's victory.

Ethiopians from every tribe, culture and community answered Menelik's call. Regional leaders from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds responded unanimously creating an army of 100,000. They had inferior weapons but a strong cause.

### The battle

The first showdown occurred at Amba Alagi on 7 December 1895, where a relatively smaller Italian army was wiped out. The second encounter was at Mekelle, where the Italians were stationed behind a strong fort. The Ethiopians surrounded the Italians for two weeks and, upon Empress Tayitu's advice, cut off the fort's water supply.

The Italian commander agreed to surrender if they would be allowed to leave with their firearms. Menelik agreed that they could leave the garrison unharmed.

But the Italians remained in their strongholds, fortifying their position at Adigrat and Sauria. Menelik was not in a hurry to attack these forts.

After two weeks of inactivity, General Baratieri decided to advance for a surprise attack. It was 1 March 1896, or, according to the Ethiopian calendar, Yekatit 23, 1888, the day of Saint George. The priests carried the Tabot, a replica of the Ark of the Covenant, a religious icon that symbolises the sanctity of Ethiopia, to the battlefield. The 20,000 Italian and Italian-trained native troops who advanced in three columns fought bravely with their

cannons and machine guns before facing a decisive defeat. Casualties were severe on both sides.

One of the key leaders of the Ethiopian forces was Etege Tayitu Bitul, wife of Emperor Menelik. A fearless strategist and brilliant administrator, she led 6,000 cavalry to the war front, and employed traditional music and war chants that motivated the fighting spirit of the warriors.

### The impact

The Adwa victory led to a change of government in Italy. Due to public protest and failure of his colonial policy, Prime Minister Francesco Crispi resigned.

Negotiations between the two countries resulted in the Addis Ababa Treaty. One of its key components was the unconditional acceptance of Ethiopian independence and sovereignty.

### News of an African victory spread throughout the world.

Adwa turned Ethiopia into the symbol of redemption and freedom for black people. Marcus Garvey, W.E.B. Du Bois, Bob Marley, George Padmore and others drew inspiration from the African victory. The first Afro-Brazilian newspaper was named O Menelick, publishing pride in black identity and African connection with prominent women writers from 1915-1916.

Adwa connected black people with Africa's ancient glory and future hope, as Marcus Garvey wrote:

Look to Africa for the crowing of a black king. He shall be the redeemer.

The green, yellow and red Ethiopian flag was adopted by several African countries after colonial liberation and a universal national anthem was created for black people.

(SOURCE: THE CONVERSATION)



Ephrem Endale  
Contributor

# Between you & me

## Jumping Fences; “To Be or Not to Be...”

It's astounding how many of us act as we know even issues about which we don't have the slightest hint. We claim to know almost everything as if we can push the Einsteins of the world into the back benches; “Go and do your homework before you even think of sitting in the front rows of knowledge like we do!” And believe me many times than not we succeed in attracting quite significant following. One thing is that we talk of things we don't know with such finality we don't leave others room to navigate across the speculation realm. “Sorry; about the issue you just said I'm afraid I didn't get your point. Would you kindly explain it to me?” We're not taking that lightly. Some goon is trying to put our reputation as a know-all on the chopping block. “Who the hell allowed this goon into the room!” That of course is implied in gestures and facial expressions! We could with all the confidence in the world say that in this age of information very unluckily most of us haven't yet left the train station of knowledge and rain after zooms past.

Take politics. That's one world where fence jumping seems to be the norm rather than the exception. Say, just the other day talking over cups of coffee this guy was saying that had this world had a couple of hundred more people like Lenin it would have been in a far better place than the mess it is presently. The way he says it could be like what can be called a ‘from the depths of the heart’ optimism. (And we thought good old Lenin was gone for good!) You don't need to ask him what he meant by that. “Look it is surprising you raise the name Lenin at a time when practically no one knows who the hell he was!”

“That's what I'm saying! Had people some idea of what that guy fought for they would have put his statue in all the capitals of the world. (That must

his idea of an implied scorn directed at us. You know we had his statue somewhere downtown and we pulled it down whom the political dynamics changed. Want to know the possible irony? Well the people in charge were the ones for whom Lenin, along with the two bearded guys, the savior of the oppressed of the world. That, too, must have been fence-jumping which was all about ingratitude! Ha! At least give him credit for that red book of quotations which made everyone smart. Some must have thought “If he didn't say it, it hadn't been said!” (Someone should come up with some ‘Quotations for Dummies!’ book, which excludes no one even the Kan Ye West fellow.) “You know once Lenin said...”

Anyway the guy who practically worshipped Lenin goes into such a flip flop he turns his idol into enemy number one! Does that sound familiar? The very person you thought was a very true friend, that sort of friend who goes with you all the way to the bitter end. Then something happens; something you probably don't know. And that is when the world turns on its head. The guy who spoke of you with such enthusiasm high esteem, the person who was close to making a demi-God out of you is suddenly out on some vicious character assassination campaign. It takes time for the news of the outrage to reach you. Most of the time that's the case, wouldn't you say? You, who is, to borrow an entertainment industry jargon, the Central Character of the whole story would be among the last to get wind of what was going on. How easily and effortlessly he jumped the best friendship fence and joined ‘the other side’ is a mind wrecking and even frustrating riddle for you.

When we feel and act we know things we actually DON'T know, you ask yourself in which literary genre to put the story; tragedy or comedy!

Recently, I was watching some guy out on the streets interviewing random pedestrians on issues which seemingly have to do with Africa. Most of those interviewed look like guys on either side of their thirties with some probably past the four decades mark and others closer to their teens. Look trying to evaluate people by their appearances would be not far from being primitive as primitive goes. But most of them, and I'm not talking about how they are dressed or things like that, look like they have some schooling. So you'd expect for them to respond quite easily to questions which are neither bright nor difficult. But alas! This was one of the times when you didn't know how to react. I mean the way they try to display they are actually on this side of the fence where knowledge or something close to knowledge rules, how wonderful it would have been if people had the courage to “You're only embarrassing yourself and no one is impressed. Look, how about going back over the fence to where you came from and arm yourself with sufficient knowledge so that you don't have to jump any fence to join this side. The doors would be wide open.” But no; none of us want to be blacklisted by these people by trying to tell them the last thing they want to hear.

I know a guy who could say could be a case study of fence-jumping the highest level. You can't help wondering, and even giving him a little dose of admiration under your breath, about the way he can turn things to his liking. And he has mastered doing all the wrong things without blinking a single eyelid all the time jumping fences at will. Especially he joins and then leaves a certain group, one of those spiritually inclined groups, with such frequency you wonder how they take him in repeatedly the guy having kicked dust into their faces over and again. When he goes back it means there are some new funds for the taking.

The juice of the story here is that he manages his fence-jumping with such command many fall for his ruse and even become his cheerleaders. He knows when the group have some contract or freelance job to offer in his field, a field in which his capabilities are up for serious questions. Somewhat he ‘wins’ the contract of the freelance job. Here is where he plays real smart. He apportions the job among a few guys he knows; guys with far better capabilities. Finally, he pays he was promised and goes away with more than the lions share without penning a single word. Then you know what happens? He leaves! That's what he does, the guy leaves after collecting his pay just like that. You find him in places where members of the group are seldom, if ever, found. “Hey, what's going on! I thought you guys don't come to such places.”

“So what's the big deal?”

“I'm surprised to find you here. Have they rewritten their books?”

“I don't know and I don't care.”

“Meaning...”

“I have left them.”

“Oooh...” And that is an “Oooh...” which comes after every few months!

There was some debate among those who know how the people over at the place gave him so much freedom to go in and out when his real intentions evaded no one. Well, it was a debate which really didn't go off. Why? I'll tell you why. It's about network dummy! In case no one told you yet, the right network in the right places could do ‘miracles’ and the world could be yours. Is his case among the exceptional? I'm not sure. It might be.

## Self-Crowned Geniuses!

Many of us seem to be afflicted with this curse of taking people for their appearances. I tell you this is one problem, and a crucial one too, which eats at the ropes holding the social fabric intact. And the sly ones (some would say the smart ones) make the most of it.

There is something we notice these days. We saw these guys because they were on some TV channel and on a few YouTube sites. But everywhere we go the self-acclaimed geniuses are so many you can't help asking, “Is this I-know-all,” feeling some sort of a virus-induced health problem our scientists have yet to discover! I'd have no problem if people felt somewhat up the stairs for what they believe is their IQ level. The issue here is that most of us have the wrong notion of our own capabilities; so much so that we've closed the doors on experience-gathering and learning. So we're left stuck in time while everything around us moving, and moving really fast.

The answers they gave to simple questions concerning the AU, African countries and the like were not only shockingly flawed but outrageous too. You'd be pardoned to muse “Don't tell me these people are representatives of the society!” You know what makes them shocking. The confidence you witness as they gave the answers was so much so you wonder how they manage to be so sure. If you said “No Jamaica isn't an African country.” I tell you the response would be that angry stare

which you feel digging right through your thick or thin skin.

It was sometime back when I found myself among a couple of friends who were trying to discuss certain issue with two gents and a lady they knew casually. Now, other than the local happenings, they also talked about international issues. Well, I can tell you, for me, that was one of those amusing moments in all the wrong ways; amused at discovering even people of better status all round were so uninformed of even the most basic things! Much of the time the argument for the failure of people to be informed about the world around them that many of us totally given up reading. The critics of the social media would argue that it is making morons out of all of us. Though it isn't evidence-supported I'd up to a limit agree with that replacing ‘morons’ with some non-controversial term. What's more, these days the social media being one vat wilderness of total confusion the argument is not without merit. But then blaming that particular sector for all our ills and failures would not be such a good idea.

It's great to believe in oneself! I mean believing in oneself is the groundwork for going with life in this increasingly difficult and even scary world. The problem is that we might confuse outright arrogance with believing in oneself. After all, there're ways and there are other ways!

While we are at it do you feel the time actually

just zooms by without us noticing the process of nature? It's Monday and before you know it the next Monday is knocking on the door. What! What the hell have I been doing the whole week? Or was it actually a whole week? You know these days technology is fast changing you feel if the AI robots are messing with what we've been taking for granted. We have this notion of time actually running. They tell us we've much less time than we imagine. Maybe is that why we feel that the weeks and the months are in some hundred-meter dash Hussein Bolt style!

Yes, that is general feeling. But then you are forced to notice the days and the hours when things in your life go down south. Somedays, things just fall off your life's superhighway and you are left wondering, “What in the world is happening to me?” The fridge has malfunctioned and you need at least ten grand to kick start again. That is what the repair guy tells you with little or no emotion. “Ten grand! you must be kidding me! If I had that much money, I'd have been on cloud 9!” Really! Cloud for ten grand?

The past several days the way your immediate boss is looking at you is giving you the creeps. That very guy whose smile radiated an entire room is frowning; that very guy who never, even accidentally, lets out words and concepts which would offend quite a lot of people, that very guy who shook the hands of even the lowest clerks with both his hands! And you thought his nerves could

have never gone into frown mode. Your usual reaction would probably be “Him frowning! You must be out of your mind!” So you can't help feeling a little edgy even mentally playing out some awful scenarios. “They must be cooking something for me behind the doors!” “They're going to give me the marching orders. The letter is already signed and sealed!”

Your parents have called from the region where they live and told you they need money. (Incidentally they didn't say for what reasons, only that they need it fast. All of a sudden so many things go wrong that you start feeling the end of the road is nearing or you. The household expenditures have spiraled due to if the terrible rise cost of living. You were already between the rock and a hard pace and now this comes!...

It would feel terrible; You try to sooth your nerves arguing with yourself that you were not the only one on the trouble waters. “Well, almost everybody is in deep financial troubles and I shouldn't take things personally.” Nice guy. But take this from me and your nice words are only that nice. “The guy sees reality directly into the eyes and there are not many people like him. At least he'd keep his mental machine intact.

Sometimes you wonder why we are facing so much trouble to do things with efficiency in most places when the country seems to be bursting with so many self-crowned geniuses!