



The Ethiopian Herald

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Ethiopia calls for collective action on maritime, boarder insecurity

• Scholars discuss pressing regional issues

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- Amid regional peace and security challenges, Ethiopia is striving for uniting approaches despite toughness of the burden, said Foreign Affairs State Minister.

During the second series of the Horn Dialogue, held yesterday, State Minister Ambassador Misganu Arega said that Ethiopia, as a stakeholder in the region, is playing its role to unite the region to fight terrorism, piracy and political crisis in the Horn of Africa.

“As we gather here today, the Horn of Africa stands at the critical juncture. This region is a strategic gateway to Africa, the Middle East and Asia. However, we cannot ignore the hardship reality of the whole region burdened by complex security challenges and political instability, recurrent drought induced by climate change,” he noted.

All these challenges are interwoven with historical grievances, ethnic tensions, and governance issues. External actors with overt and covert agendas often complicate the existing political and security landscape, he highlighted.

“The human course of this crisis is immense and it

See Ethiopia callss ... Page 3



Wetlands conservation top priority for Horn countries

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

ADDIS ABABA - East Africa countries should give due attention towards wetlands conservation, by doing so, they mitigate impacts of recurrent droughts and floods, said Wetland International.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Wetlands International Eastern Africa Director Julie Mulonga said that taking the significance of wetlands for mitigating the impacts of recurrent droughts and floods, East African countries, which are exposed to recurrent drought and flooding, should deliberate on ways of conserving wetlands.

Wetlands serve as lifelines for pastoralists and other communities, the director

See Wetlands ... Page 3



Francis Omondi Ogolla

ENDF expresses condolences over death of Kenyan military chief

STAFF REPORTER

Addis Ababa - Chief of General Staff of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) Birhanu Jula expressed his condolences over the death of the Kenyan Military Chief Gen. Francis Omondi Ogolla.

See ENDF expresses ... Page 3

Addis mega projects, corridor dev't align with green growth: Mayor

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA - The existing and ongoing mega projects and corridor development have given prime attention to minimize environmental pollution and align with the aspiration to green growth, the Addis Ababa Mayor said.

Addis Ababa City Administration Environmental Protection Authority launched yesterday an advocacy campaign under the theme ‘Stop pollution, Beauty awakes’ which is said to last for the coming six months.

While opening the campaign, Mayor Adanech Abiebie said that the metropolis is surrounded by hills and mountains and covered 76 rivers that cross over 600km.

Its good weather coupled with the groundwater and preserved forest that covers 1,300km has made Addis Ababa a preferable diplomatic hub and tourist destination. However, its progress has not



been well managed as an old city with 130 years, she emphasized.

“There was a huge gap in preserving the metropolis’s natural resources that has caused pressing environmental pollution and exposed its residents to different

complications including health problems.”

The Mayor further noted that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) riverside project is among the landmark initiatives which aim

See Addis mega ... Page 3

News



Muferihat Kamil

Labor sector's new concepts expedite Ethiopia's economic progress

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA - The new concepts in the labor sector not only aim to create jobs and enhance citizens' skills, but also ensure the sustainability of Ethiopia's economic progress, the Ministry of Labor and Skills (MoLS) said.

MoLS Minister Muferihat Kamil made the above remark yesterday while opening the three-day training that is being held in collaboration with the Addis Ababa Labor and Skill Bureau and Entrepreneurship Development Institute.

The training aims to familiarize civil servants and employees of technical and vocational institutions with the sector's new concept of public entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem building.

Muferihat also highlighted that the new concepts includes not only facilitating job opportunities for citizens and enhancing their skills, but also realizing the continuity of the country's economic progress.

"The new concepts should implement four pillars to create better entrepreneurship which are the questions of existence of employer and employee, job opportunity, institution building and training."

MoLS is focusing on empowering citizens to adapt the dynamics in the labor market and providing quality services while withstanding challenges and they are expected to converting problems into opportunities. "We must have political, economic, and social missions to implement the new idea," the minister emphasized.

Addis Ababa Labor and Skills Bureau Head Tiratu Beyene mentioned that the training is important to increase the capacity of new leaders who have joined the sector.

The Bureau has carried out meticulous reforms over the past five months to provide transparent, efficient and technology-supported services and the reform has resulted in improvement in terms of human resource development and structure.

The training which is focused on policies and strategies, is instrumental to build the capacity of institution leaders and help them to implement new concepts, Tiratu remarked.

Mol says revised industrial policy instrumental to curb trade deficit

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - Ministry of Industry (MoI) stated that the revised industrial policy of Ethiopia is instrumental to balance export and import trades.

The Ministry has held an awareness creation event yesterday for stakeholders to make the policy effective together.

In his opening speech, Minister of Industry, Melaku Alebel said that the revised industrial policy is inclusive, market oriented and considers global context.

The revised policy is created relying on two pillars that enable the manufacturing sector to produce inputs at home and increase production so as to reduce reliance on imported goods, he mentioned.

The policy promotes financial support and accessibility for manufacturing industry and startups, according to the Minister.

As to him, a well regulated micro-economy and business plays vital role to encourage manufacturing industries to become competitive thereby ensure sustainable



Melaku Alebel

development utilizing conducive business environment.

The revised policy tries to balance between export and import substitution, Melaku said, adding that with imports surpassing exports by a significant margin, there is a pressing need to narrow the trade deficit by fostering and encouraging local production.

The policy takes into account the most commonly imported products in contrast with the nation's potential resources to achieve the objectives of strengthening domestic manufacturers and achieve self-reliance in industrial products, he indicated.

This policy promotes human resource development and improving working environment to increase Ethiopian product desirability on the market and promote development of manufacturing industry, he mentioned.

"Under the revised policy, we have established a committee that supports industries at federal level to encourage manufacturers by providing incentives based on their performances. We are working to make our manufacturers competitive in the global market in 6 years. But to achieve this, we need to revise our policies, our human expertise."

The policy is instrumental in coordinating of various government entities, including executive bodies at federal and state levels, the manufacturing industry council and the private sector to realize the policy's objectives, Melaku underscored.



Modern transport payment system vital to realize Digital Ethiopia: MinT

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA - Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MinT) expressed that modernizing the transport payment system would play a crucial role in realizing Digital Ethiopia 2025.

MinT State Minister Yeshurun Alemayehu (PhD) reverberated the above notion yesterday while attending the partnership event among the RIDE and VISA intended to provide cashless transport payment system.

According to the State Minister, modernizing the transport payment system is among the government priority areas designed to realize country's aspiration towards technological advancement and digitalization.

"As Addis Ababa is the third largest diplomatic hub in the world, tourists from different directions have been coming here

thereby it needs to implement modern transport payment system to create conducive environment," Yeshurun said.

The partnership between RIDE and VISA will help to modernize the transportation sector, he stated, while pledging his institute's support.

Artificial Intelligence Institute (AII) State Minister, Taye Girma (PhD) said "AII has been carrying out various activities such as extending infrastructure and establishing cloud data center in order to realize digital Ethiopia 2025."

As to Taye, encouraging stakeholders' integration is a driving force to realize digital Ethiopia and providing modernization service to the people thereby caring their interests.

On the occasion, RIDE CEO, Samrawit Fikru said that her company has been

working to advance the transportation sector and created 85,000 jobs since its establishment.

"We are thrilled to partner with VISA to offer international travelers, expats, and Diasporas a secure and convenient payment option," she noted.

VISA Country Director, Yared Endalew on his part said "At Visa, We are committed to enabling seamless and secure digital payments to everyone and everywhere. This partnership with RIDE demonstrates our dedication to support the travel and tourism industry in Ethiopia by providing international travelers with a familiar and trusted payment method."

It was to be recalled that the reformist government focus in participating private sector involvement to bring holistic development across the country.

News

Coalition advocates stakeholders' unison for child protection

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - As the root cause of child problems is lack of coordination, the collaboration of relevant stakeholders and their coordinated response are crucial to ensure children's well-being, the National Child Policy and Advocacy Coalition said.

The coalition held diplomacy and networking panel discussion and workshop on Thursday under the theme "Harmony for Hope." The workshop aims to re-invigorate solidarity, initiate close cooperation and reinforce the momentum putting civil societies, private sector and government into commitment.

Child Protection Coalition Chairperson and Woord en Daad Country Representative Epherem Shiferaw stated that ensuring children's well-being is not a task that left to a single entity; it would rather requires the collaboration and coordination of the government, private sector and civil societies.

The stakeholders are expected to conduct research on child protection and rights to know the magnitude of the problem and to forward viable solutions including offering capacity building programs, involving children themselves in their issues and others.

Noting the shortcomings in the execution and reinforcement of domestic and international child protection conventions and laws, Epherem indicated the laws' implementation remains the main focus of members of the protection coalition. "Members of the collation are advocating for the proper implementation of these conventions and laws that would contribute to overcome 50% of the current child problems."

Moreover, child protection and right highly demands awareness creation on socio-cultural values, advocacy, networking and coordination, building shared capacity and other activities. As a result, the effort requires intervening on child problem root causes, not on symptoms.

For her part, the Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations Council (ECSOC) Acting Executive Director Hana Woldegebriel said that the child issues needed state, national and international collaborations. Child protection policy issues are required the engagement and partnership of the government, private sector and other partners.

The director also expressed optimism that the panel discussion would help to create better understanding among concerned bodies in the child protection and strengthen their coordination and cooperation.

The council is also expressed its readiness to support efforts that have been exerted to ensure the well-being of Ethiopian children."

The Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA) Representative Zebidar Bogale said on the occasion that different stakeholders have been widely contributing towards the well-being of children. "However, the effort requires strengthening the coalition and cooperation between the partners."

Wetlands...

said adding that it help reduce the severity of droughts and floods. However, the increasing frequency and intensity of climate change-related events pose a significant threat to wetlands and the communities that depend on them.

Indicating that Climate change poses a significant threat to wetlands, affecting water levels, biodiversity, and ecosystem functions, she said that as temperatures rise and rainfall patterns shift, wetlands face increased pressure from floods, droughts, and habitat degradation.

Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that integrates climate change adaptation strategies into wetland conservation and management efforts, the director added.

"In response to flooding and water management challenges, East African countries must adopt proactive measures, such as early warning systems, integrated water resource management approaches, and stakeholder engagement. By incorporating scientific knowledge, policy frameworks, and community participation, governments can better prepare for and mitigate the impacts of floods and water-related disasters."

Lauding the effort of the Ethiopian government's green legacy initiatives, she said that it has potential to contribute to wetland conservation by enhancing soil stability, reducing erosion, and providing habitat for biodiversity.

However, Julie said; "The success of these efforts depends on careful species selection, community involvement, and long-term monitoring to ensure the survival and growth of planted trees."

Raising awareness, fostering collaboration, and adopting sustainable practices are essential for safeguarding wetlands in East Africa, the director also indicated; "By recognizing the value of wetlands, integrating climate change considerations, and engaging diverse stakeholders, we can work together to protect these vital ecosystems for future generations."

Ethiopia calls for collective action...

cripples development, fuels humanitarian crisis," Amb. Misganu said.

The presence of terrorism and armed conflict, not only inflict sufferings, but also exacerbates piracy and illicit trade across the vital route, therefore, he suggested that it needs urgent collective action to come together discuss for solution.

In his welcoming speech to the second series of the Horn Dialogue participants incorporated from all regional countries, Institute of Foreign Affairs Chief Executive Officer, Jafar Bdru, on his part said that the region is experiencing complex security dynamics with far-reaching consequences for its inhabitants and the

international arena at large.

"These issues transcend national boundaries and demand comprehensive and long-lasting solutions that address the root cause and foster regional stability. The situation demands immediate attention and collaborative efforts from various stakeholders, Jafar stated.

Recognizing the urgency of the situation, a diverse group of expertise from different countries, institutions and scholars have come together to discuss and develop solutions, he indicated.

Despite the challenges, the Horn region holds immense potential for regional integrity and

prosperity, he said, adding that the region can achieve security, economic prosperity and social development by leveraging the collective strengths, resources and aspirations of these member countries.

On the occasion, Senior Regional Security Analyst, Semir Yesuf (PhD) said that the regional issues happening at this time in the region require fostering relationships, collaboration and dialogue based on mutual interests.

Military actions and unilateral policy actions cannot resolve the crisis, so, it needs to make agreements with win-win approaches, he commented.

ENDF expresses condolences over...

Field marshal Birhanu, in his condolences, stated that Gen. Francis Omondi's contribution to the peace and security of his country as well as the region was significant.

Gen. Francis Omondi Ogolla will always be remembered for his contribution to peace and stability in Kenya, Field Marshal Birhanu Jula underscored, affirmed that ENDF will

stand by Kenyans at this difficult time.

The Chief of Staff has sent message of condolences on behalf of the ENDF to bereaved families and friends of the top military officers who have lost their lives in a helicopter crash.

Kenya's military chief Gen. Francis Ogolla died in a helicopter crash west of the

country, President William Ruto announced Thursday and declared three days of national mourning.

The helicopter was carrying 11 people, including Gen. Ogolla, when it crashed Thursday and caught fire in a remote area near the border with Uganda, killing nine people onboard, the president said.

Addis mega projects, corridor dev't...

to curb Addis Ababa's rampant environmental problems. The Green Legacy Initiative (GLI), which was also initiated by the Premier, has increased Ethiopia's forest coverage from 2.8 to 15%. Apart from swift image building, this and other greenery initiatives have tremendous significance in creating climate resilient and sustainable economy.

"The policy that was devised with regard to electric car is another huge commitment taken by the government to ensure green growth."

Nonetheless, Adanech indicated that the sewage system that has been operated by industries, institutions and household has remained major challenge. To this end, the sewerage system and flood management has

gained major priority in the recent corridor development.

Studies indicated that the negative impact of old vehicles in the city is 60%. By expanding the use of electric cars, the Ethiopian government could protect both its capital's economy and citizen's well-being.

Given the ever increasing population and economic growth, plastic use is rapidly intensified through time. It is causing major complication on health which needs radical change in terms of using environmental friendly materials that could be easily decayed.

She also touched up another type of pollution such as noise pollution that needs

the collaborative efforts from the society as well as institutions. Implementing different campaigns would play a pivotal role in sustaining the ongoing efforts for environment protection and enhance public awareness and implement laws and regulations are also crucial.

Mayor Adanech called on citizens, industries and institutions to contribute their share in making Addis Ababa clean, attractive and best tourist destination that could be transferred to future generations.

Addis Ababa City Administration Environmental Protection Authority Executive Director Dida Diriba on his said that the advocacy campaign has set a plan to address over 2.7 million citizens through awareness

rising.

The campaign also plans to make 4,599 blocks free from any kind of pollution. Also, each month will be dedicated to carry out massive awareness raising events on various forms of pollutions including soil, water, and noise, among others

According to him, the campaign has given due attention to curb the various forms of pollution that causes existential threat on humans and environment and. Plan also set to transform the campaign into system once it is concluded.

Highlighting the authority's engagement in environmental protection, Dida mentioned the corrective measures that are taken on institutions that violate rules and regulations.

Opinion

Rehabilitating conflict, war victims needs concerted effort

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Post-conflict rehabilitation includes and covers a series of measures targeted at reconstructing societies that have been deconstructed by conflicts, disputes, clashes and skirmishes. Whether it is war, civil unrest, or any other form of violence it will have negative impacts on the lives of the Ethiopian people who are forced to suffer from it. These people need support for their post-conflict revival. There are several aspects that are related to the survival of Ethiopians who are affected by conflicts to which they are not a party.

The major issue of survival is the termination of unnecessary conflicts. These include reconciliation, reconstruction and reintegration among people affected by conflicts. Reconciliation presupposes rebuilding trust and fostering dialogue among conflicting parties. Trust relies on positive expectations, reliance and confidence which are crucial and essential for long-term peace and stability. Trust is the basis of developing positive relationship among disputants or even armed contenders. Once trust is rooted among conflicting parties, it bears fruits for all groups and individuals.

Fostering, promoting and encouraging dialogue among conflicting parties in Ethiopia involves addressing the real grievances. It is necessary to identify the root-cause of grievance that led to conflicts in order to arrive at relevant and realistic solutions. One of the first measures in addressing conflicts is promoting forgiveness. Forgiveness, pardon and clemency create several opportunities for peaceful coexistence among individuals, communities or societies that had been engaged in clashes and collisions. These clashes might have been petty but not resolved in good time to continue with peace.

Usually, unresolved petty individual disputes develop into widespread social divergence and disagreement. These also end-up in social conflicts involving larger communities and regions in Ethiopia. To resolve these disputes it is absolutely necessary to create opportunities for adversaries to work together. It is also advisable to avoid, as much as possible, foreign elements from getting involved in the domestic affairs of Ethiopians. These elements might create hurdles that prevent peaceful resolution of disputes for achieving common development goals.

Rehabilitation of local people affected by conflicts requires rebuilding of physical infrastructures. These include the building of roads, bridges, schools, and hospitals. Infrastructural development demands huge investment, skilled personnel, machineries, building materials and other inputs. Some of these are imported materials that require foreign exchange.

Conflicts also lead to the destruction of roads and bridges. Similarly, schools and hospitals require imported inputs which could not be

produced domestically. Apart from these social services, construction of homes is crucial for restoring normal conditions and for providing essential services to communities affected by conflict. These services are discontinued in communities negatively affected by conflicts and clashes. The rehabilitation of social services required huge investment, mainly in foreign exchange. In other words, the rehabilitation efforts involve local and external assistance.

Demobilization and reintegration of disarmed combatants involved in conflicts and wars is crucial for preventing the recurrence of violence. It is possible to have demobilized combatants that are not disarmed. If they are not treated carefully and peacefully, they may refuse to reintegrate into the society. They may be engaged in armed robbery and other violent acts. There is the possibility of maltreating them by members of the society who had suffered from internal conflicts.

It is possible that some people may not be targeted during conflict, yet they suffer from its effects. These may be physical harm or mental disorders affecting the non-combatants. Also relatives of combatants feel the danger of being exposed at the end of the social conflict. These and others who suffered from the effect of the conflict become disturbed until the clash and its social divergence come to an end. The ending of the conflict is a turning point toward reintegration, which becomes the Task of Tantalus, difficult to perform. If those people affected by conflicts are optimistic and confident of achieving peace, law and order, they are bound to reintegrate into civilian life.

Reintegration is an essential precondition for preventing a return to violence. It may include providing job training, education and psychological support. Those who have participated in armed violence may need training in skills that help them easily engage in productive employment. Some may want to continue with their education at a level they had achieved before they engaged in violent combat, warfare or fighting.

Some combatants may be mentally disturbed, needing professional support to comfortably participate in their society. Former combatants may need other services to help them transition to peaceful participation in society. Once they are accepted by the society, they feel some sense of equal participation in their own community. They also feel that they enjoy justice and rule of law in their community. In this regard, it is absolutely necessary to establish mechanisms for accountability not to repeat past mistakes in committing violence within the society. Of course, justice is vital for addressing past atrocities committed against society by violent actors.

Those persons who willingly and willfully caused destabilization of the community or society through armed conflicts should pledge to defend law and order in their place of residence and other areas. These measures help in preventing future conflicts.

This may, however, involve prosecuting war crimes, establishing truth and reconciliation commissions. These commissions are instrumental in digging out the truth that would help in creating peace in the society.

If the truth is difficult to dig out, the society continues to suffer from rounds of crimes that destabilize the political, economic and social linkages and ties of the society. This would create a fertile ground for the germination of crimes against innocent people. Unchecked crimes cause rounds of violence that bleed the members of the society who have not participated in it. The innocent people are forced to shed their blood for which there would be no accountability. In a society that suffers from the absence of accountability and responsibility it is, therefore, absolutely essential to reform the legal systems to ensure equal protection under the law.

People residing in war affected areas need humanitarian assistance. Providing humanitarian aid such as food, water, shelter, and medical care to displaced people is critical for their survival. It is crucial to address the immediate needs of the Ethiopian people who are displaced due to conflicts.

It is necessary to prepare for the prevention of further suffering in the aftermath of clashes. These humanitarian activities may need the support of agencies concerned with provision of aid to those who are in need of it. These agencies may be in contact with external institutions that are involved in gathering actual humanitarian support at the global level. They usually operate in the rich countries of the world where humanitarian assistance may be acquired. In these countries, individuals are willing to provide financial and material assistance to the people of war trodden countries. Their support flows to countries that have been negatively affected by conflicts. The aid agencies operating in these countries ensure that the aid is reaching those people who are negatively affected by wars, skirmishes and conflicts. Such aid is useful for rehabilitating people affected by conflicts.

The rehabilitation of people that are negatively affected by war and conflicts need economic development for their future survival. Creating opportunities for sustainable economic development and growth requires tremendous efforts by all concerned. They have to begin with poverty reduction among people who suffered from conflicts. During conflicts, innocent people could not work productively to provide means of survival for their families.

Poverty reduction presupposes the promotion of stability in which war affected people may engage in productive employment. These actions demand identification of the root causes of conflicts that help in reaching relevant solutions. Productive engagement in economic sectors would help people earn income for maintaining enjoyable standard of living. This may involve the development

of sectors of the economy including agriculture, industry, and services sectors. The development of these sectors promotes individuals dedicated for the rehabilitation of people who are affected by conflicts.

Social scientists are of the opinion that political reform is a useful instrument for resolving social conflicts. In this regard, building "inclusive and democratic" institutions is essential. It promotes stability and prevents the reemergence of conflicts. This may call for the reform of relevant governance arrangements and organizations. These institutions are important for the promotion of political participation of all citizens of Ethiopia without any form of differentiation. Such arrangement may ensure respect for human rights and the rule of law. These rights should not remain on paper only, but they should be practiced by all Ethiopians irrespective of age, sex, ethnic and regional affiliations. These measures may help in ensuring inclusiveness and promoting democratic aspirations. In this regard, the three branches of government such as the Legislative, Executive and the Judiciary should be in a better position to execute their duties and responsibilities as provided in the Constitution. These institutions should preserve law and order and control conflicts for the rehabilitation and survival of people.

In post-conflict situations, it is absolutely essential to empower Ethiopian communities through the instrumentality of elders and religions persons. Engaging local communities in the decision-making process on issues that affect the lives of the people in their locality is of the essence. Empowerment is nothing but authority or power of the people to decide on matters that affect their lives. It is the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling their lives and claiming rights as Ethiopian citizens. Empowering them to take ownership of their own development is critical.

It is absolutely essential for building resilience and promoting sustainable peace within communities. These developments also ensure peace, law and order in the country, enabling people to be confident, showing certainty about anything. They are sure of themselves and their abilities to perform anything. They have inner knowledge of their capability and they feel secure rather than insecure.

In post-conflict situations, Ethiopians will, therefore, live in peace and prosperity. They will also be engaged in the reconstruction and development of peaceful and prosperous future for all, irrespective of vicious identification and differentiation imposed on them by aliens. These will surely contribute to the rehabilitation of the Ethiopian people affected by conflicts.

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

Editorial

Liberalization of trade sector: A timely policy reform

The Ethiopian Investment Board has issued a new directive outlining that foreign investors can engage in specific trade investments. The board has unveiled a new directive to regulate foreign investors' participation in previously reserved businesses including export, import, wholesale and retail trade investments.

It seems impractical nowadays promoting restriction forever economically, politically and socially since the dynamic world is ever changing as the globalization is overwhelming our planet through digital advancement. Being isolated is not only impossible this time; it rather imposes adverse impact especially on the economic activities of a country and Ethiopia is not unique in this regard.

Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC) Commissioner Hanna Arayaselassie briefed recently the details of the new directive that will create better competitiveness and increase quality in trade investment. She stated that the government has taken privatization measures to realize the homegrown economic reform in a bid to ensure competitiveness of businesses.

Accordingly, the objective of this directive is to list out investment areas in the export, import, wholesale and retail trade sectors reserved for domestic investors in which foreign investors may participate, establish the conditions that apply, and indicate details of the facilitation and regulatory functions of the appropriate government bodies.

The policy reform the government has recently formed will take into account several advantages. The decision speeds up the journey to prosperity the country is pursuing. Without belittling the impact the presence of foreign investors pose on indigenous investors as a result of capital imbalance, and the gap in terms of experience, knowledge and technology, liberalizing the sector worth more even for the local investors in myriads of ways like enabling them integrate into the global trade value chain, and eventually transit to value-added investments. In so doing, they become competent in the global market by providing standard products in quality and quantity.

Importantly, enacting the directive will stabilize the market via encouraging fair competition so that local consumers can purchase commodities with reasonable price. Also it avails our country in utilizing its resources of different kinds that could not provide any significant use to date. To tell the truth, our country is blessed with natural surface, underground and aquatic resources as well as productive labor but benefited a minimum partly because of lack of finance, knowledge and technology and largely because of the restrictive policies the previous governments used to apply.

Now, however, it is the time to level the ground for investors from all corners of the world to play as per the requirements the directive has put. For the country to exploit its resources properly, the presence of foreign investors here with their accumulated experience, finance and technology is commendable for the reason that domestic investors gain experience which gives them opportunity to participate in the global market.

As Ethiopia is drudging to get membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) that requires competency in terms of quality and quantity of the products, the experience Ethiopian inventors will acquire from foreign investors is of paramount importance in this regard. In line with this, the country will earn hard currency via exporting value added products especially from the products local investors export. Moreover, knowledge and technology transfer benefits Ethiopian youths to get employment in various aspects of business.



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Opinion

On the 5th International Chinese Language Day

BY ZHAO ZHIYUAN

This April 20th marks the 15th “United Nations Chinese Language Day” and the 5th “International Chinese Language Day” themed on “Chinese Language: Connecting Cultures through the Bridge of Mutual Learning”. On this occasion, I would like to extend my warm congratulations and best wishes to Chinese learners in Ethiopia and across the world.

The establishment of the Chinese Language Days epitomizes the popularity and attraction of Chinese traditional culture. In 2010 when the UN launched the Language Day Initiative to maintain the equal use of its six official languages and cultural diversity, the organization decided to set up UN Chinese Language Day on April 20th, the day of Grain Rain—one of the 24 Chinese solar terms—to commemorate the contributions of Cang Jie, ancestor of Chinese characters. It is a day to promote the international application of Chinese language, showcase the charm of Chinese culture, and further enhance communication and mutual understanding. Based on the UN Chinese Language Day, the first International Chinese Language Day was celebrated on April 20th, 2020. Since then, more than 180 countries and regions have been celebrating the event every year, which strengthens communication and exchanges among different peoples and civilizations.

Chinese language, as an important carrier of Chinese time-honored civilization, bears the concept of peace, harmony, openness, coexistence, inclusiveness and shared destiny. Its appeal gets the Chinese language community larger and larger. As of 2022, more than 30 million people have been learning Chinese in more than 80,000 schools and training institutes in 180 countries and regions. Chinese language has been part of 81 countries' national education systems. Thanks to the language with the most speakers worldwide, information can reach more people and be better received around the world.

The popularity of Chinese learning contributes to the removing of cultural barriers and the enhancing of mutual understanding in an era when changes of the world, of our times, and of historical significance are unfolding like never before. We feel more than ever that mankind share the weal and woe in a community with a shared future. At the Central Conference on Work Relating to Foreign Affairs held last year in

Beijing, it was pointed out that China has advocated the building of a community with a shared future for mankind, pointing the right direction for human society leading to common development, lasting peace and security, and mutual learning between civilizations. President Xi Jinping also proposed the Global Civilization Initiative (GCI), providing an important direction for advancing inter-civilizational exchanges and mutual learning, and promoting the progress of human civilization.

Ethiopia is a showcase of cultural diversity where different cultures enrich and inspire one another. In his remarks at the 44th session of the African Union Executive Council this year, His Excellency Foreign Minister Taye Atske Selassie proposed the inclusion of Amharic as the official language of the AU. His proposal reflects that our Ethiopian brothers and sisters share the pride with Chinese people in our respective cultures. China will, as always, join hands with Ethiopia to inject new impetus to cultural exchanges and communication to realize harmonious coexistence between different civilizations in pursuit of world peace, common development and a brighter future—a vision of the GCI. A golden example is the mutual learning of languages of our two countries. Chinese is taught in two Confucius Institutes in Ethiopia and Amharic Language and Literature has become a major in a Chinese university. This forges closer people-to-people ties and strengthens mutual understanding. Both languages are spoken by great peoples, carry profound wisdom and civilization, and play an increasingly significant role in developing our all-weather strategic partnership. To usher in an even more promising future of common development and prosperity, we need not only bricks, steel and concrete, but also empathy, friendship and mutual understanding. Therefore, apart from mutual learning of languages, more and more cooperation projects in education, training, and people-to-people exchanges are expected. To this end, both China and Ethiopia should give a full play to BRICS, FOCAC and other cooperation frameworks.

As a Chinese saying goes, “a single flower does not make spring, while one hundred flowers in full blossom bring spring to the garden.” I am fully confident that China and Ethiopia can work together to promote cultural diversity and make the GCI deliver for each and everyone. Let us embrace a more culturally colorful world!

The author is Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of The People's Republic of China to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

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

Art & Culture

Ethiopian music exponent

(ORIGINAL STORY BY BEZA ESHETU FROM ADDIS ZEMEN, TRANSLATION/ADAPTION BY ALEM HAILU G/K)

Muluken Melese was born in 1954 to his priest father Tamer Tiruneh and to his mother Enatenesh Getahun at Eneded Wereda Kidanemheret village in the then Gojam province during a time when the abode, vicinity and home were serene.

A handsome kid, he was a favorite for all. Often, his father went to church carrying a book bearing the psalm of David in his right hand and dragging Muluken on the left hand. He did so out of his interest to instill religiosity in the latter's mind. That is why Muluken somewhat acquired the skill of beating a drum as well as the art of possessing podium in style and standing before the target audience as befitting a melody staged.

As he had four sisters and three brothers, his world was foregrounded by considerateness and love.

About his name, it is just like the famous singer GG put it "I have no name at home!" Here the logic is if someone is given many names s/he becomes nameless as the mathematicians refer to this thing as undefined supplying the example that when one divides a number by zero the quotient could assume many numbers making the division process indefinite or unspecified. His sister called him Muluken (a full/bright day) a name which became the one he introduced himself to his music fans. His mother used to call him Mulusew (Faculties intact person), for she suffered a miscarriage before she gave birth to him and faced complications when delivering his four eldest siblings. To his mother's relief, he was born with lesser labor in the ward room.

His father, who was involved in a court case related to a land feud, preferred to call his chubby and light skinned son Semachew, which literary means listen to them/the accusers. Gradually, among all the names the one by which his sister referred to him got the upper hand.

Following the death of Muluken's much-beloved mother at his early age, life could not be rosy for him as before in that cozy house. In this period of bereavement his maternal uncle Melese Gesese who used to live in Addis came to their home to visit them.

During those days it was a fad taking a provincial child as a foster child to look after for his/her better upkeep such as education and town's life. Among the 8 children, Melese chose Muluken to bring him up under his wings.

Muluken began to live in Addis at a village called Kolfe. Just like his friends, he was sent to a local school. His uncle wrote the name Muluken Melese on the latter's exercise book. From that day on that name became Muluken's legitimate name.

Though he grew up at his uncle's house, life could not be less unbearable for him as he could not come to terms with his aunt-in-law. While harboring resentment, he heard about a non-governmental organization in his vicinity that took care of orphans and helpless senior

citizens. Without hesitancy he went there and got registered outright. He became the favorite kid of the organization especially to the manager. He was given the nickname Elvis. Staffers, who went out of the compound for some duties, used to gift him with clothes. Many promised to him that they would send him abroad for education when he came of age.

Following the opening of a music department in the NGO, he began to take musical lesson parallel to the educational ones. After a six-month stay at the NGO, he went to his hometown upon hearing the sickness of his sister.

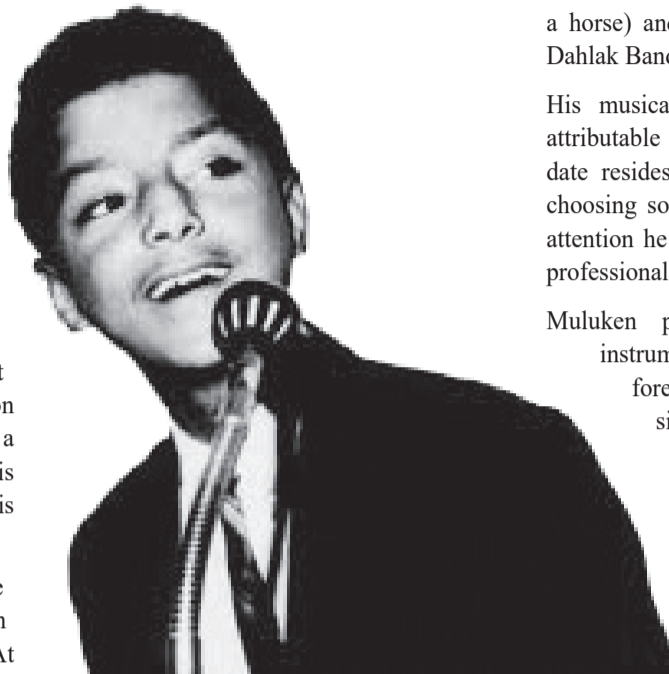
Up on return to Addis, he didn't resume his education at the NGO. Rather, hired in pastries, he began fending for himself. At sundown, as it was a custom, he used to hang out with peers. One day, before they knew it members of the circle stayed late into the night engrossed in chitchatting to their hearts' content. To see off a member of their circle they went out into the street up to Webe Bereha, a village heavily populated by bars with dazzling lights that illumine the night accentuated by jazz beats. The strange thing he saw impressed him. Among the bars that hosted magnetizing night clubs, one bar stood out. Getting closer they checked out what is going on in that bar. Soon, they realized its being a bar where an orchestra called Patries Lumumba often staged a fast orchestra.

Shortly, they learnt Asegedech Alamerew was the owner of the hot bar. When Muluken asked a shop owner nearby, "If I ask the lady for a job, will she respond in the affirmative?" offering him a pen and a paper, the shopper responded, "Why don't you ask her in black and white?" Getting into the bar Muluken handed over the paper to the organizer of the orchestra, who laughed to his heart's content upon receiving an application letter from the little boy. The organizer downplayed the case. But Asegedech was observing what was going on from afar. She asked an explanation to the strange situation. With unzipped lips, the organizer told her that the kid wanted us to hire him if he qualified taking exam.

"Give him an exam; if he qualifies, I will hire him. Otherwise, I will offer him another job," said Asegedech. It was a time when Muluken was imitating Tilahun so he perfectly reenacted Tilahun's songs with barefoot and short. A ventriloquist, he sang "Le Ewenet Emotalehu Alsasame lenefse (I will day for the sake of the truth; I will not bat an eye to take my own life) and Enkerdad Enkerdad (Weed, weed)

Occupants of the bar who were stunned by his astounding talent contributed money to him that night organizing an impromptu fundraiser. On the morrow, occupants of the bar that night bought to him a khaki cloth. Suit followed suit. He also put on a new pair of shoes. A contract agreement was signed between the owner of the bar and the little boy Muluken. According to the contract, Muluken had to sing every night in the bar and Asegedech had to pay him a monthly salary of 90 birr. At that time 90 birr was too much.

Regarding the ecstatic feeling he experienced, in 1981, in an interview he held with the famous



journalist and author Sebat Gebregziabhere in Tsedey Magazine, Muluken reminisced "Like a millionaire I felt like I was over the moon."

The handsome boy gifted with a dulcet voice and dexterity quickly adapted the life of the nightclub. Often, he grabbed the attention of entertainers. During his grasshopper years, he turned a sought-after musician. But that too was short-lived, for members of the Police Orchestra set their eyes on him. They spent no time to sweet talk him into joining their club. There too he became the youngest musician cherished by many. The famous song verse writers Solomon Tessema and Tesfaye Abebe (Gashe) tailored for him many verses. Solomon produced the verse Yezelealem Enkilfe (Everlasting sleep), while Tesfaye Yalejenet (That Childhood) Enate Setweldegn Meche Amakerechegn (When my mother gave birth to me, did she consult me?) Embaye Lomi Meslo (My tears trickled down like lemons) He sang them superbly.

Even if he played his original music in the Police Orchestra enjoying the opportunity of going to different places and multiplying over his fans' base, he quitted his job of his own volition to join private music bands. Though he worked with the Dahelak Band for a longer period he had briefly worked with Ethio Star Band, Equators Band and Roha Band. He as well had worked with Mulatu Astateke.

After he stopped working with the orchestras above, he had released two Albums called Yezelalem Enkelef (Rverlasting sleep) "Yalayenew Yelem" (There is nothing we haven't seen). Following this, his fame went far and wide.

The following songs are found among the short list of favorite songs of the listening public Hodenew Telatesh (My stomach is your enemy), Swenetwa (Her elegance), Mewdeden Wededkut (I liked my loving). Yeregem YehLebe (Let this heart of mine be cursed), Webet (pretty), Wetete Mare (My milk and honey), Menew krefede (Why after it is too late?), Nanu Nanu Neye (Come come Nanu), Tenesh Kelebelaye (Get off my heart) Weha welawaye (Water the vacillator).

For him, in musical composition and perfection Swenetwa and Hodenew Telatesh ranks top, while in performance Chebelew (Spur

a horse) and Webet he sang accentuated by Dahlak Band Mulatu Astateke as a composer.

His musical talent set aside, the reasons attributable to the popularity of his music to date resides in the caution he exercised in choosing song verses and musical notes, the attention he accorded and his chemistry with professionals in the field.

Muluken perfectly plays many musical instruments including drums. He had foregrounded the works of many singers as a drummer. Though a 37-year time had elapsed ever since he kissed music goodbye, he has still possessed the cherished corner of citizens as one of the prominent singers of Ethiopia. Surprisingly, youngsters born after he ceased singing opt to tune to his music.

As the saying goes haste makes waste, when it comes producing music, Muluken did not let the door ajar for haste. He took time to choose and pick lyrics and musical notes offered to him by professionals in the field. He had sensitive ears. So, he rejected works that did not satisfy him and amended some that begged for improvement. Sometimes, he blended two or more proposed works to come up with best lyric and note compositions. That has rendered his works peculiarly engrossing.

Once, the versatile artist Alemtsehay Wedajo, who gave to Muluken many song verses, did note that Muluken was a singer who contributed a lot for the betterment of the royalty payment of lyric writers and musical note composers. That ice-breaker move has propelled Ethiopian Music forward. That is why many musicians see Muluken as an exponent of Ethiopian music.

Though his name is still on the lips of many, it was only for 17 years he sang secular songs. Turning his back to nonreligious songs he spent 37 years devoted to the religious ones. The time he quitted singing marks a time when he was basking under fame, enjoying handsome financial returns and experiencing an upward trajectory in fans' big interest in him. As such nobody expected a 180-degree turn. That is why many musical fans were saddened when he gave up worldly music.

According to Muluken, he was inclined to atheism as he didn't win a lottery ticket after praying to God to bath him with fortune.

Tagging his colloquies he started going to church and listening to preaching. Soon he gave up drinking and smoking.

In the meantime, he went to America to sing for a year and half. As to him, once, hearing a voice from God "Stop earthly music", he quitted worldly music and resorted to religious ones like "I'm a soldier of God".

He spent the past 37 years in America Virginia and never returned back to Ethiopia. Undergoing medical treatment for long, he passed away at the age 70 on 9 April 2024. On 12 April 2024 he was laid to rest in America where he spent the longer portion of his life.

We express condolences to his relatives and fans upon their bereavement.

Law & Politics

EU - AU multifaceted cooperation, achieving common objectives

BY EYUEL KIFLU

As the world navigates an increasingly complex geopolitical landscape, the relationship between the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU) has taken on renewed significance. Once marked by a history of colonial ties and uneven power dynamics, this crucial partnership is now undergoing a remarkable transformation, driven by a shared vision for a more just and prosperous global order. The relation of the two bloc dates back to the 2000 summit in Cairo, Egypt.

At the heart of this evolving collaboration is the shared challenges faced by both blocs from the climate change crisis and global health threats to the need for sustainable economic development and strengthened security cooperation. Recognizing the limitations of unilateral action, the AU and EU have embarked on a path to a deeper integration and coordinated policymaking.

One area of growing cooperation is the fight against climate change. The AU's ambitious Green Recovery Action Plan coupled with the EU's European Green Deal have laid the groundwork for joint initiatives to accelerate the transition to renewable energy, protect biodiversity, and build climate-resilient infrastructure across the African continent. Working with Africa in renewable energy is beneficial because of the continent's untapped resource potential in this sector.

Beyond environmental cooperation, the AU-EU partnership is also expanding into spheres of security, trade, and digital transformation. Joint efforts to combat terrorism, strengthen border management, and foster inclusive economic growth are creating new avenues for mutually beneficial collaboration.

As the world is experiencing an era of geopolitical shifts and emerging challenges, the strengthening of the AU-EU alliance stands as a beacon of hope. By capitalizing on their complementary assets and leveraging their collective influence, the two regional blocs are poised to spearhead transformative change on a global scale.

In a recent briefing, Javier Nino Perez, the EU ambassador to the AU, shared insights into the evolving partnership. The EU has pledged to invest 150 billion Euros over the next few years to support the African Union's development. The EU also works with civil society, local authorities, and youth representatives to promote people-to-people contact and cooperation through initiatives like the Erasmus Student Exchange Program and collaborations between African and European artists.

Ambassador Nino Perez emphasized the importance of listening to each other and learning from each other's experiences, particularly in the areas of human rights, science, technology, and innovation. He



noted that the EU is committed to sharing its knowledge and expertise with Africa to foster the development of the latter.

The ambassador also discussed the EU's substantial investments in Africa, totalling around 279 billion dollars. "Our cooperation extends beyond the political sphere. We have vibrant cultural initiatives that bring together artists from the two blocs and promoting people-to-people connections. And our dialogue covers a wide range of issues - from human rights to science, technology and innovation," he said.

Addressing human rights challenges in both continents, Perez stressed the need for mutual learning and support. "Europe is a continent where we have many tensions and issues related to inequality and the rise of the extreme right," he acknowledged.

According to Perez another critical area of cooperation with Africa is energy. Africa has immense renewable energy potential, yet receives only 2% of global investments in this sector. The EU is committed to change this and work on to bring sustainable energy solutions to the continent, Perez said. "We invest in education, vaccine production, and every sector we deem vital for Africa's development," he added.

Beyond economic engagement, the EU is actively involved in peace and security operations across the continent, deploying European police and military personnel. "We come here. We bring money, and together with our African friends and brothers, we risk our lives," with over 13 joint EU-Africa operations tackling challenges like piracy and terrorism, Perez stated.

However, the issue of migration remains a sensitive one. While acknowledging the political challenges in Europe, the ambassador emphasized the potential benefits of well-managed migration. "Migrants don't go to Europe to kill and steal. Migrants go to Europe to work," he said.

Perez also underscored the EU's

commitment to multilateralism, noting the difficulties in bringing together diverse member states, just as the AU faces in connecting its 55 members. "The only way to deal with conflicts and challenges is to do it collectively and peacefully, and to do it by obeying international laws," he asserted.

Looking to the future, the ambassador expressed the EU's belief in regard to African integration potential, drawing parallels to the European experience. "We believe that one day Africans will be able

to travel to another country freely," he said, highlighting progress in areas such as electronic visas and the establishment of a continental free trade area.

"The EU provides a staggering 40 percent of the African Union Commission's budget - a testament to our belief in the AU's dream for a more integrated, prosperous Africa," he added.

Also, on his stay with The Ethiopian Herald recently, the ambassador said that regarding health, the EU wants to increase the capacity of Africa to produce vaccines and medicine, health security, quality of health services, and decrease the inequality in access to services. We are launching significant investment to increase the capacity of vaccine production through a project 'MAV+' with four African countries: Ghana, Senegal, South Africa, and Rwanda to increase the vaccine production. It is more than one billion Euros investment. EU also wanted to help Africa on the environment and renewable energy, the Ambassador elucidated.

In addition, the EU is supporting African initiatives to establish a single market on aviation and transport, and a single electricity market hoping to help 600 million Africans who do not have access to electricity, adding, "It is taking our work to a different level to a more strategic one under African ownership and leadership," noted the ambassador.

Europe is the largest development and humanitarian assistance provider, and it is also the largest investing and trading partner with Africa. African initiatives backed by the EU are crucial to the continent's development.

Overall, the evolving partnership between the two blocs holds immense promise for a more just and prosperous global future by capitalizing on their shared challenges and leveraging their collective influence.

The AU-EU collaboration has expanded into diverse spheres, from climate action and sustainable development to security, trade, and digital transformation. Through joint initiatives, the two unions are addressing pressing issues such as the climate crisis, global health threats, and the need for inclusive economic growth.

Moreover, the EU's substantial investments in Africa, amounting to billions of euros have the power to benefit both sides. The huge African resources in different aspects such as: human power, mineral, arable land and many other blessings are favourable to work and invest in Africa. The continent has also overcome different challenges and learnt from them and it takes its own ways for the solution. The time to wait for others must be stopped for Africa, and investing in education and technology is very crucial for the continent's development. Enhancing mutual partnership is a key move for the AU and forges strategic bond with blocs like EU.

The evolving partnership between the two blocs holds immense promise for a more just and prosperous global future by capitalizing on their shared challenges and leveraging their collective influence



Time to take our wetlands more seriously!

Julie Mulonga

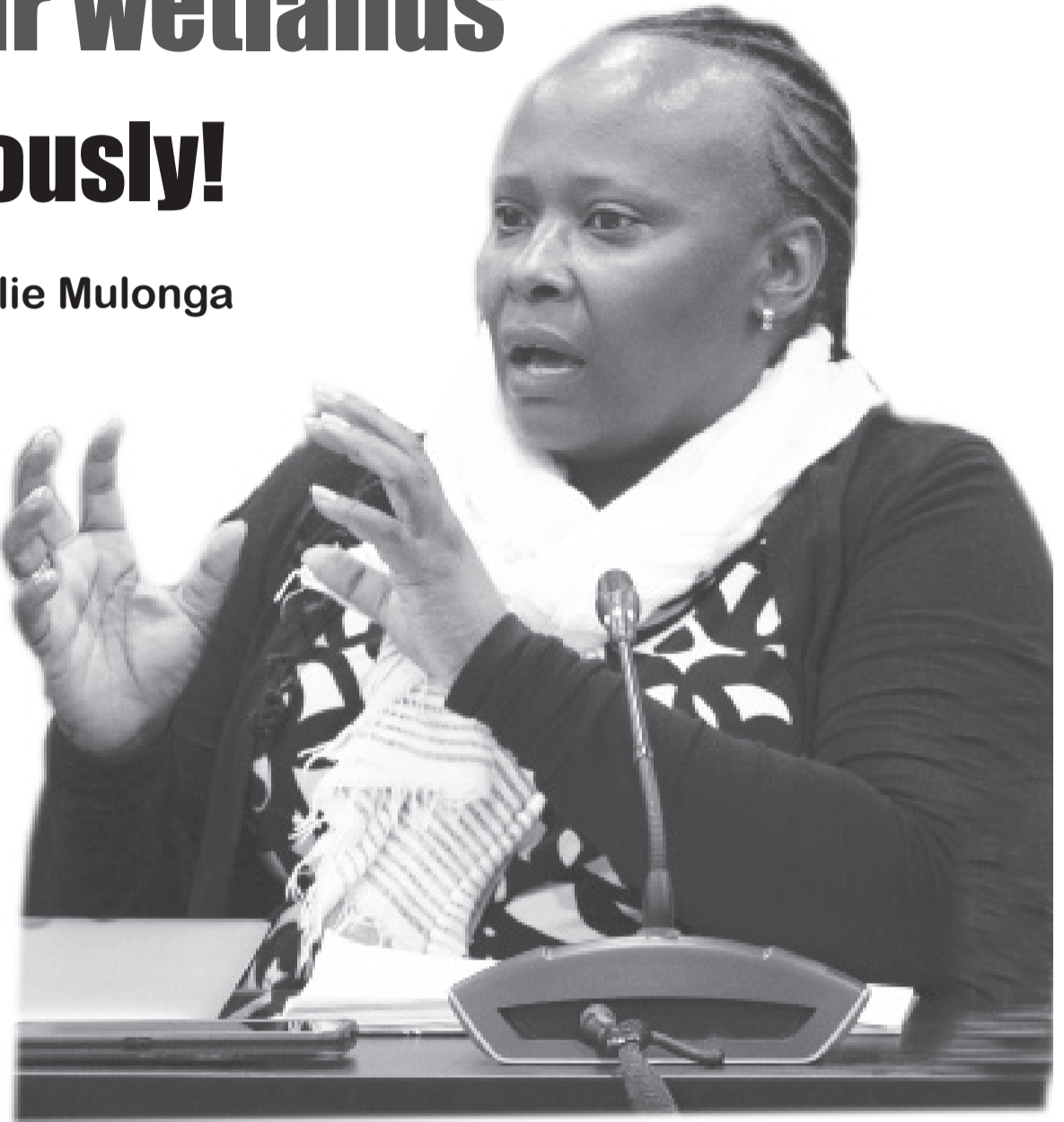
BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Today's guest, Julie Mulonga, is currently a Director of Wetlands International Eastern Africa. After completing her primary and secondary education, she obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Biology, followed by a postgraduate diploma in Integrated Water Resources Management, and a Master of Science in Environmental Planning and Management.

Currently, she is pursuing a PhD in Climate Change & Adaptation to gain a better understanding of the vulnerabilities of communities living adjacent to wetlands.

Over the past 24 years, she has worked in the water resources management sector for both the government and NGOs. Streams that once flowed freely through her neighborhood when she was a young girl no longer exist or are heavily polluted. Her concern over the depleting water resources inspired her to passionately work in the sector.

While working with Wetlands International for the past 11 years, as the Director of East Africa, she considers the opening of new offices in Tanzania, Uganda, and Ethiopia to be one of her proudest moments. During her time in Ethiopia for wetland-related tasks, The Ethiopian Herald had a brief stay to learn more about the causes and measures taken in the East Africa region to protect the ecosystem in general, and wetlands in particular. Enjoy the read!



Let us start our discussion by elaborating the meaning and significance of conserving wetland in general?

Wetlands are areas where land meets water, typically six meters or less according to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. These areas play a vital role in water storage, regulation, and purification, often referred to as the "kidneys of the earth." Despite their importance, wetlands are often misunderstood and undervalued, leading to their degradation and destruction.

The impacts of climate change and the stress on freshwater resources is in large part due to the loss and degradation of wetlands. In turn, the changing climate means the world's water is under unprecedented pressure, impacting human and food security.

But water – and wetlands – are not just victims of the climate and nature crises, they are central to solving them. With 35% loss globally in the last 50 years, mainly driven by land-use change, wetlands are our most threatened ecosystem, disappearing three times faster than forests.

Africa needs to restore and reconnect wetlands across all landscapes to increase resilience and reduce the impact of floods, wildfires and droughts. Reconnecting wetlands across natural landscapes and halting drainage is the basis for solving the challenges of water, food, climate, land degradation and sustainable economies.

In East Africa, wetlands play a crucial role in mitigating the impacts of recurrent droughts and floods. By storing and slowly releasing water, wetlands serve as lifelines for pastoralists and other communities, helping to reduce the severity of droughts and floods. However, the increasing frequency and intensity of climate change-related events pose a significant threat to wetlands and the communities that depend on them.

We are part of Wetlands International, a global NGO based in the Netherlands, making us an international organization. Our primary focus is on the conservation and restoration of wetlands, and we are the only organization that exclusively concentrates on wetlands. With years of experience in the field, we have been actively engaged in Ethiopia for the past five years, working on various programs ranging from policy issues, education, community involvement, wetland restoration, livelihood support, and facilitating consensus among stakeholders on critical wetland issues.

Wetlands International was established in 1959, initially as an organization dedicated to bird conservation. However, the realization that birds depend on critical wetland habitats led us to expand our focus to wetlands in collaboration with other organizations, leading to our current identity as Wetlands International.

By storing and slowly releasing water, wetlands serve as lifelines for pastoralists and other communities, helping to reduce the severity of droughts and floods

Could you tell us more about the Ramsar convention?

The Convention on Wetlands is the intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. The Convention was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971 and came into force in 1975.

Its mission covers the wise use of wetlands for their ecosystems and also their water resources. The Convention therefore works particularly closely with the six other biodiversity-related Conventions, and with those concerned with water governance.

The Convention has devoted a great deal of effort to developing synergies with these other environment-related instrument. There are several countries who are party to this convention, including most countries in Eastern Africa, though Ethiopia is yet to become party to the Ramsar Convention. Indeed, they are still working on it.

As you know, the East African countries are exposed for recurrent drought. So what is the very factor for this?

Now, picking up from where I left off, wetlands are important because they store that water. Then during the drought period, they release the water very slowly. So, we actually refer to them as blue lifelines, because they support, especially the pastoralists, this is where they get their water from.

continued to page 9

Time to take our wetlands ...

Apart from that, when there are a lot of floods, these wetlands are actually able to absorb some of those floods. So they are actually able to help with attenuating or reducing the force of droughts. So you find in some watersheds where the wetlands have been removed, there is nothing to actually hold that water. So the water actually ends up going with a lot of force, and it destroys certain places. So we are not only talking about droughts, but we are also talking about floods that affect communities.

Right now we are hearing about a lot of communities being washed away by the floods. But I believe if there were wetlands there, they would be able to hold this water and prevent it from washing villages and communities in other areas. So in terms of droughts, they are very critical.

If we are able to conserve a lot of these wetlands, I believe a lot of communities would be able to get water from them during the dry period.

Would you please tell us about the best practice gained so far and the challenge you have faced in conserving the wetlands in the east African countries?

Through our work in East African countries, we have witnessed several best practices in wetland protection and management. Countries like Uganda have implemented robust wetland policies and management plans, emphasizing the importance of community engagement, livelihood support, and capacity building. These initiatives have led to tangible improvements in wetland conservation and restoration efforts, showcasing the positive impact of integrated approaches to wetland management.

Challenges in expanding our programs in East Africa include establishing partnerships, navigating diverse regulatory environments, and ensuring effective community engagement. Building trust, capacity, and awareness among stakeholders is essential for the successful implementation of wetland conservation initiatives.

Climate change poses a significant threat to wetlands, affecting water levels, biodiversity, and ecosystem functions. As temperatures rise and rainfall patterns shift, wetlands face increased pressure from floods, droughts, and habitat degradation. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that integrates climate change adaptation strategies into wetland conservation and management efforts.

Flooding is one of the serious challenges that the east African countries are facing? What should be the role played by the East African countries in that regard?

In response to flooding and water management challenges, East African countries must adopt proactive measures, such as early warning systems, integrated water resource management approaches, and stakeholder engagement. By incorporating scientific knowledge, policy frameworks, and community participation, governments can better prepare for and mitigate the



By identifying key landscapes like Lake Hawassa, the organization aims to implement sustainable interventions for better management

impacts of floods and water-related disasters.

The Ethiopian government's tree planting initiatives have the potential to contribute to wetland conservation by enhancing soil stability, reducing erosion, and providing habitat for biodiversity. However, the success of these efforts depends on careful species selection, community involvement and long-term monitoring to ensure the survival and growth of planted trees.

In conclusion, raising awareness, fostering collaboration, and adopting sustainable practices are essential for safeguarding wetlands in East Africa. By recognizing the value of wetlands, integrating climate change considerations, and engaging diverse stakeholders, we can work together to protect these vital ecosystems for future generations.

How are countries in the horn managing their water resources? Construction of dams is contributed for the existence of artificial wetlands. Would you comment in that?

Someone is polluting the water. Who is responsible for this pollution? How will they be held accountable? We are starting to realize some important things that I appreciate. In the past, small-scale producers used water without considering the amount they were using. Now, there is a growing awareness that people need to recognize and be accountable for the water they use. Previously, they would extract water from rivers without considering the impact. This issue is now being taken more seriously, especially in African countries.

One positive development is the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)

approach, which brings stakeholders in the catchment area together. For example, in Ethiopia, the Rift Valley platform has been established to bring together various stakeholders, including the private sector and government. This initiative, led by the government, is a powerful step towards better water management.

Regarding artificial wetlands created by dams, there is controversy surrounding their construction. While dams provide benefits like hydroelectric power and water for agriculture, there are concerns about their impact on water bodies. It is essential to conduct thorough studies to understand and mitigate these effects. Development cannot be halted, but it can be informed by science to ensure a win-win situation for wetlands, governments, and communities.

Apart from raising awareness of the society, what are the major areas of intervention that your organization provides?

In terms of Wetlands International's support for communities and governments, youth engagement is crucial. Youth and school children play a vital role in spreading awareness about wetlands to their families and communities. Additionally, the organization lobbies for funding to support projects, such as the one in Ethiopia supported by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). By targeting different levels of stakeholders, including governments and donors, Wetlands International aims to make a positive impact.

My recent visit to Hawassa involved

planning for the next six years until 2030 to align the organization's strategies with national and international initiatives. The focus is on addressing wetland issues strategically and tapping in to available resources. By identifying key landscapes like Lake Hawassa, the organization aims to implement sustainable interventions for better management.

Overall, the goal is to conserve not just individual lakes but the entire catchment areas. By fundraising and implementing projects in various wetland areas, Wetlands International hopes to make a significant difference.

These are the questions I have for you today. If you would like to raise more relevant points, please take a chance?

What I would just like to reiterate is for a long time, we have not taken our wetlands seriously. Thus, we need to start taking these wetlands much more seriously. They are being cleared for agriculture and various other uses. I think it is got to get to a stage where we need to stop that and conserve these wetlands because of their importance. They trap the water so they can help us with floods and minimize droughts. Apart from storing carbon, wetlands are also helping us in terms of mitigating climate change.

Wetlands hold some of the largest stores of carbon on the planet, but when disturbed or drained they release the three major heat-trapping GHGs: carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O, mainly from ditches). At the same time, degraded wetlands fail to sustain essential ecosystem services such as food, freshwater supply, erosion, and flood control, all vital also in the context of climate change adaptation.

Since they can become a huge source of emissions upon degradation, by conserving and restoring wetlands, such as mangroves, you are addressing emissions at the source and enhancing removals, while also enhancing water resilience and other adaptation co-benefits.

Measures to transition to more sustainable paths should take into account effects and impacts on ecosystems, including wetlands (e.g. clean energy transition, sustainable agriculture), and local and indigenous communities.

Thus, I think we need to get to a stage where we are taking our wetlands seriously bringing all the sectors to the table. Because what I find is that different sectors treat wetlands differently. So, we all need to come to the table and start talking about this resource called water. I think once we do that, then we will be able to conserve it in a much better way.

Thank you very much for your willingness.

It is my pleasure!

Society

Festivals to promoting cultural tourism industry

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Ethiopia is a multiethnic and a multicultural country rich with its religious and cultural heritages.

Just to mention but a few, Meskel and Epiphany festivals, Fiche Chambalala- the New Year festival of the Sidama people- and Shewal Eid, the religious and cultural festival of the Harari people as well as the Gadda System which is an indigenous democratic system of governance of the Oromo people, are among the religious and cultural festivals celebrated colorfully in a manner keeping with the identity, value system.

This diversity is reflected in various ways including in the form of music, rituals, festivals, cuisines and the like events and lived experiences of the community.

Merely in this month of April, two cultural and religious festivals- the Fiche Chamballala and the Shewal Eid festivals- were celebrated warmly and colorfully in Sidama and Harari states respectively by bringing together a huge number of people from at home and abroad.

During the festivals held at both places, the significance of such religious and cultural festivals in advancing the tourism industry was highlighted.

Speaking at the Shewal Eid festival marked recently, Minister of Tourism, Nassise Chali said that Ethiopia is home to diverse cultural, historical and natural tourism heritages that have a potential to allure and captivate the interests of visitors across the world. The availability of these age-old tangible and intangible heritages all the way through the country testifies that Ethiopia is a symbol of diversity and multiculturalism and a land with breathtaking and mesmerizing cultures.

The old city of Harar is a unique example of this, as it holds unique tangible and intangible historical, cultural and religious heritages. Being the owner of an ancient civilization and a center of religion, Harar is a living city where the traditional features and untapped cultures that have been passed down from generation to generation are reflected, she added.

According to her, Shewal Eid is deeply rooted in Harari culture and holds immense historical and religious significance. As the festival marks the end of the fasting period of Ramadan and is celebrated with great enthusiasm and joy, it brings a sense of togetherness and unity. Tourists, who are seeking to have a real cultural experience, have to attend the Shewal Eid festival as it allows them to witness and have a firsthand experience about the traditional, cultural and religious values of the Harari people. This immersion in Ethiopian culture enhances the overall tourism experience and promotes cultural exchange.

“We believe that the celebration is attracting a significant number of domestic and international tourists to Ethiopia. Visitors are captivated by the vibrant atmosphere, colorful processions, traditional music



and dance performances associated with the festival. As a result, there was a surge in tourist arrivals during the Shewal Eid period, benefiting the tourism industry and supporting local businesses such as hotels, restaurants, and handicraft vendors.”

She also underscored the need to keep on promoting the festival through various platforms because the positive portrayal of the festival in media coverage and travel publications enhances Ethiopia’s reputation as a culturally significant and tourist-friendly country. This positive destination image in turn attracts more visitors to the country and leads to sustained growth in tourism in the end.

Culture and Sport Minister Kejela Merdasa also said that Harari’s art works have crossed borders and are the heritage of the people of the world.

The Minister stated that Harar and its respective people are symbols of peace and love besides their rich historical and cultural heritages which are inscribed by UNESCO as both tangible and intangible heritages of the World.

Addressing the gatherings President of the State of Harari, Ordin Bedri, conveyed his congratulatory message to the Ethiopian people, noting that the registration of the Shewal Eid festival as an intangible cultural heritage is a great success.

The influx of tourists during the Shewal Eid celebration is contributing to the local economy in various ways, the State is working to promote the tourism sector in a more organized fashion. Tourists spend money on accommodation, transportation, food, souvenirs, and other goods and services, generating income for local communities. This increased economic activity helps create employment opportunities, improve infrastructure, and boost the overall socio-economic development of the State.

Shewal Eid is serving as a platform to promote cultural tourism in Ethiopia. Cultural and religious festivals provide opportunity for tourists to engage with

Ethiopian traditions, customs and religious practices. This exposure not only enriches travel experiences but also encourages exploring other cultural attractions and heritage sites in the country. Consequently, Shewal Eid acts as a catalyst for promoting broader cultural tourism initiatives in Ethiopia.

He finally noted that the celebration of Shewal Eid showcases Ethiopia’s rich cultural diversity and highlights the country as a vibrant and welcoming tourist destination.

Shewal Eid commemorates the end of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan and holds immense significance for the Harari people. It is a festival that shows the rich history, culture and tradition of the community.

One of the most captivating aspects of Shewal Eid is the “Chibal,” a vibrant procession that winds its way through the city’s narrow alleys. Men, women, and children dressed in colorful garments adorned with intricate embroidery and gleaming jewelry, parade through the streets, accompanied by rhythmic drumming and chanting. The air is filled with an infectious energy as celebrants exchange greetings and best wishes.

Shewal Eid is more than just a religious celebration; it is a powerful symbol of Harari identity and history. The festival reinforces social bonds within the community and serves as a reminder of the Harari people’s rich cultural heritage. UNESCO’s recognition of Shewal Eid as intangible cultural heritage underscores the importance of preserving these traditions for future generations.

The Shewal Eid celebrations offer a glimpse into the enduring spirit of the Harari people. By continuing to celebrate their traditions, the Harari community ensures that their unique cultural heritage continues to thrive for years to come.

It is to be recalled that the Shewal Eid festival will be celebrated for the following three days in different cultural activities at Harar city.

Cultural and religious festivals provide opportunity for tourists to engage with Ethiopian traditions, customs, and religious practices

Verbatim and Caption



PM Abiy lauds local manufacturing investments

With foreign direct investments, we are advancing local manufacturing of top-notch high-tension cables and electric towers, catering to the telecom and electricity sectors. Boosting metal production is integral to our industrial development policy.

I am pleased to see the production of vehicles and components in Ethiopia. It is also encouraging to witness the local production of vehicles and their components.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said while visiting manufacturing companies on Friday

Sweden finances construction of 6,000 schools in Ethiopia: Ambassador

The partnership and diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and Sweden is a historic relationship. The partnership was remarkably developed following Ras Tafari's visit to Oslo in 1924, when he met with the Swedish King and the Archbishop. Through time, the diplomatic relations of the two countries gathered momentum.

Sweden has assisted the construction of more than 6,000 primary schools that were built across the country in the 60, 70, and 80s. The Ethio-Swedish long-standing cooperation is further advancing over the years. It is characterized by the mutual benefit of the people and economies of the two countries.

Ambassador Hans Henric Lundquist, Swedish Ambassador in Ethiopia said during the Ethio-Swedish solidarity panel discussion

