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## Women's engagement crux of matter for Nat'l Dialogue success

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA-Women need to participate in the National Dialogue not only because it is their right, but they could also play an invaluable role in realizing its vision of bringing national consensus, President Sahlework Zewde said.

The President made the above remark at the national forum that the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) organized under the theme "Women's participation and role in the National Dialogue" yesterday.

There are various constraints that draw women back; nonetheless, as they are the primary victims during unrest and conflict; they need to have space in decision making positions and peace building endeavors, she added.

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## Public raises over 1.1 bln Birr for Abbay Dam in nine-month

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## TMA 's resilient, transformative business in East Africa

• Ethiopia offers immense investment opportunities



Ewnetu Taye

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA-The Trade Mark Africa (TMA) has been working to promote resilient and transformative trade and investment in the East African region including Ethiopia, the country director said.

Speaking to The Ethiopian Herald, the TMA Country Director Ewnetu Taye stated that the firm has also been working to enhance market access and export trade among the East African countries.

To the realization of its goal, the TMA has been forming close partnership with continental and regional organizations including the African Union (AU), the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) secretariat, the East African Community (ECC) and the

Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD).

It also has strong collaboration with the African Customs Union, the region's private sector, civil societies and others to promote resilient and transformative trade in East Africa, the director added.

"Similarly, we have been emphasizing on job creation and preservation of export and regionally oriented targets, increasing the capacity of East African private sector and business associations and building regional capacity to mitigate economic shocks."

According to Ewnetu, Ethiopia has offered enormous investment opportunities in strategic areas

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Million Mathewos

## Ministry posts over 287 mln USD minerals export

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- The Ministry of Mines revealed that 287.28 million USD was secured from minerals export during the last nine months of the current fiscal year.

Mines State Minister Million Mathewos told the Ethiopia Press Agency (EPA) that a plan was set to earn 387.28 million USD from

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**Is there a 'culture of Africa'? A simple question in search of complex answers**

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# News

## Helping hand for children with cancer

BY FIKADU BELAY

Tsige Wegu has been passing through a lot of challenges due to cancer complications of her son. Eversince she knew about her beloved son's health situation, Tsige has left no stones unturned to find ways that could help to improve her son's health.

For the last five years, her son has undergone six surgeries. During these five years, Tsige's family life had been exposed to various psychological factors and financial stresses.

Since Tsige used to live outside of Addis Ababa, she and her family had initially sought treatment in their province. However, the severity of her son's illness and the exorbitant costs had forced them to exhaust all their financial resources within the first eight months. They were left with no choice but to consider returning home, defeated and burdened by the scars of their efforts.

In their darkest moment, someone came forward with a glimmer of hope. They recommend Tsige and her family to a new organization based at Tesfa Addis Parent Childhood Charity, which provides assistance to families battling cancer. This organization proved to be a lifeline for Tsige and her son.

According to international Atomic Energy Agency data, the cancer burden in Ethiopia is significant: of its 120 million populations, it is estimated that nearly 80 000 people were diagnosed with cancer in 2022, and 55 000 people died. These numbers are expected to more than double in the next two decades.

Tesfa Addis Parent Childhood Charity Executive Director Sara Ibrahim stated that the center organization is committed to



providing comprehensive psychological and social support to children suffering from cancer and their parents.

The organization operates in multiple cities across Ethiopia, including Mekele, Gondar, Jimma, and Addis Ababa.

Sara emphasized the importance of identifying vulnerable individuals and offering assistance in various areas, such as food, clothing, transportation, and other related concerns. By addressing these practical issues, the organization aims to alleviate the burdens faced by families and create an environment where children can receive the necessary treatment and care.

Through the collaborative efforts of the

community and various international humanitarian organizations, the center ensures that the children receive comprehensive support. This includes provisions for accommodation, transportation, education, birthday celebrations, clothing, and other forms of assistance. Furthermore, the center covers medical expenses outside of hospitals, ensuring comprehensive care for the children.

Grateful for the organization's support, Tsige said that the organization had been generously covered medical expenses of her son,

Reflecting on the organization's 12-year journey, Sara mentioned that they have successfully treated over three thousand

children thus far. The charity organization's unwavering dedication to its cause has resulted in significant positive impacts on the lives of numerous young cancer patients and their families.

At the recent event organized to provide psychological support to children with cancer by the Russian Embassy, Sara stated that they have been actively involved in providing psychological support to over forty children with cancer and their parents. The embassy has also expressed its commitment to expanding its contributions offering additional resources and educational support to the children in the future.

Psychological support plays a crucial role in the care of children with cancer, offering numerous benefits. It helps children cope with the emotional and psychological challenges associated with their diagnosis and treatment. Additionally, psychological support addresses the unique needs of children, promoting positive adjustment and resilience. It assists in managing treatment-related distress by providing a safe space to express fears, reducing anxiety, and improving adherence to medical protocols.

Furthermore, psychologists work closely with families, offering guidance and support to parents and siblings, fostering open communication, and strengthening the family unit during this challenging time.

It was learnt that the provision of psychological and other support by the Russian Embassy to children's cancer patients in Ethiopia holds significant potential for strengthening the bilateral agreement between the two countries. This initiative not only demonstrates Russia's commitment to humanitarian efforts but also highlights the importance of collaboration in addressing healthcare challenges.

## Commission revamping disaster response works to address humanitarian needs

**ADDIS ABABA (ENA)** - The Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission (EDRMC) stated that it is undergoing a significant overhaul to strengthen its ability to manage and respond to the uncertain humanitarian needs.

The EDRMC started pre-deployment training for management and staff of the commission at the African Leadership Excellence Academy on Friday.

EDEMCC Commissioner Shiferaw Teklemariam on the occasion said the commission is implementing reforms, including revised policy, new human resources structure, preparedness in terms of resources and technology to manage and respond to the uncertain humanitarian needs. The Council of Ministers has approved the revised Disaster Risk Management Policy in February which was in use for about 20 years.

The reform activities following the implementation of the revised policy, will equip the commission with more qualified and agile workforce prepared to handle emergencies, he stated.

According to him, the commission should also be equipped with the necessary human and material resources as well as technology to strengthen its ability to manage and respond to the uncertain humanitarian needs in the country.

Therefore, the commission is undergoing



an internal reorganization to streamline operations and optimize its effectiveness in tackling humanitarian crises.

The reform activities are crucial at a time when aid is dwindling while the need is huge, he noted, adding that the government shouldered most portion of the humanitarian burden to save livelihoods, compromising other development activities.

However, with dwindling support from international stakeholders, it is crucial for the commission to become more self-sufficient and adept at managing these complex situations, he stressed.

The revamped commission will be better equipped to anticipate, prevent, respond to, and recover from disasters, ultimately safeguarding the well-being of Ethiopian citizens during times of crisis.

## Scholar underlines need for inclusive rehabilitation for autistics

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

**ADDIS ABABA**—Inclusive learning and rehabilitation centers need to be established for autistics to make them productive, give parents relief from the burden of taking care autistic child, scholar said.

People with Disabilities (PoWs) participation in education is very low in Ethiopia, but studies on people with neuro-development disorders are unknown.

Approached by the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Dilla University Special Needs and Inclusive Education Assistant Professor Ali Sani said that schools which are accessible, inclusive for PoWs and learning centers for children with autistic need to be established. Ali, who is also advisor at Light for the World, added that like all citizens have equal right to access to education, children with autism also have right to attend education and get benefit from all services in areas they are living to make relieve their parents in burden of taking care of them.

In this regard, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Women and Social Affairs and Ministry of Health need to work in coordination all levels to solve such problems in the national school system by providing reasonable support to make better citizens, Ali said.

"All materials for autistic should be available everywhere. If they get such support, they



can change their behaviors and skills through consecutive training and follow up. Autistics need high support like inclusive education or curriculum with rehabilitation center. Thus, teachers should be assigned for to make them active and productive citizens as well," he added.

He said, "Autistics children face two challenges in terms of socialization and communication. Thus, to solve their communication challenges, experts need to give speech therapy support and help them socialize themselves via create adaptive behavior with the society." Real disability policy is on the way to be approved by ministry of education, and parents need to be aware on sexual reproduction of their child with autism in order to create conducive environment and protect autistic persons from illegal abortion and injury



# Editorial

## Standard-bearer of commonpeace, security,development

Ethiopia knows full well that peace is the salient prerequisite for the continent especially for the volatile and conflicts-rocked East African Region. That is why its foreign policy is tailored in a fashion that forges amicable relationships with neighboring countries and beyond setting in mind common growth.

The significance of Ethiopia's geopolitical positioning is paramount be it for East Africa or the world. That goes without saying.

Once Somalia's peace was marred, for the country succumbed to statelessness. Utilizing the hotbed created for terrorism, Alshabab was raring its grotesque face in the Red Sea and its environs. The Sea had turned a spawning ground of pirates strangulating global sea transport. In taking the hustle out, Ethiopia, marked for being a votary of peace, volunteered. Scouring documents one could brush up one's mind for the phenomena was not an unfolding in the distant past.

Against the above backdrop, the price Ethiopia paid on the altar of maintaining global peace sticks out as the saying goes "a friend in need is a friend indeed." Aside from helping in stabilizing Somalia, it has immensely helped in ensuring the safety of the former's people. True to its glorious peace maintaining record on the global arena, Ethiopia had dispatched its defense force to Somalia, South Sudan and Darfur, among others. The turnaround did obligate sacrifice. Especially the terrorist group Alshabab was emasculated. Devoid of a spine it was made as good as dead in east African region.

The relative tranquility that ensued following the peace restoring task has allowed countries of the region to turn their face towards development and affluence as well as to roll the ball of gigantic projects that could render their respective citizens beneficiaries of sustainable development.

Here, it suffices to mention the state of the win-win Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) built on a trans boundary river and which is nearing completion thanks to its collective security stance. The perks from the dam are extrapolated to go beyond Ethiopia's perimeter and benefit Africa. The demand for Ethiopia-generated hydropower has made a spike shedding light on the fact that the country has succeeded in proving a prominent development ally.

Also parallel to the effort of achieving self-sufficiency in food, Ethiopia is striving to plow a vast array of fallow lands, modernizing farming techniques and utilizing modern technologies in a bid to troubleshoot the shortage of food in the region.

Interconnecting the region via road networks and telecommunication is also one of the tasks Ethiopia is passionately pursuing to spur the region's march on the avenue of development.

Given the aforementioned facts, one could effortlessly tell Ethiopia's worth-emulating exemplary role when it comes to collective peace, security, development, economy and regional issues.

Not only that, resilient Ethiopia is also a role-model in amicably resolving internal conflicts via dialogue as witnessed in the Pretoria agreement. For an enduring solution it is due to embrace a national dialogue. This could also make it a standard bearer.

To cross pollinate ideas on peace, security, development, taskforce exchange and regional issues PMs of different African countries have discussed with Ethiopian Higher Officials. Here, it suffices to mention the Libyan and Rwandan PMs. This indicates its diplomacy is going in tandem with set plan.

The fact that the 4th UN conference for development financing is to be held here in Ethiopia is heartwarming for it is in consonance with the aforementioned fact. Besides Ethiopia, specially, its capital Addis is becoming an ideal place for meeting ,conference and exhibitions and the like.

Ethiopia's impact-creating role stands out. This push has a rippling effect to the benefit of common growth.

# Opinion

## Ethiopia's just cause in having access to the sea

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

For all creatures living on earth, water is a great boon of nature. It is very difficult to find anything that is not related to water. Even if we only associate the benefits of this natural gift with the existence of human beings; we (human beings) can get a lot of basic benefits. To put it simply, water gives us food, hygiene, transportation and many other benefits. In order to know these benefits, it is not necessary to do much research or digging, just being human is enough.

However, water has many other positive aspects. If we look at this not at the individual level, but at the national level, we can see the benefits of the sea, oceans and rivers. Based on this, we like to talk about the importance of water in terms of the economic and political interests of a country, and related issues. We have been talking extensively with the guest we have invited, especially about the natural water resources that Ethiopia has, and the historical and natural rights that Ethiopia should have.

Before that, let's try to explore a little what the research results say about the economic and political benefits of a sea gate for a country. Access to seaports plays an important role in the economic and political situation of a country. The first role is economic growth and trade and foreign exchange earnings; He mentions that seaports facilitate international trade, allowing countries to earn foreign currency by exporting and importing. Another benefit is cost reduction. This means that owning a seaport can reduce the cost of efficient transportation of imported goods, consumer products and raw materials.

Another advantage is that they are competitive. He explains that access to (owning) seaports increases a country's competitiveness in the international market. In addition, he explains that it has a significant contribution to political influence and freedom. Mainly, coastal access gives a country more political influence, allowing it to assert its interests in regional and global affairs. These same studies have confirmed that owning a sea gate provides geostrategic options.

Some studies show that seaports help a country to effectively manage changing regional conditions by expanding its geostrategic options.

Water plays an irreplaceable role from the individual to the nation. Oceans serve as connectors between different parts of the world. Commercial ships transport goods across natural and man-made harbors, navigating these bodies of water for weeks or months. Seaborne trade routes meet humans' basic needs, making it essential for governments to control these sea areas to ensure the safety and sovereignty of their citizens.

Viewing water from this perspective reveals its significance beyond hygiene, drinking, food, and cooking, both globally and domestically. Consequently, countries worldwide dedicate extensive efforts to managing water resources, formulating policies for the careful utilization of rain and groundwater resources, and asserting control over adjacent seas for strategic advantage. In general, water plays a pivotal role in political, economic, and related human issues, underscoring its importance for both nations and individuals.

Water has been historically fundamental to

civilization. For instance, ancient cooperative societies based their lives on nature, primarily subsisting on fruits and hunting. However, as they transitioned to agriculture, settling near rivers, the foundations of civilization were laid.

Major civilizations like Greece, Rome, Mesopotamia, and China originated from agricultural practices along riverbanks. Subsequently, these civilizations expanded their reach through water-based transportation, with notable explorers like Magellan navigating the globe via water routes. Rivers have been crucial for agriculture, transportation, and trade, serving as the main arteries of world commerce.

The possession of sea gates is crucial for a country's development and regional influence. Seaports play a pivotal role in economic growth by fostering trade, investment, and industrialization, with significant contributions to infrastructure development. Ports also play an indispensable role in promoting development, creating jobs, and enhancing infrastructure in surrounding areas. Ethiopia, a landlocked country, faces inherent disadvantages due to its lack of access to the sea.

While Djibouti currently serves as the main port for Ethiopia's foreign trade, relying solely on one port poses limitations and risks. To mitigate these challenges, Ethiopia is exploring equitable port utilization agreements with neighboring countries like Eritrea, Djibouti, Somaliland, and considering future collaborations, such as the Lamu port in Kenya. The strategic significance of sea gates is multifaceted, enabling global connectivity, trade, and economic prosperity.

Despite abundant water resources, Ethiopia has not fully harnessed its water potential. The country's rivers, like the Abay and Baro Akobo, remain underutilized, while other rivers are primarily used for electricity generation. Properly utilizing these resources is essential for maximizing their benefits.

Ethiopia must address internal capacity constraints and external influences to optimize water resource management effectively. Historically, external pressures, such as colonial perspectives on Africa, have hindered Ethiopia's water resource development. Addressing these challenges through expert-led solutions and policy discussions is crucial for leveraging water resources to alleviate poverty and foster national development.

Water is indeed the foundation of civilization and development, highlighting the importance of water management for sustainable growth. Access to ports and rivers is critical for landlocked countries like Ethiopia, necessitating strategic planning and diplomatic engagement to secure sea gateways. Collaborative efforts across sectors and generations are essential to enhance water resource utilization and promote economic prosperity.

Educating future generations on water management and instilling a sense of responsibility towards water conservation from an early age is vital for sustainable development. By prioritizing water resources and addressing internal and external challenges, Ethiopia can unlock its full potential and pave the way for long-term growth and prosperity.

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



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## Public raises over 1.1 bln Birr for Abbay Dam in nine-month

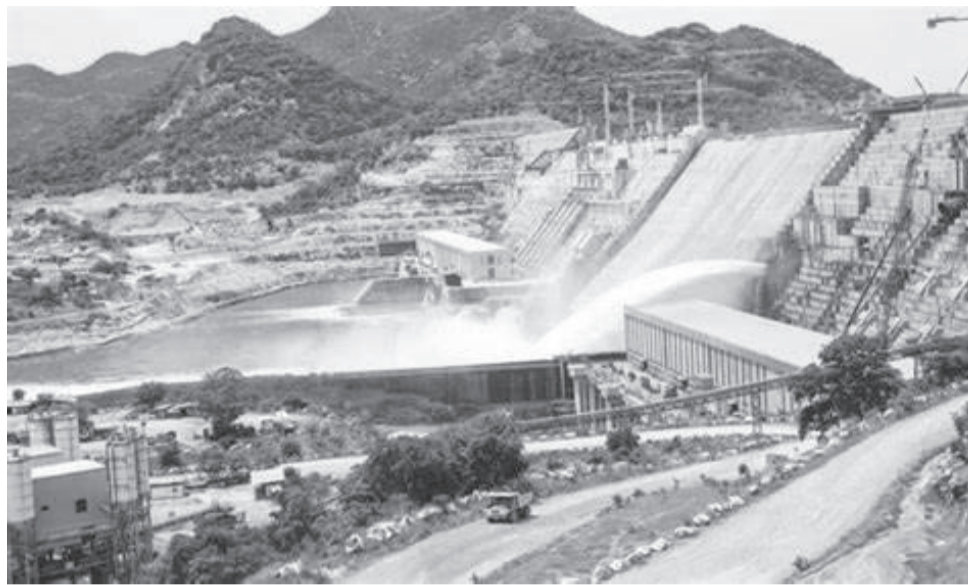
BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

**ADDIS ABABA** - The public has contributed some 1.1 billion Birr for the construction of the Abbay Dam during the past nine months of the current fiscal year, the coordinating office disclosed.

The Office of National Council for the Coordination of Public Participation on the Construction of Abbay Dam further indicated that out of the planned 1.4 billion Birr, it has managed to amass 1.1 billion in the reported period.

Office's Media and Communication Director Hailu Abraham told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the stated amount of money was obtained from bond sales, donation, and SMS scheme and other income generating programs from Ethiopians and the Diaspora.

Accordingly, out of the total revenue, over 14 million Birr was generated from Diaspora bond sales and gifts, while some 98 million Birr was secured from 8100A SMS scheme. Besides, Ethiopian Electric Power granted over 72 million Birr in the reported period.



“The money that was collected for the Abbay Dam during the past nine months surpassed that of the past year same period by 87 percent. Also, owing to an intensified participation of all segments of the society and the increasing local grants, it was managed to amass close 183,000 Birr in just one month (March 2024).”

Mentioning the mega dam's nearing completion (95.8%), the director stressed the need for the public's intensified support until the full execution.

Since its launching, Ethiopians in home and abroad have raised over 19 billion Birr for the construction of the Abbay Dam, it was learned.

## Ministry to enhance efforts in addressing data, statistics discrepancy

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** – Collective action is required to address various challenges emanated from data and statistics improper usage, said Ministry of Planning and Development (MoPD)

The above statement was noted yesterday by MoPD State Minister Nemera Gebeyehu while presenting Ethiopia's experience in data and statistics at the forum held at Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). He said that sharing experience in the forum is used for attaining sustainable development goals (SDG) through collective action. Giving due attention to data and statistics is really important to attain the expected outcome in Africa.

As to him, most of African countries shared similar experience that the culture of utilizing data, statistics, and policy making process is still lagging. Dis-connectivity between statistics and policy making is a serious problem in Ethiopia, indeed! “Likewise, development planning and the implementation of monitoring and evaluation (M and E) doesn't depend on the capability of the local institution is another factor for not bringing about significant outcome in data and statistics process. It demonstrates that the area needs to take serious attention and collective advocacy at large,” Nemera said.

He further stated that every institution should give due attention to utilize the data and statistics in a proper manner in the African continent. It means that a lot of activities are expected of each institution as they have to know how effective national statistics agencies utilize the resources through establishing some sorts of coordination with various stakeholders especially which are working on data production, data management and data dissemination system.

“Capacity limitation and access to data quality is also another factor that is hindering the proper utilization of data and statistics in a modern approach, he added.

He further underlined that Ethiopia has planned to host three censuses within the coming three years on agriculture, business establishment, and health and education.

## Women's engagement...

“Women need to echo their voice and play an active role in the National Dialogue. To this end, discussion by itself is not enough and it needs to be practical whereby women sit around at a table with men to confer on contentious issues.”

According to Sahlework, women's participation in the Pretoria agreement on both sides is unsatisfactory, emphasizing the need to enable women to play an active role in supporting the government's efforts to bring peace and stability in the country.

The President further stressed that discussion and dialogue need to be the only ways to resolve differences expressing optimism that the National Dialogue will be the instrument to address the country's longstanding and contentious problems.

ENDC Chief Commissioner Prof. Mesfin Araya said on the occasion that the commission has been taking bold steps to enhance women's participation and role. Accordingly, the ENDC has made women's participation not to be relied on quota, instead ideas.

Given the limited opportunity women are entitled to participate in national issues and the double responsibilities they have shoulder for long, their participation in the National Dialogue has remained stagnant. However, promising results have been registered in increasing their role and contribution in this regard.

Prof. Mesfin also stated that women's involvement makes the National Dialogue fruitful. Therefore, he called on women's associations and interest groups to support

the commission in order to ensure holistic participation of women.

For Women and Social Affairs Minister Ergogie Tesfaye (PhD), leaving women behind would not only hinder the National Dialogue but it would also make it impossible to achieve. “While women constitute about 50% of the total population, they cannot be left behind while seeking for peace and development.”

Women and children are the most vulnerable groups during instability and women's meaningful representation as well as participation would play an essential role in making the dialogue holistic and fruitful. Also, women need to deeply understand their value in peace processes and need to actively take part in the National Dialogue, the Minister emphasized.

## Ministry posts ...

minerals export for the reported period while the performance achieved 74.11 percent of the target.

According to him, 3,023 tons of gold, 69.79 tons of tantalum, 11,176.4 of lithium ore, 100.563 tons of ornamental minerals and 32, 141.65 tons of industrial minerals were exported to the foreign market during the nine months. The income was made by supplying over 43,491 tons of minerals to the foreign market. This current revenue surpassed that of the past year same period by 114.19 million USD.

The state minister also noted that apart from the mining expenses business, 173.18 million Birr income was obtained from royalty, community development fund and licensing in the reported period. “The aim is to increase the international market networks by attracting those who have the capacity and experience to participate in the mining industry.”

Efforts have been made to promote Ethiopia's mineral potentials in two rounds of the Mining and Technology Expo, as well as in the international mining conference in Australia and South Africa.

Due attention has been given to enable Ethiopia to utilize its potential in the mining sector. Accordingly, the Mining Council has been formed and put into action to ensure that projects started in the sector are completed on time.

To increase import substitution, monitoring and support activities have been done for companies engaged in coal washing, ceramic, marble, granite and terrazzo products and increase their performance, Million remarked.

Having exported a total of 7,690,452 tons of minerals to the foreign market in the last fiscal year, Ethiopia grossed 172, 83 million USD.

## TMA's resilient, ...

including agriculture and agro-processing, textile, and printing services among many others. “The country availed one of the most appealing investment opportunities in the continent.”

For Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Association (ACCSA) President Mesenbet Shenkute, opening up the previously-restricted business areas for foreign firms would bring significant benefits in job creation and increase the supply of goods in the local market.

Mesenbet; however, stressed the need to

put in place viable mechanisms that will protect local businesses.

In this regard, the ACCSA set out to discuss its members and other partners on this issue and it is also working to forward research based policy recommendations on the recently-enacted measure.

The full implementation of the AfCFTA needs a wide range of preparations including improving the quality of products, boosting the manufacturing industries' capacity, increasing production and productivity and others, she noted.



# Opinion

## When, why peace and who is duty bound to heed?

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Whenever people act, communicate, interact and deal with a range of activities individually or collectively, the primary things that has to come to the mind of every rational person in the first place is first peace, second peace and even next peace as it is the ultimate cornerstone of stable, productive and pleasing trek in the history of human life. From this, one can deduce that no value is fixed to peace at all since it is tantamount to life itself.

Thus, everyone has to be part of the peace movement introduces and goes over the needs, importance, and implementation of peace edifice skills and wisdom. Yes, there must be a need, in Ethiopia especially these days, to relearn how to live peacefully and promote conflict solving skills among the community and in families. Peace can be spoiled by conflict entrepreneurs and peace-loathing elements whenever public gatherings are observed, wedding and other decisive social cohesion testimonies are exercised, religious and worship prayers are conducted, public holidays such as the upcoming Easter are commemorated.

The best remedy for getting such ill-intended missions aborted is raising public awareness and boosting community engagement. True, community engagement in securing peace is not an end in itself, but it is a means of achieving and promoting increased inclusiveness and resilience in communities that have lived through repeated cycles of violence with limited participation in societal agreement.

Here implementing a broad range of mandated tasks can come to the forefront, including improving situational awareness, protection of civilians, strategies supporting inclusive political processes, monitoring the violation of human rights, strengthening the legitimacy of state institutions and fostering the effective implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities, as they are of significantly useful in reaping the bounties of peace and serenity in the country. Unequivocally, there is widespread recognition that the sustainability peaceful solutions to the problems is dependent on the inclusivity and fairness to generate a shared societal agreement about what peace means and what it entails.

The very point that needs to be recognized along this line is that peace and peaceful scenario cannot be simply achieved through top-down approaches, such as through formalizing elite bargains and brokering power-sharing agreements, as these have been proven to be short-lived in the absence of broader buy-in. Therefore, community engagement, understood not as the mere first step of outreach, but as an actual process of inclusion in decision-making, lies very much at the heart of the concept of sustaining peace.

Principally, by applying integrated interventions, community engagement activities have contributed to sustaining peace through a number of interventions. To

mention but a few, supporting community-based mechanisms to address threats to civilians that increase community resilience, promoting inclusive processes that can best address the roots of societal grievances, including by supporting the reintegration of former fighter and countering narratives that capitalize on disenfranchisement to breed extremism and radicalization and supporting opportunities and avenues for dialogue between parties in a state of rivalry, and the role the local population play in due course of promoting societal cohesion, fraternity among citizens as well as bolstering institutional responsiveness and accountability.

Yes, contributing to sustaining peace at the grassroots level, strengthening community resilience and local ownership structured and consistent community engagement have been part of effective peace securing strategies to address threats to civilians, be they emanate from armed groups or as a result of inter-tribal violence.

At the same time, reinforcing the role of traditional authorities in communal conflict management, indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms, the ideas of opinion leaders, religious fathers and the society's entrenched culture of respect, which has, in turn, strengthened the community's capacity to resolve disagreements and conflicts in the future have to be well capitalized.

Besides, promoting inclusive processes and space for dialogue, strengthening local capacities for conflict resolution and reconciliation is an important step towards sustainable peace, tranquility and long-lasting stability.

All the efforts focusing on sharing good practices to allow for peaceful coexistence, tolerance and non-violent communication and close discussion can bear fruits if properly handled and genuinely held. Interestingly, strengthening capacities and resilience as well as promoting inclusivity are all ultimately intended to create a stronger bond between/among the society, the government and the country at large.

Yes, peace efforts are of paramount importance in bringing communities closer to their neighbors, workmates, and even institutions in conflict affected settings where trust among the community has been eroded and the legitimacy of the latter is often disputed. In order to achieve the mission of building sustainable peace, a community-led approach has proven to be highly effective and critical in achieving long-lasting impact and change. They have to be well consolidated as they are imperative to build confidence among people, be it each other or one another, through direct work with communities and their members in the area. It has additionally proven to be an effective use of resources and local capacity.

Needless to mention, many forms of violence and conflict are escalating due to multiple, often interconnected causes, such as poverty, insufficient development, inequitable resource distribution, competing

political ideologies, and religious tensions. These issues have led to complex and prolonged violence. By engaging with communities, researching the causes of conflicts, proposing solutions, and promoting harmony between conflicting parties, everyone peculiarly scholars in the universities can play a crucial role in preventing and resolving conflict by tackling the underlying causes of disputes, contention, incongruity and disagreements. No doubt, scholars and students have spent time interacting with and listening to individuals and community groups to gain a deeper understanding of the causal factors behind conflicts, and various ways of making peace.

Here, their work has to be translated into practical action to help the country make a difference. The issue of ensuring peace should not be left solely to the government and other parties working on the area instead it requires the amalgamated effort of all. For this to happen, every citizen of the nation has to work hard in countering the society's fear about the interference of anti-peace and anti-development rudiments. If that is so, all citizens of the country are expected to build peace by using convening and convincing power to initiate conversations between conflicting parties, offering training opportunities and equipping them with the tools to understand the political and legal aspects of peace that will enable them to engage and negotiate with the government and even with each other.

Citizens have to engage in integrating both traditional and scientific methods of conflict resolution and peace building mechanisms to ensure compatibility with local beliefs while upholding scientific rigor, promoting peaceful coexistence by encouraging acceptance of cultural diversity and emphasizing the richness and intellectual value of different cultures. The primacy of political solutions for local, national, regional, continental and even international peace and security questions has been continually required, indeed! There is also a widespread recognition that the sustainability of political solutions is dependent on their inclusivity as this is required to generate a shared societal agreement about what peace means and what it entails. Besides, sustaining peace should be broadly understood as a goal and a process to build a common vision of a society, ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are taken into account.

What matters here is the general society has to well comprehend the means how to promote peace, maintain social peace, the importance of peace, how to solve conflict via the basic mechanisms of conflict resolution, and other related and lucrative ways. As the challenges compromising peace and peace journey still exist, all walks of life have to sensitize themselves and other community members about the significance of standing together to ensure peace.

People have to make a culture of uttering,

'Peace has to begin with me.' In a world too often plagued by conflict and discord, the pursuit of peace becomes an urgent and vital endeavour.

No doubt, protecting and sustaining peace poses a daunting task for countries emerging from wars and violence like ours. This is often because the underlying causes of the conflicts are not well understood or addressed, leaving room for potential instability. Insecurity, inequality and exclusion are common drivers of conflict that must be dealt with conclusively to prevent recurrent conflicts and support the creation of productive livelihoods and resilient communities. By focusing on education, community engagement, and inclusive development, Ethiopians can promote equal opportunities and build a peaceful future.

We all must remember that investment in prevention is far more cost-effective than allocating resources to deal with the consequences of instability and violence through military interventions, honestly speaking, conflict prevention, early warning systems, and protective measures are mutually reinforcing strategies that contribute to ensuring the root causes of conflicts are addressed and conflicts prevented from recurring or occurring altogether.

In a nutshell, all citizens of the nation need to adopt appropriate preventive strategies to safeguard peace and security. For instance, the youth are at the heart of prevention as they are the main targets for radicalization and violent extremism. Hence, it is essential to provide platforms and forums that encourage them to be active ambassadors of cohesion, peace and stability in their communities across the nation. In this regard, inclusive dialogue and community participation have proven to be powerful and effective tools for prevention.

Recognizing the threats and taking action to prevent radicalization towards violent extremism, the government of Ethiopia is working towards thriving collaboration and cooperation of all stakeholders at all levels. Timely information about developing local crises is crucial for politicians, security agencies, and community leaders are widely practiced by the government so as to prevent disputes from escalating into large-scale conflicts. Furthermore, empowering diverse local peace actors to engage early and effectively can help prevent conflicts and promote peace among warring communities. This calls for deliberate efforts in empowering community members and building resilient peace defenders.

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



# Business & Economy

## Advantages of providing foreign companies wholesale, retail trade

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

The government of Ethiopia recently introduced a new regulation and rules which allow foreign companies to engage in whole sale and retail trade in the country following Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's green light to do so. Sectors previously reserved to the local business men will be opened to the foreigners step by step from now on and the scheme is expected to improve the trade and transaction system of the country. The regulation also opens the door to foreign business men to engage in import and export trade.

Reflecting his view regarding the newly introduced regulation with regard to trade and business that needs to be implemented fully, Fikadu Petrose, a lawyer and consultant stated that in addition to improving the trade system, the policy would enhance the nation's competitiveness in the international market.

Costentinos Berhetesfa (PhD), an economist, and lecturer at Addis Ababa University, said that from the very beginning, inhibiting foreign businessmen from engaging in the wholesale and retail trade was wrong. The new regulation, which allows foreign businessmen to engage in trade, would thus help modernize the trade system through knowledge and technology transfer.

It helps to resolve the problems pervasive in the trade value chain in the country, supports the enhancement of legitimate trade and stabilizes inflation. He also said that it brings opportunities to the local private sector to draw lesson and experience sharing. Though the involvement of foreign companies in whole sale and retail business though seems new in Ethiopia, it is common in the foreign world. Even diaspora Ethiopians have engaged in various retail businesses in many countries.

As to Fikadu, the government introduced the regulation due to desperate situation prevailed in the country because of the incompetency of local private sector. Though the government provided protection and incentives to the local business, they remained stagnant and failed to bring change in the sector.

The government supports businessmen for the growth of local industries but if they fail to go accordingly, it is rather better to open the market to foreign companies so that the business relied more on competition rather than subsidy.

"Though the government provided protection to local companies, the price of production and products is increasing instead of decreasing. Therefore, to support consumers get goods with fair price, the government is coerced to open the market to foreign companies," Fikadu said.

"To date, providing protection to local businessmen did not bring quenching benefit, even the subsidy is used appropriately" Fikadu exclaimed citing the introductory part of the regulation which indicated the failure of the provision of protection to the local companies.

A person who engaged in consulting trade



*Foreign investors' engagement to whole sale and retail trade boosts nation's economy*

and business, on his part noted that the government's measures taken to improve the trade system failed to meet the objectives. Therefore, it was resorted to find other option that is opening up the sector to foreign actors and in his view; the government has taken wise decisions.

He further said that the demand for whole sale and retail business is growing from time to time. Unless the business is supported by foreign actors, it will be endangered. Currently, the wholesale and retail business is monopolized by few local companies. Thus, to make the sector competent; opening it to foreigners should be taken as a way out.

In the past, the government established companies such as "Alebejmla" in order to stabilize the market by allocating huge amount of investment but failed to fulfill its mission because the sector is monopolized by few local private companies. However, in line with allowing foreign companies to do business here, it is essential to inspect them when they conduct their business whether it goes in line with the rules and regulations introduced by the government.

According to Fikadu, the rules more benefit the consumers than the traders. The government provided incentive and protection to traders engaged in four sectors such as import, export, wholesale and retail trades. However, the expected outcome was not obtained. The government's giving up of protection to the local traders, enables foreign companies to import huge amount of commodities and supply in fair price in which enable to stabilize the market.

Nevertheless, some argue that the incoming of foreign businessmen to engage in whole sale and retail trade might bring pressure on local traders. They further said that the current anomalies witnessed on the trade system are not created by the ill performance of local traders. A financial professional who demanded to hold his name anonymous said that he believes that the introduction of the new regulation and the incoming of foreign companies can improve the archive trade system but the failures of the local trade system is posed by the foreign currency crunch in the banks.

He further said that in fact, most traders took the foreign currency crunch as good opportunity to engage in clandestine activities such as illegal trade so that one can conclude that shortage of hard currency and the related financial policy play their part for the failure of the trade system.

As to the financial professional, side by side with the inviting of foreign companies to engage in whole sale and retail trade, governing the financial system through market system making the Dollar-birr exchange rates similar to the parallel market is essential. Otherwise, the presence of foreign investors here is no more effective.

In the past, the government agreed with the American Whole mart huge company to do business here and started working but due to shortage of hard currency because of the government's monopolistic policy, the company canceled its plan. It leveled the government financial policy as impractical.

Therefore, as to him, inviting foreign companies should be accompanied with inviting foreign banks to do business here and determining the exchange rate based on market so that curbing foreign currency crunch will be possible. Unless these is realized, no foreign company comes here to engage in wholesale, retail, import and export trade.

He corroborated his argument by citing that currently one Dollar is exchanged by 57 Birr in the formal market in Banks while it is exchanged by 120 Birr in the parallel market and in such a situation, expecting foreign companies to come here and engage in trade business is unrealistic. Therefore, determining the exchange rate based on market is essential.

However, Costentinos Berhetesfa (PhD) does not agree with the above arguments. As to him, without the incoming of foreign banks and determining the exchange rate by market, foreign companies can come here to engage in the whole sale, retail, and import and export business. The new regulation itself created good opportunities and can attract foreign companies to come here and do business. But liberalizing the financial sector also further encourages them to do a lot.

He further said that determining the money exchange rate by market not only helps to attract foreign companies to invest here but also to stabilize the whole economy. Adding he said that in our country, market is conducted based on the black market exchange rate which disturbs the entire business system and to bring the long lasting solution, determining the exchange rate by supply and demand chain is essential.

Many agree that governing the exchange rate by market price might aggravate inflation but as to the financial professional person analysis, the existing market is already underway considering the exchange rate in the parallel market. Therefore, the society also has been familiar with such development and the pain that comes from the inflation only put pressure for the time being. To withstand the pressure due to the demand for foreign currency, the government should enhance its foreign currency garnering and preserving capacity.

If the value of one Dollar becomes 120 Birr by formal market, customers do not go to purchase Dollar in the black market. When there is sufficient hard currency in the market no person resort to go to the black market rather he/she goes to the formal market. Therefore, the government before starting to determine the Dollar /Birr exchange rate by market, it has to accumulate plenty of hard currency in the Banks.

Following the decision to determine the exchange rate by the market, if there is no sufficient hard currency in the banks, customers again will go to the black market to obtain Dollar which again poses market disruption. As to Costentinos, determining the exchange rate should be a must and if it happens at least the nation obtains 12 billion Dollars from the diaspora because they start to send their money to their relatives in the formal and legal market channel instead of the black market.

This again reduces illegal trade posed by black market and creates stability. The government revenue also will be increased. Supermarkets owned by foreigners also supply quality products with fair price to their customers but they may demand hard currency for their profit.



# Planet Earth

## Addis corridor development to increase city's livability

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Cities are lively, dynamic environments that foster innovation, entrepreneurship, and development while providing socio-cultural diversity and economic opportunity. But these advantages come at a high price.

Green cities, as many experts have acknowledged, not only benefit the environment but also stimulate economic expansion and wealth creation. They may provide a plethora of job opportunities by promoting industries like sustainable transportation, green building, and renewable energy. In addition to lowering resource consumption and raising productivity, sustainable transportation and building designs also result in cost savings.

Green neighborhoods tend to attract better valuations for real estate, hence generating wealth for owners from lower and middle class backgrounds. Additionally, the shift to green cities can draw talent and enterprises, promoting economic growth and innovation.

In light of the worldwide environmental and climate crises, the idea of “green cities” is not only a utopian concept but also a necessity for existence as the globe continues to move towards urbanization. A cleaner environment, healthier inhabitants, economic success, and resilience in the face of environmental problems are the rewards of a difficult but worthwhile path. Future cities will be dynamic, green environments that support humankind and the environment.

Most of the African cities do not meet the aforesaid criteria for various reasons. Some are struggling to alter their former shabby and ugly faces, while others prefer to remain as they are. As the innate behavior of human beings needs sustainable change, even though they are financially weak due to global influence, they are forced to change due to the ever-increasing population and progress of other cities.

Nothing static, be it natural or manmade phenomena, forced cities to alter their previous status. Some countries build new cities without taking the desires of their people into account. They finally demolished it. Others prefer to renew old cities instead of constructing new ones. Through this process, they make cities environment friendly. No one detests this vision of being equivalent to the world's big cities by creating clean and neat spaces that are convenient for dwellers. Understanding the aforesaid truth, Ethiopia is now undergoing various tasks with the mission of creating a beautiful and tourist-friendly city.

As part of making cities neat and clean, the Addis Ababa corridor development project has given a special emphasis to making the city green and neat as a new pin. This will make the capital a beautiful flower, like its name suggests. With such a vision, the corridor and reconstruction development works have been carried out as per the pledge of the incumbent government to Addis residents during the previous election



campaign.

The project includes massive and human-oriented development projects. Among the development works that have been done so far, for instance, are the construction of the municipal office, Meskel Square, Friendship and Unity Park, the Science Museum, the Abrehot Library, Pushkin Square, Gotera Akaki Bole Road, and so on. Thus, the project is believed to be connecting all the aforesaid domains of development.

In view of the size of the corridor development, the government is working hard to complete the road and green development work in Piassa, Arat Kilo, and Bole lines by the end of May.

Climate change brings with it a host of challenges, including extreme weather events and rising temperatures. Green cities, by design, are better equipped to weather these changes. Green and blue infrastructure can mitigate urban heat islands, manage storm water, and reduce the risk of flooding.

Addis Ababa City Mayor Adanech Abiebie agreed with the aforesaid statement, saying that the existing and ongoing mega projects and corridor development have given prime attention to minimizing environmental pollution and aligning with the aspiration for green growth.

In the launch of an advocacy campaign named “Stop Pollution, Beauty Awakens,” organized by the Addis Ababa City Administration Environmental Protection Authority, the mayor said that the metropolis is surrounded by hills and mountains and covers 76 rivers that cross over 600km.

Its good weather, coupled with the groundwater and preserved forest that cover 1,300 km, 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.”

Citing the Sheger riverside project, which is the initiative of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD), as the landmark that aims to curb Addis Ababa's rampant environmental problems, the Green Legacy Initiative (GLI), 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 a climate-resilient and sustainable economy.

“The policy that was devised with regard to electric cars 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 households has remained a major challenge. To this end, the sewerage system and flood management have gained major priority in the recent corridor development.

She also brought up another type of pollution, such as noise pollution, that needs the collaborative efforts of society as well as institutions. Implementing different campaigns would play a pivotal role in sustaining the ongoing efforts for environmental protection, enhancing public awareness, and implementing laws and regulations.

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

Yimegnushal Tadesse is the Deputy Bureau Head of Addis Ababa City Beautification and Greenery Development. The ongoing corridor development project in the capital is set to significantly enhance the city's green coverage. As the rapidly growing population of Addis Ababa has led to an increased demand for infrastructure

development over the years, the city administration has been undertaking various initiatives to address longstanding challenges in this area. One such initiative is the corridor development project.

The Bureau “Once completed, this project will not only address the community's infrastructure needs but also transform the city's overall appearance and aesthetics.”

Indicating that the previous development projects were not well-integrated with greenery development efforts, she added that it was hindering the city from achieving an appealing appearance. However, over the past five years, the city's growth has been aligned with greenery development, leading to concerted efforts to create a clean and attractive environment for residents.

The recently launched corridor development project is expected to provide additional impetus to these efforts by addressing challenges that have hindered the implementation of greenery development guidelines in line with the city's standards. This project will play a crucial role in promoting tourism and extending visitors' stays in the city by enhancing its aesthetics and green coverage, she pinpointed.

According to data from the bureau, greenery development efforts undertaken over the past five years have increased Addis Ababa's green coverage from 2.8 percent to 15 percent. The corridor development project is part of the city administration's broader strategy to address infrastructure needs while promoting a sustainable and eco-friendly urban environment for its residents and visitors.

The corridor development project will change the former image of Addis Ababa into a great and globally competitive city, apart from making its residents lead a comfortable lifestyle. For the realization of the project, every organization should discharge the responsibility expected to do so.



# Art & Culture

## Is there a 'culture of Africa'?

### A simple question in search of complex answers

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

Is there an African culture, an African art or an African anthropology or an African science? These questions seem mostly academic or banal but there are no clear answers to them. The academic world loves controversies and the ordinary public is fond of listening to academic debates however erudite they sometimes sound. At the end of the day it is akin to asking whether there is an African science; something that sounds ridiculous because science has no ethnic or national identity.

Is there an African philosophy? This question had triggered heated debates and controversies among intellectual circles in Africa or in the Diaspora. The issue has never been settled in a satisfactory manner although the protagonists and antagonists of the very existence of African philosophy are exchanging criticisms from time to time without coming into agreement. Back in the 1870s, there were apparently three tendencies that characterized the debates.

There were African philosophers who said yes, Africa has its own philosophy. The second batch of writers denied the very existence of an African philosophy per se, by sticking to the old Eurocentric conception of Africa that denied or refused to talk about African philosophy because it did not exist. The third group consisted of African philosopher like the late Hountoudji et. al. who argued that African philosophy should be the combination or symbiosis of the Eurocentric view plus African traditional world views. It is not clear which camp had won the day because all of the three tendencies had their strong and weak points that led to the debate to remain hanging in midair.

Most Africans address this question positively although they have no solid arguments to support their contentions. If there is a European philosophy why not an African philosophy? If there is Chinese philosophy why not an African philosophy? Simplistic as it may sound, this kind of answer may be warranted either by sheer African nationalism or by a defiant sense of self-affirmation in a world where anything African is still looked at with jaundiced eyes. The other baffling question related to this: Why is Africa is often held in uncertainty while other continents and other people are admitted to the club of the privileged few whose culture or philosophy is readily accorded universal recognition? Why Africa is the victim of doubt or a thinly veiled sense of inferiority complex? Is this the last vestige of the colonial and post-colonial eras where anything African is hard to swallow?

When it comes to the question whether Africa has "an African culture", it would be ideal to start with the best definition of culture that was given by an anthropologist called Eduard B. Tylor, who is considered the founder of cultural anthropology,



who defined culture as, "the complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."

In general, no one denies the existence of African culture or the fact that Africans have their own cultures although 'a culture of Africa' may be a different story. "The Culture of Africa is varied and manifold, consisting of a mixture of countries with various tribes depicting their unique characteristic and trait from the continent of Africa. It is a product of the diverse populations that inhabit the continent of Africa and the African Diaspora."

This is so because culture, unlike philosophy cannot be readily attributed the whole continent as if it has one common culture. Africa is not a homogeneous entity like China or Japan. Although Japan and China belong to Asia, they do not have a common Asiatic culture because they are two different geographic entities with two different cultures. As a corollary of this, Africa which a continent cannot have one common culture although the commonality of the various cultures of Africa is expressed in the fact that most of them share common characteristic because of their common social physiognomies.

"Generally, Culture can be defined as a collective mass of distinctive qualities belonging to a certain group of people. These qualities include laws, morals, beliefs, knowledge, art, customs and any other attribute belonging to a member of that society. Culture is the way of life of a group of people." There are an estimated thousands of cultures in Africa and they can be depicted collectively as representing African culture in general.

What we may call an African Culture may therefore be the collection of all the cultures of the various peoples and ethnic groups of Africa. "There are over 3000 different ethnic groups speaking more than 2100 languages in all of Africa. The people there practice a variety of religions, including Christianity, Islam Judaism, and traditional religions

specific to their ethnic group." When we speak of language we are bound to speak of cultures because language is one of the most important dimensions of culture. The most widely spoken language of Africa are Swahili, spoken by 200 million people, followed by Yoruba spoken by 45million people Igbo spoken by 30 million people and Fula spoken by 35 million people and belong to the Niger-Congo family of languages.

The other point is that the culture of Africa may be divided in various "clusters of cultures" consisting of many more sub-cultures. "The people North Africa are primarily followers of Islam and are speakers of Arabic." If we go further south of the continent with observe the same phenomenon in southern-central Africa. "The French and Arabs have heavily are heavily influenced by the people of the Congo and they have a distinctive modern music style." We can go on analyzing the clusters of cultures across Africa. The people of the Horn of Africa have similar cultural traits and religious beliefs that they share among themselves and form a cluster distinct from north, south-central or western African cultures and sub-cultures.

Within these cultural clusters, there are countries or civilizations that have contributed more than others in terms of their contribution to the common culture of Africa. "The first major civilization in Africa was Egypt centered around the lush Nile river delta. Egyptian civilization truly began around 3150 BC when the ruler Menes unified the entire area into a kingdom." When we talk about early African civilizations and by implication about early African cultures, we can mention the three, i.e. Egypt, Kush and Axum as the main civilizations. In an area full of people competing for power and resources, each culture affected the rise and fall of others.

As we said above, there are obviously common features, values and morals that African cultures share between them. As culture in the African context or in

general is the product of the interaction and fusion of many cultures, the values African share include, "principles such as unity, patriotism, social cohesion, respect for authority and elders and a sense of community life. African culture also promotes the sanctity of life decent dressing, honesty and integrity, peaceful coexistence and communality." Africans have common and particular cultural heritages that define their common identities. African heritage is the history, cultural practices and beliefs of the people of Africa. It is important to preserve African heritage because it helps us understand our past and where we came from. It also helps us understand our culture and how we relate to one another.

To wrap up our discussion, we are bound to go back to the question we raised in the title to this article. Is there a culture of Africa? In other words, does Africans have a common culture? From the discussion above the answer to this question is yes and no. Africans have a common ancestry but not a common culture because they are diverse people who have developed diverse cultures through time and history.

As Africans do not have a common language, they do not have a common culture. Yes, they have common cultural attributes in the sense that culture, in Africa as elsewhere tends to overlap across geographical borders and communities that are linked by factors such as ethnicity and language. Yes, they share common cultural values and traits that bind them together as people of the same continent.

We are coming full circle and asking whether Africans have common philosophical values. The answer is also yes, they have. Do they have common culture? Yes, they have. As we tried to show in the above analysis, these questions are not only ambiguous but also simple to ask. The answers might also look complex but they are in fact simple. Both African philosophy and African culture can be addressed in the singular as well as in the plural. It is not geography but language and culture that is bind Africans together and allow them to live in harmony by sharing common world views as well as common cultural values.

There are sometimes misconceptions about Africa presented as the reality in the Western media. Africans were, until recently depicted as wild people without philosophy of life or decent cultural practices.

Negative perceptions and representations of Africa such as civil wars, hunger, corruption, greed, selfishness, disease and poverty have been the defining characteristic Africa and Africans in the minds of many Western people. These stereotypes are still prevalent. Yet, the truth is that Africans are like any people in the world, normal people of integrity and humility that define their cultural values and philosophical outlooks.



# Society

## Ethiopia in the right track to ensure food security via innovation, technology

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

Despite its land size, favorable climatic conditions and vast areas of fertile soil favorable for growing varieties of crops, coupled with a large number of manpower who can make difference in every sector, Africa is still suffering from hunger and drought.

Aside from climate change related challenges, absences of peace together with poor technology that are used for agriculture are the main causes for this food insecurity and hunger. Only a few African countries are capable of feeding themselves and export surplus products to others. The rest are dependent on foreign aid for food.

As indicated by Innovation and Technology Minister Belete Molla, (PhD), Africa should capitalize on technology so as to improve its agricultural system, ensure food security. According to him, Ethiopia is working aggressively to ensure food security by applying proper technology that can enhance production and productivity.

Speaking at the Sixth African Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Forum that was concluded last Thursday in Addis Ababa under the theme, "Effective delivery of innovative science and technology solutions to reinforce the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 and eradicate poverty in Africa." Belete underlined that Africa is seeing a glimmer of hope in areas of transformation. However, there are still challenges that hinder the continent from achieving its goals.

He said, poverty, absence of peace and security, not able to ensure development, are among the challenges faced by the continent. In this regard, science; technology and innovation are powerful tools to uplift the continent from its challenges. Applying technology and innovations on agriculture, renewable energy and health sectors will ease the burden of the society.

The continent should work aggressively to ensure economic progress by fighting poverty and creating job opportunities. Strong foundation must be laid in the continent to advance the use of technology and innovation, the Minister remarked.

What is more, the active involvement and collaboration of governmental institutions, private sector, research centers, civil societies and international development partners in areas of knowledge transfer and resource mobilization are needed to ensure food security in the continent, he added.

Seeing the versatile benefits of innovation and technology, Ethiopia is committedly working to improving agricultural



**Applying technology and innovations on agriculture, renewable energy and health sectors will ease the burden of the society**

productivity and ensuring food security, he reiterated.

To this end, it has developed a food system transformation roadmap and launched several initiatives that are crucial to boosting agricultural productivity, achieving self-sufficiency, and combating climate change. These initiatives include improving access to fertilizers, seeds, and technology for farmers.

"Ethiopia's commitment to advance its agricultural sector and ensure food security is a good example that should be emulated by other African countries."

He also said that by deploying Artificial intelligence based development schemes the country has prepared a road map that target to boost production and detach itself from food insecurity. It has also recently amended its Science and Technology policy, placing a strong emphasis on fostering innovation and harnessing the potential of emerging technologies and enacted a national Digital Transformation strategy named "Digital Ethiopia 2025."

Speaking on his part, Deputy Executive Secretary of UNECA Antonio Pedro said Africa's share of global poor people increased from 15 percent in 1990 to 63 percent in 2018 and may reach 90 percent by 2030. Africa should work emphasizing on human capital development, research and technology transfer, and Artificial Intelligence to accelerate its development.

Mentioning the continent's untapped potential in crop production, and animal and fishery resources, he said introducing modern agriculture techniques and deploying technology- assisted farming is of critical importance to improve the lives of millions of people.

"Science and technology can advance the wellbeing of millions of households, farmers, fishermen, and many others that are still using traditional farming tools; and with the help of science and technology they can be lifted out of extreme poverty," said Pedro.

According to him, science and technology have a significant role in easing the lifestyle of every individual. This is especially true for those people living in poverty for they have a significant role in increasing the efficiency of service delivery to the poor, monitoring living conditions and predicting imminent crises in crowded or remote areas.

Noting that about one billion people in Africa cannot afford a healthy diet, Pedro said, Africa is unlikely to meet the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods, adopted by the African Union Assembly Heads of State and Government in June 2014 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, to end all forms of hunger by 2025.

He said science, technology and innovation are critical to transform the continent's agriculture, industry and build a prosperous Africa.

Indeed, as it was mentioned by the Innovation and Technology Minister, Ethiopia has been making significant strides in addressing societal needs and driving development through the strategic application of science and technology.

The country's commitment to leveraging innovation, research and technological advancements to tackle pressing challenges and achieve sustainable development goals is evident in its aggressive pursuit for development across various sectors. The agricultural sector that properly applied science and technology, and is bearing fruits by increasing production and productivity is a good indication.

What is more, the prestigious Agricola Medal award Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) received at the beginning of this year, January 28th, from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) for his government commitment to food security, nutrition and pursuit of innovative solutions in wheat self-sufficiency is an affirmation that the country is on the right track to ensure food security, improve production and productivity.

Indeed, as a nation that strives to ensure sustainable economic development and to champion food security, the role of innovation and technology is a priority agenda of the government. That is why the nation has been investing in research institutions, innovation hubs and technology parks to spur scientific advancements and technological innovations. All the investments on digital infrastructure, e-governance system and ICT initiatives to enhance service delivery and empower citizens through digital literacy and skill developments are bearing fruits. As mentioned before, the agricultural sector is a living witness to this.



# Law & Politics

## Reasserting Ethiopia's Commitment to Peace

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

During the past few days, many Ethiopian diplomats have been reasserting the commitment of the reformist government towards attaining full peace in every part of the country, proving the narrative of certain media outlets that try to tarnish the image of the country. It is known that there are numerous attempts of destabilization in the country that try to project images of Ethiopia as a center of instability in the Horn of Africa and undermine its commitment to peace. That in turn will reflect negatively on the image of the country and affect not only investment but also the potential of the country to become a major and attractive destination for tourists even more than previous years.

Ethiopia recognizes that peace is a huge and precious as well as decisive factor to keep up with the momentum of carrying out major development projects since the advent of the current reformist government.

During the past weeks discussions were held in the country on the status of every activity carried out during the past six years and what challenges were encountered and how they were overcome besides discussing what would be needed to continue at full speed in the realization of important and fundamental development projects that we see being completed and implemented. It is clearly visible and acknowledged even by adversaries of this government that it can meet its plans and avail the results to citizens. Suffice it to see how several development projects were achieved and others are being carried out towards completion with the set time frame and the necessary quality.

The construction of several new roads and the repair and maintenance of others, the construction of bridges and resort areas both in Addis as well as even in remote parts of the country that have the potential of attracting tourists present a good image of the country. Among these could be mentioned projects such as the Koyisha project, the Wonchi project, the Gorgora project, the Halala Kela project which all shine as showcases of the accomplishment of this reformist government that no one can deny.

Furthermore, the reconstruction and renovation of the capital city Addis Ababa is becoming a huge topic of discussion because it is changing the face of Addis Ababa in an unequivocal manner. People who return to Addis after a few years of stay elsewhere and have not been witnessing the day to day changes happening in the city would not even recognize the city with many new projects already completed such as the Unity Park, where you can have a good look at the country and its historical chapters of the past, the Friendship Park, where families could pass some time with their loved ones in ease and comfort, Entoto Park with a view to the overall scene of Addis and suitable for a walk and passing some leisure with friends and relatives and the newly inaugurated Adwa Victory Memorial, an architectural gem right at the heart of Addis.

Moreover, the newly launched introduction of the Corridor Development Project in Addis is engaged in changing the city with the total reconstruction of certain central areas in the city across all directions and several neighbourhoods. According to the city municipality more than 5,000 old houses have been demolished and billions of birr have been paid or are in the process of being paid in compensation. The project has availed more than 15,000 jobs and the majority of

those who have been affected by this scheme are receiving new plots of land where they can construct their homes or businesses or are receiving new flats which are clean, healthy and comfortable leaving aside the old and dilapidated homes where they were living without the necessary utilities such as toilets with running water, sewerage and drainage system and no roads where during emergencies neither ambulances nor firefighters could access them readily to save lives. Many of such residents have been expressing their happiness of their new way of life thanks to the Corridor Development Project.

All these activities could not have been conceived and planned and carried out if there was instability in the country. Among the most challenging problems the reformist government had to face during the past six years has been the various armed groups which have tried to derail the activities of the government aimed at improving the livelihood of citizens and project the country towards new heights of decent life.

There have been continued negative news against Ethiopia and attempts to subvert the development projects of the country and at times even destabilize the establishment and try to change the government by the use of force.

Nonetheless the country has continued to register good numbers in terms of achievements in the economic, political and diplomatic spheres even by the admission of certain international bodies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank Group, WB and the UN among others. Ethiopia may have had some ups and downs in its relations with certain of its traditional friends and allies but after some time it has resumed its good relations even with more intense terms.

Admittedly, the conflict in the north was a major challenge during the past few years that risked to totally putting the country in an abyss of doubtful existence as we know it today. The various achievements and developing activities were put at serious risk also because funds had to be earmarked to repulse the existential threats the hostile forces undertook against the state of Ethiopia as a whole. The civil strife that dominated the headlines of many news outlets was instrumental in disseminating as much bad news as they could to tarnish the historical



and perennial reputation of the country and its positive image. However, the government had to mobilize all the means necessary to stop the conflict and maintain the integrity, sovereignty, and independence of the country, resisting all the pressure that had piled up during the couple of years of the hostilities and the interferences and interventions of certain nations and organizations.

Ethiopia had to mount a massive campaign of resistance using every means, political and diplomatic and the contribution of its diaspora, its intellectual class, including academics and researchers, to explain to the world using whatever means were available, including writing articles in newspapers, giving interviews on electronic media, and carrying on intense activities on social media that were aimed at the entire world, explaining how Ethiopia was in fact a victim of crude aggression and had no option but to mount a huge resistance and counter offensive not to disappoint its citizens, damaging their psyche, and that Ethiopia in fact never lost a war of aggression on its territory.

Eventually after a few years of hostilities, the Pretoria Peace Deal was signed putting in black and white the cessation of hostilities, and the end of the conflict was heralded. Today, peace is registered, and Ethiopia has shown the world that it was right and did not do any wrong to anyone except its responsibility to preserve its existence, just as any other country would do. Now that peace has been restored in the areas involved in the hostilities, significant rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts are being undertaken, and people are returning to their normal peaceful lives. But some challenges still persist in certain pockets of territory in the Oromia region and Amhara, as well as in Benishangul Gumuz regional states, where certain groups still insist on their attempt to seek to depose the current government and install their own by the use of force.

However, the government has been stretching its arms wide open to embrace them and persuade them to come to a negotiating table where their voice would be heeded as long as they agreed to act peacefully. The government has several times asserted that Ethiopia cannot afford to be involved in any armed challenge with anyone, particularly within its own borders and against its own citizens, who may feel that they have not been treated as they would have liked or hoped by

this government. The repercussions of such hostilities and violence would only aggravate the condition of the economy, which is trying to implement its homegrown policy aimed at addressing some macroeconomic issues and continuing with its current development trajectory.

In fact, according to the prime minister and the high government authorities, Ethiopia has been registering consistent growth during the past several years, deserving to have the testimony of many international bodies such as the IMF, the World Bank Group, the UN and others who have appreciated the efforts of the country in moving towards achieving the various development goals as prescribed by the UN.

Meanwhile, the government has established a commission that is ready to summon every group in Ethiopia to discuss any number of issues that have an impact on the government. According to the Commissioner of the National Dialogue Commission, it is ready to entertain everyone because it is an all-encompassing body constituted of well-knowledgeed academics and researchers who have passion for peace in Ethiopia and its growth to join shortly the category of middle-income countries.

This National Dialogue Commission has been carrying out its activities for the past two years and has made tremendous progress in terms of choosing those who are ready to take part in the discussions, despite the challenges it has been facing in the process. One of these is the non-ideal situation of certain woredas to engage in fruitful talks and discussions.

There are, however, persistent attempts by the government to bring all violent forces together to receive them with stretched arms. The response does not seem to be very fruitful due to the rigid views of these groups, who in many cases are also encouraged and even supported by some direct or indirect means to oppose the government and create instability in the country, a means to achieve their hidden strategic geopolitical interests at the expense of Ethiopia. There have been recent instances of attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of Ethiopia. Naturally, Ethiopia has used all the relevant offices to foil such endeavors.

The flurry of diplomatic activities of Ethiopian diplomats and other high-ranking officials has been motivated by Ethiopia's anxiety to make it clear that it is engaged more than ever before in trying to achieve full peace with all forces that try to present a military or diplomatic challenge to the current reformist government. It has been emphasized to all statesmen and envoys who have been visiting Ethiopia that the government is seriously committed to peace with all the forces and groups that may have issues or dissent with it.

The government has been stating again and again that any development venture would be of little use if there is no peace in every part of the country and that, in adherence to the terms and provisions of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopian constitution, elections are due within a couple of years, and all those who oppose the government's policies will have the opportunity to take part in them and peacefully access power. But this could be achieved only through peaceful means in an atmosphere of complete stability and order, with everyone being obedient to the laws of the nation. All other means cannot be accepted and would only lead to an unwanted crisis at a time when Ethiopians are really fed up with conflicts and the rhetoric of war mongering. Ethiopia needs absolute peace in order to maintain its momentum of development and progress.





Ephrem Endale  
Contributor

# Between you & me

## The 'Stepping Stones' Matter!

There was a time, years back when it seemed that everything was going to end up in dust as many young people were caught up in the 'tsunami of philosophy' and they started even 'worshipping' philosophers who necessarily don't have universal applauses. In fact they were so controversial going around the world wasn't some easy matter. Take the Osho guy for example. Now, there could be no doubt about him enjoying wide global following in almost every country. And his followers were mostly very emotional youngsters with whom. Of course, having fair discussions is very difficult if not outright impossible with followers who were one step away from making him 'The Creator' himself. You don't ask questions, you listen and say "As you say master! As you say!" I came across many youngsters and could realize the passion among that generation. Of course you can't blame many of them for having deep knowledge about the philosophies of the man. But the little they know is enough for them. I have to admit that I read at most a couple of translated works while there were scores of translated versions. If I had formed any opinion after my readings, I'm not saying!

One thing his 'teachings' seem to have been perfectly chiseled to appeal to those rebellion genes of almost every other youth. I mean those are years when logic and reality are subjected to the extreme back of the room making any sort of discussion difficult. Those were years when opposing and demonizing everything past were the orders of the day. Everything has to change and so-called traditional and cultural norms and heritages should be abolished. Maybe they should have been, maybe that was the way the world should have worked; maybe the world is in such mess that it's in because it failed to

lend ears to such teachings and preaching. Of course I can tell you there are facts that most of those young followers of the man never heard because such issues aren't raised as they don't do good the man's reputation. It breaks your heart to witness so many energetic youngsters whom the nation and the world need to isolate themselves from their respective communities because of the things the man thought.

There was this young man, a more or less rational guy, or so we thought, who worshiped the man with such finality you wondered what happened to that rational and logical guy you knew before he stumbled across the man. Unlike many among his generation this was a guy who read almost any topic, until of course the 'silent' revolution caught up with him. He took up reading especially people like Osho, Frederick Nietzsche etc. and there was no turning back; he just ignored all other books he ever read so emphatically. Now, speaking of Nietzsche, because this was one philosopher who practically mesmerized our guy. Especially one quote from the philosopher seemed to have laid the foundation of our guy's being. "God is dead!" (Familiar isn't it?) The irony here is that this young man was a regular in churches on Sundays and any other day he got the free time to drop by. In a very religious society where more than 90% of the people are religious this was one very contentious issue to raise in public. The verdict about anyone who said such a thing is simple and down to earth; "He has gone crazy." But this young man never thought he was crazy and publicly used the philosopher's saying and I can tell you he didn't make any more friends. In fact he lost most of the ones he already had. But nothing scared him bad enough to reevaluate

his situation.

Now and then I sat for tea with him and we used to discuss books, films and the like. Then after he became a new convert well the conversations dealt with new topics too. But since I'm a guy who's usually uncomfortable discussing religion or any such topic it was hard for him to 'recruit' me or think of anything like that. But one day he took that big leap and asked me what I thought about the "God is dead;" concept. Now a small trap as it was I managed to maneuver around it telling him that I didn't have deep reading of the philosopher's works and was not in a position to comment. But then I took the opportunity to throw a piece my mind at him. I said I think maybe that particular quote might have been wrongly interpreted.

"Why do you say that?"

"Well I feel many interpret it literally word for word and I have this feeling that probably wasn't what was meant." The guy was neither impressed and nor was I trying to do so. Why I should try to impress anyone about something I have the scantest knowledge about if any at all! He went into quite an emotional monologue trying to tell me that was exactly what he meant and delved into the broader issue of religion. I cut him short under the pretext of an appointment to keep and never did we raise the issue again.

Then all of a sudden this guy disappears. Just like that! Whatever happened to him he was practically forgotten after a couple of years. Then after some years I meet this guy back home for a visit from North America. We were discussing about completely different issues over tea when the name of that guy crops up. You can imagine my system going

into overdrive. So that son of a gun had all this time been across the oceans! No wonder America seems to be losing its soul! (Yes, that was too harsh of me!)

I asked what he did for a living not having any doubt that he was still in the Osho/Nietzsche guy.

"He has become a preacher!"

"Sorry; what did you say?"

"He is a preacher with quite a significant following." Oh my! Oh my! Oh my! And still there are those who tell you this world isn't changing. Now my reaction didn't make any sense to the fellow I was talking with.

"Why are you so surprised?" Watch out! You're getting too close to the cliff's edge!

"Well I never thought he was that religious!"

"He said in interviews he has always been religious since he was a toddler."

Yes; isn't that groundbreaking news of the decade!

We're in the social media age and things are harder in that there are so many pitfalls into which the young could fall without first taking care on which stones they step and which direction they are actually moving. Unfortunately, by the time many youngsters realize their mistakes it become to late them having ended up in no man's land! When it comes to the youth it's not only the direction they take that worries us but the stepping stones leading to the finish line.

## Magic in the Words, "Grateful for What I Have!"

How hard is it to be grateful for what we have? How hard is it to say, "I'm grateful for what I already have; for all the good things happening in my life," before cursing everyone and everything for the things we don't yet have? I mean life is not that simple for us to have everything we need let alone everything we want or desire. Being grateful should have been the simplest and most natural feeling; but somehow many of us fail to recognize this fact. Most of us fail to see what is there under our very eyes, we fail to understand there are those who for no reason of their own don't enjoy half the blessings we do.

Yes wanting more as long as it isn't about greed and at the expense of others. I mean we want more of things we have or even things we don't. (That's weird! How is it possible to want 'more' of things one doesn't have? I mean more is about making two, three or five, isn't it?) Anyway it seems that rather than feeling grateful for what we have and then looking ahead most of us practically forget what we actually possess, or even, to put some emphasis to it all, we forget what we're blessed with; because in these times of chaos and uncountable troubles the world over, in these times when things can no more be taken for granted, in these times when there are many who are much worse conditions than we're in for no fault on their side, saying "Thanks!" for what we have is wisdom as wisdom comes. There is the tendency when we find ourselves in some

hot waters we prefer to pour cold water over all the positive things we enjoy.

I chose to talk about this issue because of a couple of incidents which happened recently. In the first instance the behavior of this middle age fellow suddenly takes an 180o turn and begins accusing even cursing everyone. It was sort of him on one side and the whole community on the other. All of a sudden the fellow who took life in strides perfect and measured for the times is claiming the world is after him. At a certain informal gathering he says, "Everyone is evil. There isn't a single innocent person!" That was a very strong and biting statement to make especially in the presence of his supposedly good even best friends. I mean once you use the term 'everybody' exceptions wouldn't come easy.

Ok, let's give him the benefit of the doubt and he had a couple of points to be angry about like the rest of us would have been. He wasn't having a good time at his work place and seems to have locked horns with the brass for reasons still not fully known. Now, this isn't a guy one could blame for inefficiency, laziness or all those negative attributes which reflect on job performances. In fact, he is a well appreciated member of the staff. But then he gets into this disagreement with the brass. (Believe me when it comes to the brass in many of the places they know how to gang up. It much of the time behaves as a sort of fraternity where

members look after each other's backs. It is not a question of the viability of grievances or the complainants really being the victims. Yes, bumping heads with the brass is seldom an experience worthy of being inserted in the memory archives!)

So, of the little known of the case the rumors are that a newly arrived staff member was working the nuts and bolts to have him kicked out. Why is he to have him kicked out? That, dear readers, is the riddle. The new guy, so it is said, seems to have some strings attaching him with the superiors. Now our guy, understandably is very frustrated all the more because the brass seems to be sympathizing with the guy trying to make him jobless.

As if this wasn't enough trouble some family problems were the offing in his marriage of more than a decade, allegedly with the interference of some third party. Here for some reason his better half seems to be having second thoughts about keeping the marriage alive and running. No one knows what she has been fed with but the invisible third party seem to be having their way. Now it's only natural for anyone in his situation to be angry. Here comes the slip for our guy. He seems to have put everyone and anyone in the enemy camp while his problems were isolated and concerning a handful of people. What's more he's claiming that he didn't have what he 'deserves' in life and blames everyone for it! In the process he's slowly

loosing people who were very close to him.

A couple of close friends, so it's said, tried to talk him to calm down offering to be by his side in his time of problems and hardships. They tried to reason with him that he shouldn't lose friendships he has been building since his school days. They failed! The guy didn't budge. He tells them in their faces he trusts no one and that comes as sort of the next to the final nail to the coffin of lost friendships. His closest friends one by one slip away.

Now as to the complaints he wasn't leading the life he deserved that those who know believe was being ungrateful. Given his income he led a fairly comfortable life. And what's more his friends have always been by his and his family's side whenever the need arises. He started saying he deserved more, and his wasn't a life he deserved and who takes the blame? Everybody else. In fact, as we said given his income and his dinner table being always full he should have been the most grateful person for the life he leads. By the way he's the father of two girls in their early teens and attending a private school.

Whatever the difficulties we are in, whatever the demons making our lives harder are, there is always the healing magic in the words, "Grateful for what I have!"



In Pictures

## PM Abiy discusses with Libyan PM

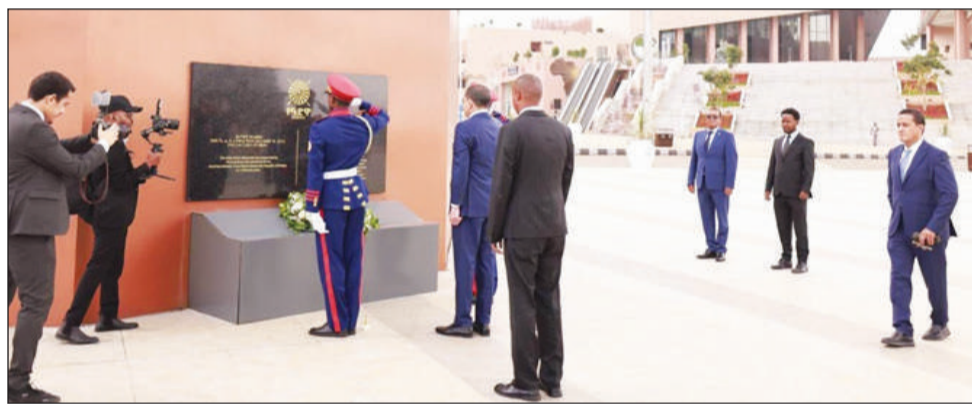
BY DARGIE KAHSAY



Prime Minister of the State of Libya, Abdul Hamid Al-Dabaiba has visited Addis Ababa this week for official state visit. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) received the Libyan PM at his office and discussed on bilaterla and regional issues of mutual interest.



The two leaders, during the meeting, discussed on regional peace and stability, economic cooperation, workforce exchange and other areas of mutual interest.



### Libyan lays a wreath at Adwa Victory Memorial

Prime Minister of the State of Libya, Abdul Hamid Al-Dabaiba, during his official state visit in Addis Ababa this week, has laid a wreath at the Adwa Victory Memorial, here in the capital.

During the wreath laying ceremony, Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Al-Dabaiba stated that the Victory of Adwa is a source of pride for all Africans. Appreciating government's commitment in building the memorial, the PM stated that the memorial is crucial to maintain the essence of the victory alive.



### PM Abiy discusses with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation CEO

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) welcomed Mark Suzman, CEO of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and his team at his office this Friday. Following the discussion, Prime Minister Abiy stated that BMGF's vital support in agriculture, health, nutrition, inclusive financial systems and other areas is invaluable to Ethiopia's development. PM Abiy stated that both sides are looking forward to strengthened partnerships ahead and other areas of cooperation.



### FM Taye discusses with UNSG Personal Envoy to Sudan

Ethiopia's Foreign Minister, Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie discussed with Lamtane Lamamra, Personal Envoy of the United Nations Secretary General (UNSG) Antonio Guterres for Sudan. The two sides discussed on the importance of a coordinated and harmonized Sudanese-led and Africa-supported peace process to find solutions to the conflict in the Sudan, according to Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia.