



The Ethiopian Herald

Vol. LXXX No 225 30 MAY 2024 - Ginbot 22, 2016

Thursday

Price Birr 10.00

Nat'l Dialogue opens new chapter in Ethiopia's history: *Chief Commissioner*

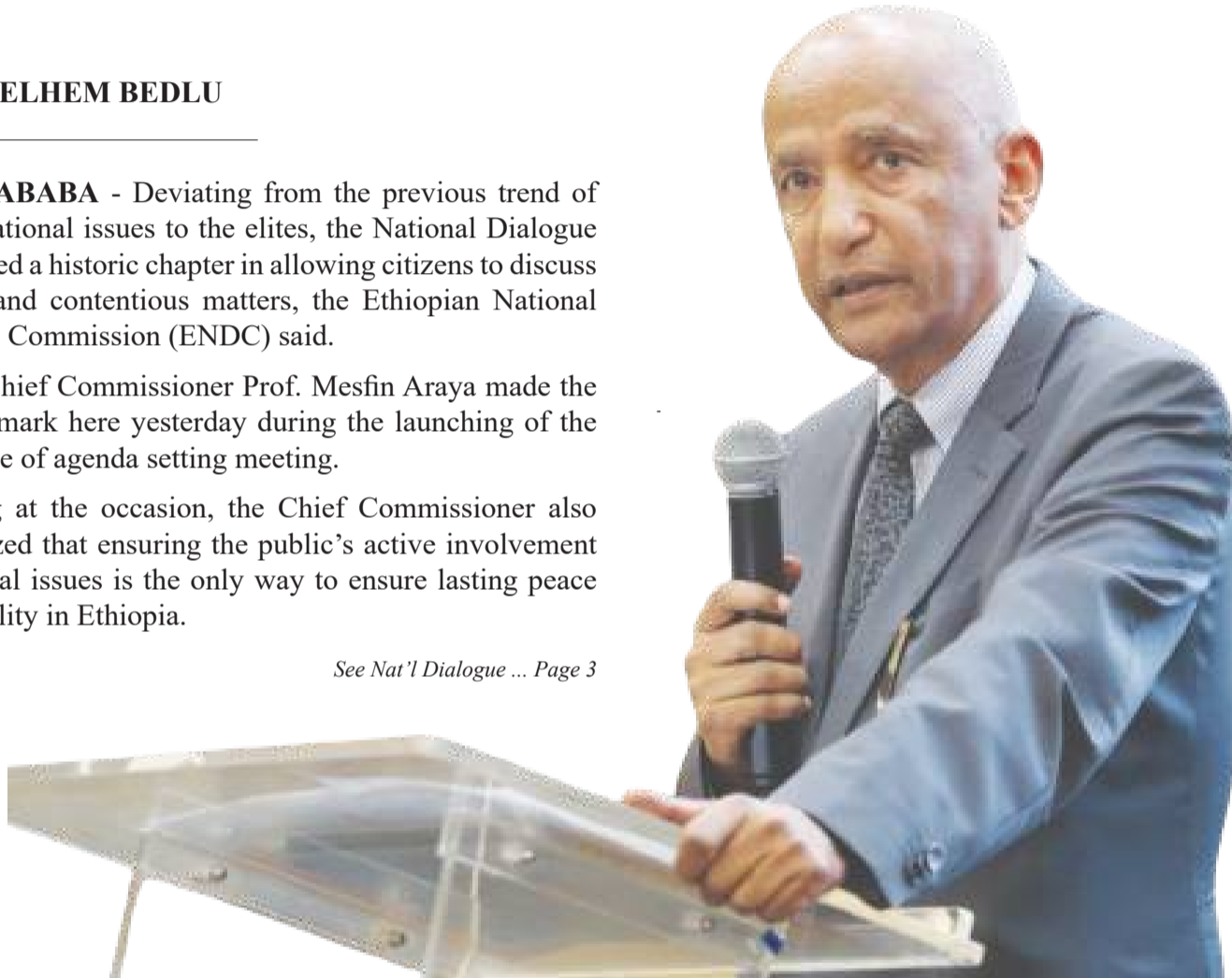
BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA - Deviating from the previous trend of letting national issues to the elites, the National Dialogue has opened a historic chapter in allowing citizens to discuss age-old and contentious matters, the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) said.

ENDC Chief Commissioner Prof. Mesfin Araya made the above remark here yesterday during the launching of the first phase of agenda setting meeting.

Speaking at the occasion, the Chief Commissioner also emphasized that ensuring the public's active involvement in national issues is the only way to ensure lasting peace and stability in Ethiopia.

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Collective action ushers conflict-affected communities' rehabilitation: *PSI*

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - Collective action of different actors is of great significance to the successful rehabilitation and rebuilding of conflict-affected communities and to address their challenges, the Policy Studies Institute (PSI) said.

The CGIAR in collaboration with PSI, the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) and other partners organized a research and policy conference on rebuilding Livelihoods in Conflict-Affected Communities in Ethiopia yesterday.

Speaking at the occasion, PSI Director General Prof. Beyene Petros stated that conflicts and droughts in Ethiopia have devastated the livelihoods of

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Saving blood vessel of economy

• Experts warn of unprecedented repercussions of financial fraud

BY EYUEL KIFLU

The financial sector which is considered to be the blood vessel of economy faces unprecedented combined threats of fraud and cyber-attacks a trend in which experts say will spark grave ramification if not dealt with properly.

Over the years, financial fraud and cyber-

attack on financial institutions even individuals has become common across all hemispheres. And, nations continue to grapple with the rising problem of financial crimes. The rapid transition to digitalization even makes the sector vulnerable to wide range of old and emerging threats.

Fraud, money laundering and online thefts

See Saving blood... Page 3

Ethio-Pakistan business ties mushrooming

BY YESUF ENDRIS

The diplomatic relationship and business cooperation between Ethiopia and Pakistan is flourishing following the opening of Ethiopia's embassy in Islamabad, a move spurred by policy and strategic reforms undertaken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoF).

Two Pakistani business delegations have visited Ethiopia, fostering expectations of substantial investment from Pakistan into Ethiopia. Pakistan, with its industrial base, and Ethiopia, with emerging markets and strategic location in East Africa, are well-positioned to benefit from mutual business cooperation, trade and investment.

Sectors such as agriculture, textiles, pharmaceuticals, and information technology have been identified as potential areas for collaboration.

In exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Pakistan Chamber of Commerce

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Ibrahim Khalid



Amb. Jemal Beker



Scholars push for effective Nat'l Dialogue implementation

• Nation enters agenda gathering phase in metropolis

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – As Ethiopia embarks on inclusive consultations, Scholars urged fellow citizens to actively engage in the National Dialogue process to address the encountered odds nationwide.

Speaking to local media, Political Science and International Relations Instructor Yonas Ayalew (PhD) said that the National Dialogue process is the mere and ideal solution that should be conceived as a routine activity to sustain and realize the country's thriving future.

As to him, a new model of social contract is primarily required for the country to bring about commendable peace and stability so that citizen sought to successfully participate in the entire process.

Calling for everyone who remains responsible in the dialogue, Yonas said it is critical to hammer on the bold picture and widen horizons to leave a profound foundation for the coming generation with a peaceful and prosperous country.

Reiterating the existence of possible loopholes in the country, Communication Researcher Negere Lencho (PhD) on his part remarked that it is hard to sustain peace with skirmishes as lasting peace requires negotiations and mutual trust.

Negere further underscored that mutual trust among the leadership and all forms of the community at each level to prioritize peaceful coexistence to address every question forwarded everywhere across the country.

On her part, Bonga University Vice President Woinshet Haile (PhD) said that national

unity is the best policy to realize peaceful Ethiopia that every citizen aspires for.

She has also indicated that the dialogue would be of a great significance to mend the long-edged historical fractures and inconveniences meaningfully.

Remarking the promising ongoing progress of the implementation, the Vice President emphasized the need to exert unwavering support of the elderly, religious fathers, experts in all disciplines in all walks of life needs to be further intensified to help successfully accomplish the remaining national homework.

It is to be recalled that the National Dialogue Commission has been conducting various activities which include participants' identification and selection all over the country and entered the implementation phase here in Addis Ababa yesterday.

MoH to hold domestic medical resource production, innovation exhibition

• Incentivizes local medical equipment manufacturers

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA - The first domestic medical resource production and innovation exhibition will be held from June 22 to June 27, 2024, under the theme 'Our health is our products', the Ministry of Health (MoH) revealed.

Health State Minister Frehiwot Abebe told journalists yesterday that the exhibition aims to strengthen and promote the local medical equipment manufacturing industry, facilitate business ties and highlight investment opportunities. It also aims to increase the domestic product's market share, reduce import dependency, and supplement the national economy.

The State Minister also highlighted that the government has given due attention to support local medical equipment manufacturers and it has been carrying out extensive tasks to increase the domestic production of medicines.

"In the medium-term development and investment plan of the health sector, the development of the pharmaceutical industry has been included with special attention.



Frehiwot Abebe

Based on this, the government planned to increase the market share of local pharmaceutical products to 47%."

In Ethiopia, the pharmaceutical industry market shows growth every year, and currently, the market size is estimated to be more than one billion USD. The size of the country's pharmaceutical market ranks among the leading in Africa, Frehiwot elaborated.

At present, there are over 25 medium and high-

level pharmaceutical and medical resource manufacturing companies in Ethiopia. These companies play a vital role in strengthening the health system and meeting the demand for services by producing medical supplies and equipment, it was indicated.

In addition, over 50 small pharmaceutical manufacturing industries are engaged in the sector, and are mainly involved in the production of antiseptics, diagnostic reagents, skin and personal hygiene products, hospital equipment and various products.

She pointed out that in the national exhibition, over 150 small, medium and high-end medical equipment manufacturers will display their products, and it is expected that private and government entities supporting the sector and development partners will show their activities.

The necessary preparations are being executed to make the exhibition, which is being coordinated by the MoH, the Armauer Hansen Research Institute, Medical Device Manufacturing Associations, and various related institutions a success, the State Minister remarked.

Authority to protect intellectual property, genetic resource

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopian Intellectual Property Authority (EIPA) announced that Ethiopia signed Final Act of treaty with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) to protect genetic resources and associated with culture and knowledge.

The WIPO member States adopted historic new treaty on intellectual property, genetic resources, and associated traditional knowledge on May 24th, 2024. WIPO's member states unanimously approved a new international agreement on the protection of rights to intellectual property, genetic resources and related cultural knowledge at a diplomatic conference held in Geneva on May 13-24.

The information sends to *The Ethiopian Herald*, the Authority's Director General Woldu Yemessel who signed the Final Act, affirmed that Ethiopia envisions a future where genetic resources and traditional knowledge associated to genetic Resources.

Similarly, the treaty is also focus on protection and utilization of resources in the responsible and equitable manner.

"The treaty represents a collective effort to honor and preserve our shared heritage. It ensuring the treaty would contribute a lot in areas of source of knowledge and prosperity for generations to come. Ethiopia aims to leverage its rich genetic resources and traditional knowledge by committing to the treaty," the director general added.

The information further stated that the landmark international agreement (treaty) requires applicants for patent applications based on genetic resources and related societal knowledge aims to avoid illegal acts in the area. It means that it helps to increase the efficiency, transparency, and quality of the patent system.

It was to be recalled that Ethiopia actively participated from the beginning of the diplomatic confer.

Nat'l Dialogue opens new...

"Previously, citizens did not have much opportunity to consult or decide on national issues, rather it had been left to politicians and elites and the National Dialogue has created a new chapter in enabling people from all walks of life to engage equally and meaningfully through their representatives."

Emphasizing this phase, which is expected to identify the major issues that will be discussed in the upcoming National Dialogue conference, he indicated that the process would play a key role

for the success of the conference.

"Through exerting our responsibilities, we could create a transparent political system, develop a new political culture but more importantly, could bring about sustainable solutions to the longstanding and contentious issues as well as build a strong nation."

The Chief Commissioner further highlighted that the ENDC gives values to the agendas identified in the consultation phase and reiterated full commitment to include them at the next National

Dialogue conference.

Commissioner YonasAdaye (PhD) for his part mentioned that the priority would be given to conducting viable discussion among participants during the seven-day agenda setting session. "Participants will have detailed discussions where they freely express their opinions without the pressure or interference of any entity. It is also noted that this process takes this lion's share in the forthcoming National Dialogue conference."

Yonas (PhD) also noted that participants are set

to identify major discussion areas and set agendas with their recommendations. Lastly, they will assign five representatives from each segment of the society including youth, women, and elderly, people with disability and businesspersons that will take part in the National Dialogue conference.

Over 2,000 participants drawn from 119 districts and representing different segments of the society are taking part in the agenda setting meeting which is set to be held here from May 29-June 4, 2024.

Ethio-Pakistan ...

and Industry Pakistan-Ethiopia Business Council Chairperson Ibrahim Khalid said that Ethiopia would be destination for several Pakistani businesses in the future.

The environment, energy supply and human resource are encouraging factors that he witnessed during his visit in Ethiopia.

Industrial parks in Pakistan are not equally green and environmental friendly compared to the Ethiopian parks. "We are keen to search for further opportunities that Ethiopia can offer to investors," he said.

Every country has competitive advantages and Pakistani companies have good experience in textiles, pharmaceuticals, and agro-processing, the Chairperson said, declaring that all these sectors are potentially lucrative in Ethiopia.

The Pakistani companies can bring technology to utilize the resource and to be part of the industrial revolution happening here in Ethiopia, he noted.

He however said that these businesses will take time to research the overall environment. "We need to have trust and build confidence on the government and on the business environment. The policy and the administration (of the Prime Minister) are very positive, so companies are optimistic to invest in Ethiopia," he underscored.

The hospitality of the Ethiopian people and infrastructural facilities also make the country attractive to investors, the Chairman added.

Ethiopian Ambassador to Pakistan, Jemal Beker also expressed his optimism on the burgeoning economic and business ties between the two nations.

The government of Ethiopia took rightsizing measures on embassies and opened embassy in Islamabad. The commitment on the side of Pakistanis is also surprisingly great. "We witnessed their interests' during the past ten business forums. Now, it is our turn to give them the confidence to invest in Ethiopia," he said.

The visits by the business delegations demonstrates the mutual interest in leveraging each other's economic strengths. Ethiopia's investment opportunities, particularly in its industrial parks, are designed with the state-of-the-art techniques and technologies to attract foreign companies. The government is also implementing friendly policies, including the homegrown economic policy, he said.

"I think, all these measures have been well-received by the Pakistani delegations, who are seeing Ethiopia as a gateway to the African market," he remarked.

Ethiopia has a promising future as its cheap energy, and large human resource would benefit not only Pakistanis, but also other countries' business, he added.

have been causing havoc on the financial sector even in New York, world's leading business centre. Months ago, co-founder of the failed crypto exchange FTX, Sam Bankman-Fried was found guilty of cheating investors and consumers of his now-bankrupt company and was sentenced to 25 years in prison. He was charged with wire fraud and conspiracy to commit money laundering last year.

The problem demonstrates the rise in finance-related crimes. Hackers and criminals usually view banks as prime targets of thefts and fraud. The trend is worse in countries with insufficient technology and human powers to combat crimes.

According to source, in current Ethiopia's fiscal year a large number of financial-related crimes have been reported and are being investigated, with billions of birr seized and under investigation.

In Ethiopia, from 2014 up until 2015 E.C. banks have lost one billion Birr due to fake documents and other fraudulent activities.

The country has foiled over 4,550 cyber-attacks in the first six months of the current Ethiopian fiscal year. The attack increased by 115 per cent compared to last year. According to INSA, the country could have lost 186 million USD has the attacked succeeded.

In addition to fraudulent acts, the

Saving blood vessel of...

digitalization of the sector also results in system failure which sometimes appears to disrupt the macro-economy.

In the recent past, a system glitch that occurred in the country's biggest bank CBE led to the loss of Billions of Ethiopian Birr. Though the bank was able to retrieve the stolen money using different means, the incident speaks volume about the increasing barriers facing this critical sector.

Michel Habte is Chief Operating Officer at the Ethiopian Securities Exchange. In an exclusive interview with The Ethiopian Herald, Michel acknowledged that glitches may happen in the most advanced countries banks, and the key is to have an operational risk framework in place to cope with these challenges. "We cannot 100 per cent prevent every glitch, but having protocols and procedures in place is crucial."

Regarding the country's financial security, Michel stated that Ethiopia is advancing in financial security and has a very strong national security agency, INSA. However, the vulnerability of the financial sector is increasing due to the use of fake documents and other fraud systems.

If the financial system is not stable, it will put pressure on the country's economy and create political instability, said Financial Intelligence Service Public Relations and Communications Executive Officer, Endale Assefa.

There are financial crimes involving the use of forged documents and business licenses to make illicit profits. The extent of the damage these crimes cause is very hard and proves difficult to prevent as criminals usually try to launder the money and give it legal status.

Endale further explained that financial fraud damages the reputation of financial institutions, erodes the credibility they have with their customers, and disrupts their relationship with other international financial institutions, leading to punishment for the financial institutions.

Endale stated that the Financial Intelligence Service works together with the financial institutions recognized by the National Bank of Ethiopia and other relevant stakeholders to prevent and control these complex crimes, which are often committed with the help of experts.

Users' limited knowledge as to how to use online financial services also become advantageous for criminals. Michel emphasized people need to understand the risks associated with their data and how to use financial services in a safe manner.

He stressed the importance of collaboration between the government, relevant agencies, banks, financial sector players, and the providers of these services to educate the population on how to use these platforms and services safely.

Collective action ushers...

communities in the conflict-impacted areas. The government and development partners are mobilizing resources to rebuild and restore.

"The conference would bring together stakeholders to emphasize investing in these communities and promoting their resilience, ensuring that no one is left behind," he added.

The director general also stated that conflicts and recurring drought have a severe impact on the community's livelihoods, necessitating urgent investments in the restoration and rehabilitation activities.

The government in collaboration with development partners is mobilizing resources to address challenges posed by these crises and it has employed evidence-based and sustainable investment options to bring the desirable outcomes.

According to Prof. Beyene, cooperation

among the government, humanitarian organizations and local actors is crucial to ensure the effective implementation of the program, help the most vulnerable segment of the society and pave the way for a more stable future for all Ethiopians.

"The conflicts disrupted the livelihoods of farming communities and led them to displacement, food insecurity and economic destruction. Millions of people are affected by acute food insecurity that is affecting IDPs, returnees and host communities alike. A strategic and comprehensive approach that combines emergency relief with long-term investment is essential."

Such efforts need assessment, financial access, agricultural support, women and youth empowerment, infrastructure rehabilitation, psychological assistance, peace-building and strengthening local governance. It also requires a multi-faceted strategy: integrated assessments,

capacity building, economic revitalization, infrastructure restoration, psychological aid, social cohesion, safety nets, sustainable practices and strategic partnerships, the director-general remarked.

For his part, CGIAR Initiative on National Policies and Strategies Program Leader and Senior Research Fellow and Lead, Clemens Breisinger said that prioritizing creating resilience is crucial before and after shocks. "Currently, we are living in areas of constant shocks and crises. We have to deal with these consequences and shocks."

ILRI Director General's Representative to Ethiopia and Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa Namukolo Covic stated that research would greatly support the recovery processes in conflict-affected areas and address communal challenges. "Ensuring the restoration of conflict-impacted communities requires high partnership with all stakeholders."

Opinion

The significance of number “One” in the People's Republic of China

BY MELAKU MULUALEM K

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Number “one” has significant position and meaning in the historical, philosophical, economic, social, cultural, and political issues of the government and people of China. It also symbolizes “leadership, honor and dignity” in China. Moreover, the number has a meaning of “the beginning, the origin, and the whole”. One source says that there are over 260 phrases and more than 420 idioms beginning with the number “one” in China's language system. One of the famous Chinese idiomatic expressions says “The journey of a thousand miles begins with ONE step”. Chinese also usually say “One heart, one mind”.

In this piece I will focus on One Child Policy, One Country Two Systems, Leaning to One Side, One Line Strategy, One China Principle and One China Policy, One Belt One Road, One Dog Policy, One Ruling Party, and One Time Zone.

One Child Policy

Currently, China has about 1.4 billion population. In the years between 1949 and 1969, the population number of China grew very fast. During this period the population number grew from 541 million to 800 million. The 1990 population censuses also showed that there was an average increase of 12.97 million people every year.

Realizing this situation the government of China decided to implement a One-Child policy to control the fast-growing population that may hinder economic and social development and put pressure on natural resources. This policy is also constitutional. According to Article 25 of the Chinese Constitution, “The State Promotes Family Planning so that population growth may fit the plans for economic and social development”.

The implementation of family planning could prevent the growth of population number from additional multi-millions. Starting from 2016, the Chinese government has revised the One Child Policy so that all Chinese couples can have two children. This revision of the policy was forwarded by the government after achieving success in economy and literacy. This policy has been revised to reduce the burden on individuals who have the practice of supporting extended family members of the couples.

One Country Two Systems

China has a unitary system of administration and applies the principle of democratic centralism. Hong Kong and Macao were taken from China by the British and Portuguese governments in 1840 and 1887 respectively. Through rigorous and tiresome diplomatic efforts of China, both Hong Kong and Macao have been returned to China in 1997 and 1999 respectively. The next challenge was how to integrate the people of both territories into the other parts of China. It was at this critical juncture “One Country Two Systems” approach was innovated.

According to this system “one country” means China, and “two systems” means socialist and capitalist systems. Thus, Hong Kong (Xianggang) and Macao are to be returned to China, but they are given the right to follow their existing ideology called capitalism for 50 years. With this system, both the people of Hong Kong and Macao will enjoy a high degree of autonomy in governance. However, the foreign and national defense of China will have power in both territories.

The issue of Taiwan can also be solved with this “One Country Two Systems” approach. The experiences of the government of China in Hong Kong and Macao are exemplary to rule Taiwan as part of China. Sooner or later this system will be implemented in Taiwan and solve the age-long problem between China and some other Western countries.

Leaning to One Side

In its early days after the founding of the PRC, new China followed a strategy of leaning to one side, the side of Socialism. Soon, China formed diplomatic relations and an alliance with the former Soviet Union and other East European Socialist countries. Leaning to one side doesn't mean China would blindly follow the Soviet Union in the international arena, nor that China had become the satellite of the Soviet Union.

During the Cold War period, almost all communist countries in Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa were satellite states to the Soviet Union. There were direct orders from the Soviet Union in their political decisions and governance. However, China refused to accept such a relationship with the Soviet Union and stood by itself. Towards the end of the 1950s differences came into being between CPC and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on some theoretical questions of principles. When the Soviet Union crumbled into pieces, almost all other satellite states faced the same problem. However, China continued to exist as a communist country up to today.

One Line Strategy

The one-line strategy of China began in the mid-1970s and lasted until the early 1980s. This strategy was crafted by Chairman Mao Zedong. During this period, China formally put an end to its alliances with the Soviet Union. This strategy led China to side with the United States of America in opposition to the Soviet Union. But this doesn't mean that China joined the Western camp by rejecting Socialist Ideology. The secret visit of Henry Kissinger in 1971 to China played a role in the better relationship between China and the USA. On the other hand, the Soviet Union supported Vietnam's anti-China activities.

During these periods, there was a fierce Cold War and competition between the Soviet Union and the USA. China realized that this situation was not only between the two social systems, but it was also for hegemonic power. At this time the rough relations between China and the USA improved. This strategy helped China not to be a satellite state of the Soviet Union. In the later period, however, the good relationship between China and Russia came into being.

Thus, now this One Line Strategy is no more in use in China. Currently, China is working with both Russia and the USA based on its new policy and strategy.

One China Principle and One China Policy

One China Principle and One China Policy are two sides of a coin. The one-China principle is a core belief of the Chinese government, while the one-China policy is a pragmatic approach adopted by countries to navigate the complex political situation between China and Taiwan.

Thus, the One-China principle is one of the fundamental parts of the foreign policy of the Government of the PRC. In establishing bilateral relations with the PRC, recognition of the one-China principle is a prerequisite. The principle underlines that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China. Legally, the Cairo Declaration, the Potsdam Proclamation, the United Nations Resolution 2758, and other international documents substantiate that Taiwan belongs to China. Few countries in the world do not recognize the One China Policy. The Kingdom of Eswatini (Kingdom of Swaziland) is a case in point.

One Belt One Road

One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative was taken by President Xi Jinping in 2013. This initiative has taken the ancient Silk Road international trade of China into consideration. It aims to enhance connectivity and promote economic cooperation among countries in Asia, Europe, Africa, and beyond. It consists of two components i.e. the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. The former focuses on land-based infrastructure projects, and the latter focuses on maritime routes and port development.

The initiative includes a wide range of sectors focusing on transportation, energy, telecommunications, and trade. It also promotes people-to-people relations. Based on this initiative, many countries are getting benefits.

One Ruling Party

China's ruling system is different from both the British Parliamentary and the American Presidential system of governance. In both countries, different parties can win elections and govern the country. The non-ruling parties are also called opposition parties. There is confrontational democracy in the Western countries. This is different from China's political governance system.

The Communist Party of China (CPC) is the only ruling party of the government. It has been the leading force in the political life of the country for more than a century. In addition to CPC, there are other political parties in China. These political parties are “participatory parties” i.e. they are not designated as opposition parties. These parties work “through multi-party cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the Communist Party of China”.

One Dog Policy

In some of China's big cities such as Beijing and Shanghai, there is one dog policy. According to this policy, only one dog is allowed per

household. There are many reasons for this policy. The major reason is to control diseases related to dogs, especially rabies, which killed many people who were infected. In the latter years, the government could control rabies by using vaccinations and treatments.

There is also a restriction on having big and dangerous dogs. Even one can't import dogs from another country which contradicts the policy. Thus the size of a dog is also limited to be small size. This also helps to protect residents who are living and using lift in their big apartments.

Currently, many dogs in Beijing are equal or a bit bigger size than a cat. All dogs should also be registered and known by the government. Thus, unlicensed and abandoned dogs cannot move in the cities freely. This policy can also help to minimize various types of pollution related to dogs. In my opinion, the One Child Policy of China has contributed to having one more dog in a family.

One Time Zone

In a territorial aspect, China is amongst the first four largest countries in the world. China has a vast land and geographically stretches across five time zones. As the rules show us in every 15 degrees of longitude there will be one hour difference in the world. According to the rule 15 degrees were chosen because a circle has 360 degrees and 360 divided by 24 hours is 15 degrees. Thus each hour, Earth rotates through 15° of longitude.

The size of China covers five-fifteen degree longitudes. Based on this rule, a place in the easternmost place of China will have five-hour differences with the westernmost part of China. But this rule is not working by the “One Time Zone” rule of China called China Standard Time. This is to mean that in China all places use similar hours whether one lives in the easternmost or westernmost territory of China. This decision was passed in China by Chairman Mao Zedong in 1949. One of the reasons was to unify the nation. This decision is still working in China.

To sum up, for China “number one” is not only a number by itself. It has also significance to the philosophical, political, economic, social and cultural thoughts of China to address various national and global problems. For China “One” is a frame to limit number, to show specific direction and strategy of the government, to set a building block to future success, to emphasize the importance of a matter, be inclusive or be universal, to indicate critical commitments to sovereignty and territorial integrity. Some of these focuses can be good lessons to developing countries to solve their holistic challenges and improve quality of life. In the One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative, “number one” is a symbol of unity, completeness, integration, interconnectedness and partnership in building the community of shared future for mankind in the world.

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

Editorial

Important milestone in the National Dialogue

The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) officially launched the agenda items gathering consultative meetings at the First Chapter of the dialogue here in Addis Ababa yesterday. While the meetings have taken place in some of the regions of the nation, the launching of similar event in Addis Ababa can be taken as a significant milestone in ensuring the effective progress of the dialogue nationwide.

Ethiopia has been making a very long preparation to conduct a national dialogue which is anticipated to bring about viable solution to decades old political problems. It is as such historical because this kind of wide ranging and in-depth dialogue has never taken place in the country before. As a result, the long-time taken to prepare for it is indeed worth the time and effort as it is supposed to transform the alarming situation in the country completely and could promise a bright future.

Yet, many Ethiopians also long for the time to commence the actual dialogue, carry it out effectively and proceed to the routine activities. Such feeling is created due to the impact of the various unfavorable incidents that caused the delay and rescheduling the Commissions time table to conduct the actual event. The Commission's success in carryout the activities so far and convening this consultative meeting is a great leap forward. It is also hoped that it will effectively discharge its remaining works in the coming weeks and months.

Now that the Addis Ababa Chapter of the agenda items collection for the national dialogue has been launched, it is possible to speak with due certainty about the effectiveness of upcoming similar events in other regions. Addis Ababa takes the lion's share of the political and economic activities of the entire nation and the start of the event here is so symbolic. With a population estimated at more than 4 million, Addis Ababa is structured in 11 Sub cities and 119 woredas which make it the biggest city in the country, and also inhabited by citizens from across the nation and even more populated than some regional states.

As a result, the metropolitan city has the potential to reflect the burning desires, the ambitions, and outlooks of the linguistic, cultural and religiously diverse people of the nation. It has also been an emblem of unity, cohesion and synergy of the people of the nation as almost everyone in all corners tunes to the progresses that occur in Addis Ababa as miniature of the entire nation. It plays a meaningful role in setting a positive pace in the historical political and economic journey of the nation.

Therefore, participants of the consultative discussion here in Addis should also do their task with due responsibility to meaningfully pinpoint the burning issues of the residents of the metropolis, discuss them thoroughly and come up with vital and prevalent topics that are the most burning ones among the public. This will be helpful not only for residents of the city but also for participants of the remaining regions.

The ENDC indicated that the participants in the consultative meeting opened yesterday in Addis Ababa included representatives from religious, civic society, and political institutions at every level.

ENDC Chief Commissioner Professor Mesfin Araya indicated on the occasion that the participants in the consultation phase represent a wide cross-section of the Addis Ababa population, including community leaders, women, youth, teachers, the business community, and those displaced from their homes or facing limited participation for various reasons.

This makes the consultation a great leap forward as it focuses on identifying key national issues where the people need to reach consensus on and contribute to the efforts to address the problems of the nation once and for all. Hence, all stakeholders should discharge their historic responsibilities for the best accomplishment of the consultation.

Opinion

The Right to live in a Clean and Healthy Environment as Human Right

BY TESFAYE ABATE

The Ethiopian Government is executing an urban corridor development initiative entitled "Clean Road- Healthy Life" The initiative goes in line with the right to live in a clean and healthy environment to which this piece is interested in.

1) Meaning and Nature

The right to live in a clean environment is an environmental right recognized at the international level. When we say the right to clean and healthy environment, we do not envisage an ideal environment with zero degree pollution, but an appropriate degree of environmental protection and conservation necessary for the enjoyment of basic human rights. The right to environment is defined by Thorne to include "the right not to be exposed to [human]-made environmental contaminants, injurious to health, the right not to be subjected to life-shortening influences, the right not to be subjected to extraordinary noise, and the right to know that natural ecosystems containing wild flora and fauna still exist in the world." This is a broader definition, which includes the right to have conducive environment for the life of human beings.

Others define the term in a narrower manner that has to do with the protection of human health and well-being from environmental hazards and they argue that this formulation is more acceptable for the right to environment to be accepted as human right. However, this anthropocentric formulation is narrow that does not include natural resource management or species extinction.

The right to live in a clean and healthy environment requires balancing the aspiration of development with environmental protection under the concept of sustainable development. There should be development so as to uplift the standard of living of the society; however, this development should not adversely affect the environment.

2) International level

A right to an environment of a certain quality has been increasingly recognized. To characterize the quality of the environment terms like 'clean', 'healthy', or 'generally satisfactory, has been employed. Constitutions that have been adopted since the 1992 have incorporated this environmental right. A number of domestic decisions consider this right as justiciable.

At the international level principle 1 of the Stockholm Declaration has recognized this environmental right. According to Principle 1 of the Stockholm Declaration, a human being "...has the fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of a quality that permits a life of dignity and well-being...."

African Charter in Article 24 provides that "all peoples shall have the right to a general satisfactory environment favorable to their development". In addition, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) incorporates the right to health (Art. 12) and the African Charter (Art. 16) interpreted to incorporate the right to live in a clean and healthy environment. The African Commission interprets that this includes the procedural obligation to conduct an environmental and social impact assessment of industrial projects and monitoring such impacts, and provide access to environmental information and meaningful participation in the relevant decision-making.

Further, the San Salvador protocol under Art 11(1)

provides that "everyone shall have the right to live in a healthy environment and to have access to basic public services". Article 24 (2) (C) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) expressly refers to "the dangers and risks of environmental pollution: in connection with the implementation of the right to highest attainable standard of health. The 2012 ASEAN Human Rights Declaration also provides the right of "every person ... to an adequate standard of living Including... (e) The right to a safe, clean and sustainable environment"

3) Its relation to Human Right

The claims of human rights of people relate to benefits important for freedom, wellbeing, dignity and human fulfillment. Those claims are meant to protect individuals from power abuse and the full realization of being human. Today, environmental law has become connected with human rights law. Environmental human rights have also received acceptance in the human rights law.

The term 'environmental right' is not precisely defined, despite the proposals. Some characteristics of the term have been established instead of defining the term. The characteristics include healthful, decent, pure, natural, clean, ecologically balanced, and safe. W. Paul has stated that decent environment might be considered as a minimum standard for preservation of human life which is realistic while absolute purity is a maximum standard that might not be achieved.

The right to environment includes the enjoyment of clean water, air, fertile soil, the right to survive without starvation and diseases that might be caused by inadequate environmental hygiene and management. This gives priority to humans' healthy life which is the primary reference.

The life of human being depends on the interaction with animals and plants. Thus, the right to environment should consider the preservation of wild animals, plants and natural resources to ensure the life of human on the Earth.

The ultimate purpose of the right to environment is the protection of human life and health, the preservation of natural environment as well as the creation of duty to protect the environment for the benefit of the existing and coming generations. Therefore, the establishment of safe, healthy, and ecologically balanced environment is believed to serve this purpose.

The 1995 FDRE Constitution has enshrined the right to clean and healthy environment. According to Article 44(1) of the FDRE Constitution, "All persons have the right to a clean and healthy environment". This makes clear that the environmental right is a constitutional right guaranteed to all people.

The Constitution imposes a duty on the Ethiopian Government to ensure that all Ethiopians live in a clean and healthy environment [Art. 92(1)] the Government is obliged to ensure that development projects do not damage or destroy the environment [Art. 92(2)]. In addition, it stipulates that both the Government and citizens have the duty to protect the environment [Art. 92(4)].

Therefore, the campaign, the Ethiopian Government has launched should be seen in light of this duty, and the citizens should actively discharge their obligation to protect the environment.

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



The Ethiopian Herald

Established in 1943

Published daily except Mondays
By The Ethiopian Press Agency

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The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy

Enhancing the emerging Ethiopian economic sectors

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Being a habitat of more than 120 million people and endowed with abundant untapped natural resources including vast arable land, favorable climate, surface and underground water and sufficient rain, mines and productive labor forces, Ethiopia has registered remarkable economic growth. However, it needs more effort to utilize technology, financial support, and well trained manpower to better exploit its resources and accelerate the growth.

Zerihun Biru (PhD), an economist, is working as a consultant for various institutions. While making an interview with the local media recently, he said that in the last two decades the government strived to achieve economic growth in the sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing and services and some tangible results are registered.

He further said that most investments put on the development endeavor came from the public sector and the role of the private sector in this regard is insignificant. The government spent huge amount of finance on the construction of infrastructure which played pivotal role for the economic growth registered so far. Roads, rail ways, industrial parks and hydropower dams etc can be mentioned in this regard.

The construction sector which is engaged in infrastructure development created job opportunities for hundreds of thousands. It also created market opportunity to cement industries, and the transport sector also engaged to move inputs and outputs to customers.

The expansion of industrial parks enabled to attract foreign and local investments and created jobs for thousands. It also created market linkage to the agriculture and most agro industries could utilize inputs from local sources. The manufacturing sector also played vital role in boosting export and import substitution. It also paved the way to the private sector to play its own part. In order to support the agricultural sector, the government imported agricultural inputs such as fertilizer, pesticides and herbicides and supplied to farmers with subsidized price. Not only these, it supplied selected seeds obtained both from local and foreign sources.

In addition, it encouraged private sector to involve in agriculture by providing land and tax holidays while they import agricultural machineries.

As to Zerihun, 72% the nation's labor goes to the agricultural sector and most farmers plow farmlands with small size which is below a hectare and such a situation also has its own draw back on enhancing productivity and production.

He also said that farming activities mostly utilize human and animal labor. In the pre and post-harvest seasons, about 30%



Ethiopia has to accelerate industrialization, structural transformation

crops are wasted. The absence of sufficient warehouses also makes the products vulnerable to insects which reduces the amount.

He further said that the sector is subsistence and vulnerable to the extreme weather conditions and due to the current global warming and climate change, the sector is critically affected. Hence, to withstand the challenge, applying climate smart agriculture must be taken as an option including the expansion of irrigation farm by exploiting surface and underground water, using drought resistance selected seeds and providing extension service to farmers.

Livestock, the sub sector of agriculture, has huge potential. Ethiopia's livestock is the largest in number in Africa. But due to lack of modern cattle rearing system, its contribution to the economy can be said limited. In fact, it contributes 20% to the agricultural GDP. It has a potential for meat and milk production but so far, the nation fundamentally exports live animals, hide, skin and limited amount of processed meat as compared to its potential.

The leather and leather products' sector utilizes local skin and hides in large proportion. Currently, the sector created job opportunity to thousands and plays pivotal role in supplying its products to local and foreign markets.

As to him, though some progress is observed, the unemployment rate is increasing. Hence, organizing the unemployed ones and creating job help to boost the economy. In this regard, paying attention to the small scale enterprises is essential. Providing loan, preparing working areas and facilitating market linkage is equally essential.

As to Zerihun, there are ample of challenges that need to be redressed. Among others are; sustaining the witnessed economic growth, poverty reduction, ensuring good governance, creating more job opportunities

both by the government and the private sector, narrowing the gap in income among citizens and minimizing aid dependency.

He further stated that other key challenges that must be addressed which incurred heavy toll on economy are global warming and climate change that critically affect the sectors such as agriculture, health, water and transportation.

The price hike of fertilizer and fuel due to the external factors and the low income in urban centers hampered the efforts for ensuring food security.

As to Zerihun, if the global warming continues in its current pace, Africa's food production will be decreased by 90% by 2050.

He further said that had the manufacturing sector's contribution to the GDP been surpassed the service sector, it would have been better because the employing capacity of the service sector is very small. For instance, in the last budget year, Ethiopia earned 1.2 billion Dollars from the sector. In the contrary in Ethiopia 15 million people earn its living from the coffee through various value chains from planting up to exporting. On the other hand, the Ethiopian Airlines which employed 17 thousand workers earned about 4 billion Dollar by exporting its services in the previous budget year these implies that, though the service sector garnered huge amount of hard currency as compared to the agriculture sector, it employed very few people. Therefore, to change the imbalance, more attention should be given for the agro industry to boost export earnings.

As to Zerihun, currently the government's debt rose to 57% of its GDP. It borrowed money from local and foreign sources and such situation aggravates inflation which hurts the poor segment of the society. Hence, the government should reduce its dependency on money borrowing to meet its development aspiration and better to

look other options.

He further said that currently, in Ethiopia the citizens' productivity capacity is 38% which is below the average sub Saharan African Countries which is 50%. He also said that 90% of the labor force deployed its physical capacity rather than its mental capacity. And the figure indicates that how Ethiopia lags behind other developed and developing countries and the level of using technology for performing job is insignificant.

About 37% of children in Ethiopia are malnourished and this again directly related with the rampant poverty prevailed in the country because malnourishment has impact on citizen's productive capacity. It reduces mental and physical potential of the children in their later age. According to the recent UNESCO report, due to malnutrition, Ethiopia annually loses about 30 billion Birr which could support the GDP.

The recent Houti rebels' attack on cargo ships on the Red Sea also created anomalies on the international trade. No cargo ships dare to go to the war zone but those interested cargo ships go to the war zone to transport the goods by taking risk incurred heavy price on freight which ultimately aggravates inflation on the importing countries' market.

As to Zerihun, currently, fuel, steel and iron and fertilizer are in short supply. As a result, the construction sector is crippled and many construction companies lay off their workers which in turn affects them and their family life.

Hence, to reverse the situation, the government should work rigorously by taking bold measures particularly on addressing shortage of hard currency, mitigating unemployment, building resilient infrastructure, utilizing social capital, diversifying export, exporting local products by value addition and implementing the homegrown economic reform effectively, he stressed.

Art & Culture

The odyssey of Ethiopian music *Kignits*

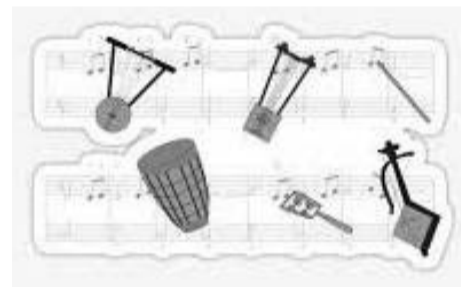
BY BITANIYA TADELE

One could stop a person on the street and ask randomly to name one of Ethiopia's four iconic musical scales. The person will not, at least not, miss *Tizeta*. These pentatonic scales or *kignits* are so popular that they almost become a genre of music in their own right, surpassing their character as mere chords progression of Ethiopian music.

Ethiopian music boasts a rich and storied heritage that traces its roots back to ancient eras. Intertwined with the nation's cultural fabric, it has served as a medium for storytelling, festivities, and artistic expression across generations. Central to Ethiopian musical tradition, the fundamental modal system known as *Kignit* (ቅኝት), comprising four primary modes: *Tizeta*, *Bati*, *Ambassel*, and *Anchihoye*. These modes, or scales, underpin the essence of Ethiopian music, defining its unique tonal quality and character. Each mode features a distinct arrangement of pitches and intervals, contributing to the rich tapestry of melodies and harmonies that define this musical landscape.

Diving into the emotive depths of *Tizita*, a symphony of slow, poignant melodies, the *Tizita* scale is commonly used in Ethiopian music to evoke feelings of nostalgia and melancholy. It is often featured in slow, emotive songs and is played on various instruments, such as the *Kirar* and the *Masinko*. Notable modern Ethiopian artists who have performed *Tizita* songs include Aster Aweke, Hailu Mergia, Bezawork Asfaw, Teddy Afro, Mulatu Astatke, Meklit Hadero, Seyfu Yohannes, and Mahmoud Ahmed. Mahmoud Ahmed is hailed as "The King of *Tizita*," while Bezawork Asfaw is celebrated as "The Queen of *Tizita*." *Tizita*'s full scale (it also has half, minor scale) goes on like: C - D - E - G - A. This consists of a major 2nd, major 2nd, minor 3rd, major 2nd, and a minor 3rd.

The second scale, *Bati*, a captivating



variation of the heptatonic *Tizita* scale, weaves together intricate notes to create a tapestry of musical expression. Enriched with the haunting allure of a minor third and a minor sixth, the *Bati* scale beckons listeners on a journey through vibrant melodies and spirited rhythms. This scale, resonating with energy and vitality, finds

its home in the heart of Ethiopian music, infusing faster-paced compositions with a sense of urgency and dynamism. As the *kirar* and the *masinko* bring the *Bati* scale to life, their strings hum with the essence of tradition and innovation, blending past and present in a harmonious union. In the hands of skilled musicians, the *Bati* scale dances and soars, painting a vivid portrait of joy and celebration.

The *Ambassel* scale, a pentatonic marvel resonating from the heart of Ethiopia's Amhara region, embodies a jubilant spirit that dances through the air like a joyous celebration of life itself. In the vibrant musical landscape of Ethiopia's Gonder and Wollo regions, the *Ambassel* scale reigns supreme, infusing melodies with an infectious energy that sweeps listeners off their feet. As the strings of the *kirar* and the bow of the *masinko* bring this scale to life, it serves as a musical ambassador bridging tradition and modernity. Through the *Ambassel* scale, ancient rituals and traditions find voice, echoing through generations with tales of triumph and sorrow.

Anchihoye, a mesmerizing pentatonic scale deeply rooted in the musical traditions of Ethiopia, possesses a unique charm that captivates listeners with its slow yet lively and danceable melodies. This enchanting scale, often performed on instruments such as the *kirar* and the *masinko*, weaves a tapestry of sound that transports audiences to a realm where time seems to stand still. North/center Ethiopia songs are usually noted to use this scale, which is: C - Db - F - Gb - A. This is a minor 2nd, major 3rd, minor 2nd, minor 3rd, and a minor 3rd.

This musical odyssey that shaped the intricate beauty and cultural significance of Ethiopian music, reigns the *Kignit* scales as pillars of artistic tradition and creative ingenuity. Each melodies carrying one away to a world of Ethiopian music where history and modernity run in parallel.

Mother

BY SENAIT G/HIWOT

*Is a fruit of nature
That is full of nurture
She bears children
And looks out for them
She's full of ideas
That will help her spouse
She is attractive
When she's protective
Life becomes harder
When you are a woman.
Nature's hard duties
are her responsibilities!!!*



What do I care?

BY ALEM HAILU G/KRISTOS

*Ravishingly beautiful
On top of that
God-fearing and cool!
What do I care
Electrified and petrified
Unable to resist her pull
At a loss how
My senses to pool
Up on catching her sight,
A wind-beaten leaf,
Shaking all over
I prove a fool?*

Indepth

Reclaiming the narrative in African philanthropy: A community-based organization's perspective

In recent years, the African philanthropy landscape has been undergoing a profound transformation. Or has it? Historically, the narrative of aid and development in Africa has been dominated by external donors and International Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs).

The role of African giving has largely been silent. However, a new paradigm is emerging—one where community-based organizations (CBOs) are reclaiming the narrative and driving change from within. Drawing on years of traditional giving, it is time we dispel the notions of African philanthropy as having been constrained or colonized. This shift is not only reshaping how philanthropy is and has been practiced in many communities on the continent but also redefining the very concept of development.

Of grassroots initiatives, families, and the community

At the heart of African philanthropy is grassroots initiatives, families, and the broader community. The people leading this transformation are the same agents that have pioneered giving throughout time, not only in emergencies.

The common feature of these agents is that they are deeply embedded within communities and possess an intimate understanding of the local context, needs, and aspirations. For instance, extended families will chip in to send children to school or ensure a relative has access to healthcare.

For example, in Zimbabwe historically in times of uncertainty, the village head or chief kept grain given to them in trust by the community for rainy days known as isiphala senkosi in IsiNdebele or dura rashe in ChiShona which means the chief's granary. Unlike external entities, these agents are not merely visitors; they are stakeholders with a vested interest in the well-being and prosperity of their communities as illustrated.

In the case of CBOs, I can point out that they are uniquely positioned to address issues in a way that is culturally sensitive and sustainable. They can mobilise local resources, engage community members, and implement solutions that are tailored to the specific challenges and opportunities of their environments.

This localised approach ensures that interventions are relevant and have a lasting impact. In this way, they tend to do away with elaborate explanations of how the resources are going to be used because everyone is in on it and knows. This is not to say there is no accountability.

Rather, no stringent conditions or agendas are attached to the aid which ends up drawing superficial impact since much of it is bogged down in bureaucracy.

The narrative of aid

The traditional narrative of African philanthropy has often portrayed the continent as a passive recipient of aid. In this instance, aid is viewed in monetary terms or whatever can be quantified, usually in dollar terms.

It is essential to continue supporting and empowering CBOs, recognizing their vital role in shaping the destiny of their communities. By doing so, we can build a new narrative of African philanthropy - one that celebrates the strength, resilience, and potential of African communities as it should be

This perspective not only undermines the agency of African communities but also perpetuates a dependency syndrome.

For the Global North, philanthropy means one has acquired a new status of wealth and suddenly has extra to give which is in contrast to African giving that is embedded in the need to help or contribute towards a solution despite one's wealth status.

However, CBOs, families, and communities have continuously challenged this narrative by showcasing the resilience, ingenuity, and resourcefulness of African communities through everyday giving. The Covid-19 pandemic provides a clear example of this as "calls for a paradigm shift in the philanthropic sector gained momentum" in the Global North.

By taking the lead in development initiatives, CBOs have long demonstrated that African communities are not helpless but are, in fact, capable of driving their own progress, *ceteris paribus*.

This shift is crucial in changing the perception of Africa from a continent in need to a continent of opportunity. It highlights the importance of partnership and collaboration, where external support complements rather than dictates local efforts.

It should be noted, these partnerships should not be "entrenched in unequal power relations" denoted by directing every minute detail of who benefits, what should be done, and where, *inter alia*, defeating the purpose of sustainable philanthropy.

Of storytelling

A critical component of reclaiming the narrative in African philanthropy is storytelling. CBOs are increasingly using storytelling as a tool to highlight their successes, share their challenges, and amplify the voices of the communities they serve.

These stories are powerful because they provide a firsthand account of the impact of community-led initiatives and offer a more nuanced and accurate portrayal of African development.

These stories are told by people at the center of whatever challenges, opportunities, or development they are undergoing not because they have to fulfill and comply with grant agreements but expressing their lived realities and experiences.

Through storytelling, CBOs can humanise their work, making it relatable and compelling to a broader audience. So many children and people have accessed healthcare, education, evaded poverty and gone on to provide the same opportunities to others within their communities or villages and these stories are known.

These stories and realities could only be possible because there were people who gave towards these causes – ensuring the adage it takes a village to raise a child, for example, all true to the dot! It also helps to build a sense of pride and ownership among community members, reinforcing the idea

that they are the architects of their own future.

Local private sector giving

An essential yet often overlooked player in the evolving landscape of African philanthropy is the local private sector. Businesses and entrepreneurs across the continent are increasingly recognizing their role in fostering social and economic development.

Through corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, direct investments in community projects, and strategic partnerships with community-based organizations, the African private sector is contributing significantly to philanthropic efforts.

These businesses bring not only financial resources but also expertise, innovation, and a results-oriented approach to development initiatives. By leveraging their networks and influence, local companies are helping to scale impactful projects, support sustainable local enterprises, and create job opportunities, thereby strengthening the economic foundation of communities.

This engagement from the local private sector not only supplements traditional philanthropic efforts but also ensures that development initiatives are deeply rooted in the local economic context, enhancing their sustainability and effectiveness.

Challenges and opportunities

While the shift towards community-driven philanthropy is promising, it is not without challenges. CBOs often operate with limited resources and face structural barriers that can impede their effectiveness.

Additionally, the existing funding models are still largely skewed towards international organizations, making it difficult for CBOs to access the necessary financial support as local funding is negligible.

However, these challenges also present opportunities. There is a growing recognition among donors and development partners of the value of supporting grassroots initiatives. By investing in capacity building and providing flexible funding, donors can help to strengthen the infrastructure of CBOs, enabling them to scale their impact.

Bringing it home

Reclaiming the narrative in African philanthropy is not just about changing perceptions; it is about shifting power and fostering a more inclusive and equitable approach to development. Community-based organizations are at the forefront of this movement, demonstrating that sustainable change is best achieved when it is driven from within.

As we look to the future, it is essential to continue supporting and empowering CBOs, recognizing their vital role in shaping the destiny of their communities. By doing so, we can build a new narrative of African philanthropy—one that celebrates the strength, resilience, and potential of African communities as it should be.

(SOURCE: INTER PRESS SERVICE)

Law & Politics

National Dialogue: The dawn of new beginning

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

Ethiopia is on the verge of embarking on the actual task of the long awaited national dialogue and reconciliation that the nation seeks more than ever. The government along with other stakeholders has been taking actions towards its realization. Such process of organizing and holding dialogues at national level is expected to be more inclusive, credible, and transparent so that it must be in a better position to be accepted by every citizens and stakeholders.

Since the onset of such gestures, the incumbent has made the road smooth for the establishment the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission and provided the necessary support to implement what has to be done. The Commission, on the other part, has taken the responsibility and assigned officials and worked with different bodies in order to take all the crucial steps to its success.

The commission has been playing its part to address all parts of the country by leaving no one behind, rather by entertaining all ideas from every walk of life. The commission has also been calling upon every individual, including the ones who take up arms for struggle, to contribute its share to the realization of the dialogue and reconciliation.

After so many rigorous and breath taking efforts in the past few months, the commission has set to start its final journey to gather agendas that are worth discussing. The commission is also expecting every sect of the society to participate in the process as it needs a unified hands.

To this regard, the national Dialogue Commission Commissioner, Mohamoud Dirir told a local media that the commission is at its final stage of gathering agendas. As to the commissioner, the national Dialogue Commission is on its key stage of implementing the agenda- setting process which is started in the capital this week.

Surely, the ongoing agenda gathering process is going to be implemented in other regional states. Similarly, the commissioner said that the process is in the pipeline in the Amhara and Tigray regional states to conduct the dialogue processes.

The process of holding an inclusive and credible national dialogue in Ethiopia is reaching a critical stage with an agenda gathering event to be held in the capital city, as to the commissioner, "Ethiopia is gearing up for a national dialogue, which has now reached a big chapter: agenda gathering."

It is vital to understand the international picture that Addis Ababa has built for the



past many decades. Hence, starting such process from the center will have a great advantage. The commissioner has also supported the idea saying "We are soon entering the agenda gathering process in Addis Ababa, not just the capital of Ethiopia but also the headquarters of African Union, and a distinguished diplomatic center globally." This choice reflects the city's diverse population, its status as a key African political and diplomatic center, and its designation as the world's third diplomatic center.

Following the Addis Ababa dialogue sessions, agenda gathering will be rolled out across the remaining parts of the country. He reiterated the commission's call for armed groups to engage peacefully in the dialogue processes.

"We continue to urge those who have taken up arms to join this process peacefully. This call will persist," he affirmed.

Mohamoud Dirir expressed optimism that the inclusive and credible approach will attract greater international support. "External support is increasing compared to the past. We recently received vehicles from Japan, and the European Union has also been providing support," he said.

Others may follow suit seeing that the dialogue processes is inclusive, he added. However, the most important aspect is that Ethiopians themselves are reaching a stage where we can solve our problems through a participatory, credible, and inclusive dialogue that excludes no actor but welcomes all ideas, even those that may differ from or oppose the government.

In a similar vein, delivering her press briefing to local and international media lately, Hirut Gebreselassie, Deputy Chief Commissioner, said that the national dialogue sessions will be bringing representatives drawn from various segment of the society.

She added that all the necessary preparations have been made to start the process in the capital city. These dialogue sessions will also continue in regional states and other city administration as per set plans, Hirut said.

She called on Ethiopians to actively participate and contribute their share for the successful conduct of the dialogue processes of this critical stage.

According to the deputy chief commissioner, the participants who come to this stage will bring agenda ideas through consultation and discussion; subsequently they will organize ideas once they have been established as common points.

Diverse stakeholders will choose their representatives to engage in the national dialogue. Representatives from various sectors of society including political parties, religious institutions, civic societies, governmental bodies, as well as representatives from various institutions and associations, will engage in discussions during the dialogue.

The commission has carried out various activities including the completion of identification of participants in eleven regional states and two city administrations in free and impartial manner.

Recall that Ethiopia has established a National Dialogue Commission to rectify and resolve age- old challenges facing the country and reach consensus on major issues of the country among Ethiopians through dialogue and transfer a peaceful country to the future generation.

Just yesterday, Ethiopia and the National Dialogue Commission officially start the first-ever phase of national dialogue in Addis Ababa. It is the most awaited nationwide consultation project so as to put an end to historical and contemporary contradictions of the country. As it is expected, the commission has set to start its agenda gathering event in the capital city.

The eleven-member Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission is entrusted with promoting an all-inclusive consultations and reconciliation process that will mend rifts, foster agreement on important national matters, and assist the nation in resolving its intricate difficulties.

Since its establishment, the Commission has been conducting various activities including identification of participants. The national dialogue sessions in Addis Ababa run starting from 29 May to June 4, 2024, bringing representatives drawn from various segments of the society.

It is reported that this is a stage in which the participants will jointly select agenda items pertinent for discussion and also representatives from respective localities will be elected to join other participants from regions and other stakeholders for a dialogue to be conducted at national level.

Women in Focus

Virtue sustained through generation

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

Asegedech Asfaw, 90, spent almost half of her life taking care of destitute and elderly people. Residing in Dire Dawa City, she has always been keen on supporting people since her childhood. Even after she started her own family, she continued supporting them to the point where she allowed them to live under her roof.

After her spouse passed away, her children got old enough and moved out of their parent's house, Asegedech totally gave herself to charity works.

In the course of time, the charity work that started at her house grew into a big one and gave birth to 'Asegedech Elderly Care and Rehab Center.' The center has survived for about 30 years not only with her strong commitment but also with the support of individual volunteers and Dire Dawa City Administration.

Currently, the center is providing 70 elderly people residing within the center with food, shelter; health and hygiene services, while 30 more seniors get services including those staying in their house in a permanent manner.

As age is something we can't fight back, Asegedech, who has dedicated her life in supporting elderly people for three decades, has now become one of the people residing in the center for the reason her energy exhausted and she got tired. Fortunately, her legacy did not go in vain as her daughter who used to lead a luxurious life in Canada has followed her mother's footsteps.

It has been four years since Emebet Mekonnen, the third daughter of Asegedech, gave up her comfortable life in Canada and moved into her home country, continuing her mother's legacy.

"One of my sisters used to give a hand for our mother after she got pensioned in Canada. Thinking that it would only be fair to let her rest for a while and do my share; I took leave for four months to come to Ethiopia. I never returned, I believe it was God's plan," Emebet underscored.

She said that the center is supported by generous people who organized various ceremonies such as weddings, remembrance, graduations, among others, at the center. Several companies including public institutions occasionally feed the elderly.

According to Emebet, 35 years have already elapsed since her mother, Asegedech, established the charity center. At first neighbors were not happy when her mother began sheltering a number of elderly people in her house.



It is due to their complaint that she was able to receive a new place, which is serving the people now.

Asegedech has planted orange, lemon, mango, including different vegetables and coffee trees in the premises of her new area. The site also has its own animal husbandry and a clinic.

Currently, people with incredible life backgrounds, those who were once in higher positions as well as those who used to own restaurants are sheltering in the center, she said.

Mekedes Tadesse, who accidentally met with Asegedech when she was picking up a destitute elderly woman from a street called Del Chora, Dire Dawa, has known Asegedech for over 30 years. On that day, they took the elderly woman to the hospital together, and since then, they have become close friends and still are.

Ever since that day, 20 years ago, Mekedes has remained the right hand for Asegedech who she referred her as 'mother'. She never get tired of admiring the strength of Asegedech especially during holidays where more preparations are taken to make the

people at the center feel at home and allow them to celebrate the day freely.

She recalled: "One day, Asegedech was not feeling well and I was the one who was in charge of the center. Accidentally, we ran out of Teff. I was very terrified and did not know what to do. Deciding to let her know, I went to Asegedech's room and said, 'we are in trouble there is only little teff left at the center.' It was her response that startled but at the same time taught me a great lesson."

Asegedech was not frustrated. Rather, she told her not to worry saying that it is not their concern. "It is the almighty God that is feeding the people not us." Even she warned her not to ever say or worry again about such things.

"Surprisingly, the minute I left her room, I heard that there was a car outside the compound. I went out to check who it was. There was a car loaded with teff, it was sent from one of our volunteers. The people of Dire Dawa are very generous. They visit the elderly every weekend and help them with showers and everything," she said.

Emama Atsede, who is one of the elderly in the center, used to have a family in Dire Dawa. Atsede adopted one of her nieces after her husband passed away. After the girl completed her education and got married, Emama Astede bequeathed the house for her and started living with the newlyweds.

Unfortunately, the girl took no time before she decided to throw out the woman who brought her up like her real daughter. After long court processes, she took the house and left her mother on the street. That was how Atsede came to the center with the support of people.

"Life in the center is relieving. I am living a wonderful life; both Asegedech and her daughter Emebet take good care of us like a good family. They have done everything I needed including meeting my religious needs."

Emebet aspires to see the center expanded and giving services for more elderly people who are leading miserable lives. She wishes to see the completion of the four stairs building which the construction activity was interrupted 15 years ago due to financial constraint. Thus, she urged governmental and non-governmental organizations to contribute their share for the completion of the building.

Asegedech Asfaw has received Honorary Doctorate Degree from Dire Dawa University for the remarkable work she has achieved at the center. Enat Bank has also renamed one of its branch banks after her name.

Currently, the center is providing 70 elderly people residing within the center with food, shelter; health and hygiene services, while 30 more seniors get services including those staying in their house in a permanent manner

Society

Ethiopia's endeavors to curb irregular migration

BY TEWODROS KASSA

Ethiopia has been making significant efforts to address irregular migration. In recent years, the Ethiopian government has implemented various strategies and policies aimed at curbing the flow of irregular migration and addressing the root causes of this phenomenon. From economic empowerment programs to enhanced border control measures, Ethiopia is taking proactive steps to tackle this issue head-on.

One of the key pillars of Ethiopia's strategy to curb irregular migration is its focus on economic empowerment. By providing opportunities for job creation, skills development, and entrepreneurship, the government aims to address the underlying economic factors that drive individuals to migrate irregularly. Through initiatives such as the national job creation efforts, the country is working to create a more conducive environment for its citizens to thrive and succeed at home.

In addition to economic empowerment, Ethiopia has also prioritized enhancing its border control measures to prevent irregular migration. These efforts have led to a significant reduction in the number of individuals attempting to migrate irregularly from Ethiopia.

Most importantly, the government recognizes the importance of addressing the root causes of irregular migration, including conflict, poverty, and lack of opportunities. To this end, by investing in education, healthcare, infrastructure, and social services, it is striving to create a more stable and prosperous society where individuals feel compelled to stay rather than seek opportunities elsewhere. This holistic approach aims to not only prevent irregular migration but also to improve the overall well-being of Ethiopian citizens.

Furthermore, regional and international partnerships are important to combat irregular migration. By collaborating with organizations such as the African Union, the United Nations (UN), and the European Union (EU), Ethiopia is able to leverage resources, expertise, and best practices from around the world to strengthen its efforts in addressing this complex issue. Through mutual cooperation and joint initiatives, Ethiopia is working towards a more coordinated and effective response to irregular migration.

Recently, the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs and International Organization for Migration (IOM) have signed a 5-year agreement that enables the country to mitigate the challenges of irregular migration and related activities.

The agreement was signed between Women and Social Affairs Minister Ergogie Tesfaye and International Organization for Migration (IOM) Chief of Mission Abibatou Wane-Fall.



Speaking during the signing ceremony, Ergogie said the Ministry has been working closely with different partners to mitigate the challenges of irregular migration.

According to her, the agreement focuses on data management of returnees and reintegration in areas of preventing irregular migration and protecting migrants in vulnerable situations.

The government of Ethiopia has been making a significant change to ensure well governed migration, protect and assist migrants in a vulnerable situation, the Minister noted.

Ergogie also explained that the government has adopted various policies, directions and legal frameworks with the development of organizational systems and human resources, including the preparation of national referral mechanisms and reintegration of returnee migrants to facilitate implementation of regular migration and to tackle the problems of irregular migration.

IOM Chief of Mission Wane-Fall said that the collaboration with the Ministry has always been rooted in ensuring the safety, dignity and well-being of migrants.

She added that the agreement would enable to solidify the partnership of the organizations and lays the ground to turn their shared vision into reality.

The cooperation agreement will support the implementation of a comprehensive five year joint strategic plan rooted in the thematic priorities, including preventing irregular migration, protecting of migrants in vulnerable situation, migration information management (data and research), capacity development and system strengthening and coordination and partnership.

Accordingly, young people are leaving their homes in search of better opportunities, often risking their lives in the process. Thus, understanding the root causes behind this scenario is fundamental to ease the challenges.

Therefore, one of the most effective ways to combat irregular youth migration is by providing access to quality education and training programs. By equipping young people with the skills they need to succeed in the local job market, it is possible to reduce their incentive to migrate in search of better opportunities.

In addition to education, creating job opportunities and entrepreneurship programs can help to keep young people in Ethiopia. By supporting small businesses and startups, we can empower young people to build successful careers and contribute to the local economy. Encouraging entrepreneurship can also foster innovation and creativity within the community.

More importantly, building strong community support systems is essential in preventing irregular youth and women migration. By providing young people with a sense of belonging and connection to their community, we can reduce the appeal of migrating to unknown destinations. Engaging local leaders, schools, and organizations in supporting youth initiatives can also help create a network of support for young people.

In sum, the country's endeavors to curb irregular migration demonstrate its commitment to addressing this multifaceted challenge. Thus, it is making significant progress in reducing irregular migration and creating a more sustainable future for its citizens. By continuing to invest in these efforts and collaborate with partners globally, Ethiopia is well-positioned to effectively manage and mitigate the impacts of irregular migration in the years to come.

Addressing irregular youth and women migration requires a multifaceted approach that tackles the root causes of the issue. By investing in education, creating job opportunities, strengthening community support systems, and collaborating with international partners, it is possible to curb irregular migration and create a better future for the new generations.

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Published Weekly in Collaboration with Haramaya University

HU launches 41st annual research, community engagement

BY DIRRIBA TESHOME

Haramaya University (HU) kicked off its three days long 41st Annual Research and Community Engagement Review Workshop with the theme: Enhancing Community Resilience: Transforming Agricultural Practices, Nutrition, and Health yesterday.

HU President, Jemal Yousuf (PhD), said in his welcoming speech that HU has been committed to improve the overall agricultural sector and the livelihoods of Ethiopians since its inception. "Haramaya University has great experiences in teaching, research and community engagements."

He also noted that HU has not held only forty one workshops, but the number indicates the continuous workshops. "Haramaya University has been working on studies for over the last seventy years with the general moto: Building Basis for Development. So, let us join in hand to enhance the prosperity of our nation through implementing research outcomes thoroughly."

Similarly, HU Vice President for Research and Community Engagement Dr Yesihak Yousuf identified the uniqueness of this year's annual forum in his welcoming



Local elders offer blessings during the opening of the event

remarks. "This year, we are being led by a new structure that brought together two broad university structures research and community engagement which were used to be led by two vice presidents.

All the directorates were combined in the same way. Using this as an opportunity, we are able to focus on researches that deal with community needs."

Haramaya University research grants focus on six thematic areas. "Regular research, female research, knowledge transfer, innovation, special studies, and grand challenges are the thematic grants the university provides," he listed them.

Currently, 46 researches are completed while 185 studies are ongoing besides the newly

approved 63 researches, he counted them specifying: "Among the newly accepted grant provisions, thirty three are PhDs. And from the ongoing researches: thirteen are grand challenges and a similar quantity is for female studies while 161 of them are being done by the university staff."

The university's research are not financed only by the government, but different sources provide the budgets he noted adding: "Our researches are basically funded externally: both national and international. This year, we were provided about 157 million Birr externally which is around 75 percent when related to that of the government's provision."

Further and beyond, Dr. Yesihak mentioned that HU researchers or instructors have got

eighteen research projects' grants from abroad in this year. "In this Ethiopian fiscal year, over fifty Research Projects are granted by international partners: Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, World Bank, African Union Commission, Global Challenges Research Fund, Purdue University (LUSER PULSE), Dutch Research Agenda (NWA), NORHED II, USAID, WHO, FAO and others."

Regarding the implementations and distributions of completed researches, Dr. Yesihak noted that the technologies would be transferred in various ways though publications and policy recommendations are prioritized. "Haramaya University has five accredited journals. And in this year only, 900 articles of the university are published on international prominent journals."

To wind up with, he disclosed that 89 technologies of 41 categories were distributed to the society both at local and national level.

National officials including State Minister of Innovation, Oromiya Tourism Commissioner, Haramaya University Administrative Board Members, Mayor of Maya City, and other federal and Oromiya state officials are taking part on the workshop.