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Premier renews call for political dialogue

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA - Resolving disagreements through political dialogue and close talks would help the nation ensure lasting peace and security, said Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD).

Speaking at a public rally held in Nekemte yesterday, premier Abiy underlined the importance of resolving disagreements through dialogue and urged armed groups to entertain peaceful dialogue thereby ensuring nationwide peace.

Appreciating the democratic culture of the Oromo people and acknowledging the existence of agendas that may cause disagreements, the prime minister stressed the necessity of sitting together to discuss and resolve differences.

Highlighting the inclusive development agenda of the government, he also expressed his confidence in the national economic growth.

The ongoing mega development projects are expected to further boost the national economy, despite the challenges posed by conflicts, he mentioned.

As Ethiopia navigates through these

See Premier renews... Page 3



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AAU to kick-start professional certification programs soon

• Addis to hold 7th regional financial summit today

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia's flagship university has set to commence the first-of-its-kind national professional certification program in all levels in the coming September, Addis Ababa University (AAU) Academic Vice President disclosed.

In a press media briefing held yesterday, the AAU academic vice president Jeilu Oumer (PhD) said that the university has been carrying out ranges of reform activities in a bid to become autonomous and nurture qualified manpower.

The vice president elaborated that the certification program, which is set to be functional as of the coming September, would be a lucrative foundation towards

See AAU to kick-start... Page 3



Yonas Adaye (PhD)

ENDC to identify Nat'l Dialogue participants in Amhara state

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA –The identification of National Dialogue participants in Amhara state would be launched soon, the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) disclosed.

See ENDC to identify... Page 3

Embassy opens exhibition featuring 120th years of Ethio-U.S. diplomatic ties

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- The Embassy of United States (U.S.) opened a photo exhibition depicting its 120th years of diplomatic journey in Ethiopia at the National Museum here yesterday.

At the opening of event, Ethiopian Tourism State Minister Sileshi Bekele said that the cultural and people-to-people ties between Ethiopia and the U.S. are growing from time to time.

The photo exhibition showcases captivating images that captured key moments in the long, thriving relations of Ethiopia and the U.S., he said.

“The increasing number of the Ethiopian Diaspora in the U.S. is playing a key role in nurturing the cultural and people to people

See Embassy opens... Page 3



Photo: Hadushe Aberha

Tapping the renewable energy sources for sustainable development

Page 6

Expecting the appearance of the great Ethiopian, African Novel

Page 7

LDCs need concessional grants, not loans, say experts

Page 8



Harari town attracts more foreign visitors

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA—Harari State Culture, Tourism and Heritage Bureau stated that the number of foreign visitors is on rise in the state.

According to the Bureau Head Teweleda Abdosh, over 112,000 local and foreign visitors visited tourist attractions in the state over the past nine months, ENA reported.

He said that 5,428 of them are foreign tourists, which is 66% higher than the same period last year.

The work of developing, enriching and promoting tourist destinations in the state is one of the reasons for the increase in the number of visitors, he stated.

He also highlighted that over 120 million Birr was earned from local and foreign tourists who visited tourist attractions in the state during the nine- months.

As to Teweleda, the heritages visited by tourists include the international heritages of the Jugol Tower and the ancient houses in it, as well as the five gates of the Jugol Tower.

In addition, traditional handicrafts, French poet Arthur Rimbaud's house, Harari ethnic museums, Adbarat, hyena food show and other heritages were visited by tourists, it was learnt.

Harar Jugol is a UNESCO World Heritage site, best known for its distinctive and well preserved historic townhouses which reflect its cultural heritage, particularly those of African and Islamic traditions. The most intact elements of the historic town of Harar Jugol are said to lie in the eastern and south-eastern part of the walled town.

Gov't toiling to own clean cities nationwide

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA- The Ethiopian government said that it is working on connecting urban and rural areas to help the nation bring structural transformation and ensure economic development.

Prosperity Party Vice President Adem Farah said that cities are rapidly expanding in Ethiopia, but they need to meet world city standard, competitive and need to meet city and rural requirement.

The vice president's remark came after launching national campaign on cities cleanness and green development under the theme: "Clean Cities for the Rise of Ethiopia," organized by Ministry of Urban and Infrastructure.

Cities should be accompanied by enough green space, ensure food security and maintain cleanliness. The nationwide city cleaning campaign and green development would help rise development of citizens' creativity and diseases protection in long run, he added.

Urban and Infrastructure Minister Chaltu Sani on her part said that: "The rapid growth and expansion of cities are



Photo: Dagne Abera

positively contributing to our country's overall development. But, if the growth is not properly managed in a sustainable manner, it will bring huge negative human and environmental evils."

"It will be possible to create a favorable environment in the same campaign by organizing consultation forums that will be held in all states and city administrations to make adequate preparations for the success

of the plan," she added.

City residents will play a major role in sorting out solid waste, rectifying and recycling materials to help the areas get benefited out of the scheme, she added.

"Public and religious institutions should involve in the campaign to clean their premises and plant seedlings in summer in order to create clean, green, conducive city for residents."

Nejashi project envisioning global village unveiled

ADDIS ABABA (ENA) -The Nejashi Zero Zero Village project, which aims to build a global village in Nejashi town of Tigray State, was unveiled at the Sheraton Hotel in Addis Ababa on Wednesday.

Nejashi is synonymous with Islam as it is the place where the first Muslim settlement took place in the world in the 7th century.

The Nejashi Zero Zero Village project was made public in the presence of Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs President Sheikh Haj Ibrahim Tufa, Tigray State Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs President Sheikh Adam Abdul Qadir, and other senior federal and regional officials.

The program featured a documentary film exploring the background of the story of King Negashi and his role in justice and peace.

It was noted on the occasion that the idea of naming the project Nejashi Zero



Zero indicates the origin and location of the story in which Islam first began in Ethiopia.

The project would be implemented by the Supreme Council for Ethiopian Islamic Affairs, the Supreme Council for Islamic

Affairs of Tigray State, and the King Nejashi Reconstruction and Development Initiative (ARDI).

The tourist village will include sub-projects, such as museum, hotel, research institution, health and sports facilities.

Ethiopia, Sudan exchange views on bilateral ties

ADDIS ABABA (ENA)-State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Mesganu Arga yesterday received Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Sudan, Ambassador Hussein Awad Ali Mohammed, in his office.

The two Ministers exchanged views on the

bilateral ties of Ethiopia and the Sudan, according to Foreign Affairs Ministry.

On the occasion, Sudanese Foreign Minister acknowledged Ethiopia's significant role in Sudan's comprehensive peace-making efforts and requested Ethiopia to play its vital role based on the historical and fraternal

close partnership of the two countries.

Ambassador Mesganu reassured Ethiopia's Commitment to peaceful resolution of the ongoing conflict in Sudan recalling Ethiopia's efforts to bring peace and stability to the sisterly nation of Sudan.

The State Minister further reiterated

Ethiopia's belief on an all-inclusive peace process owned by Sudanese and emphasized that all efforts should be Sudanese-led.

Following his recent appointment as Foreign Minister, Hussein Awad Ali Mohammed embarked on his tour, with Ethiopia being his first destination.

Strengthening private sector participation key to realizing digital economy

ADDIS ABABA -Economist and policy advisor Costantinos Berhutesfa emphasizes the need to enhance private sector involvement in Ethiopia to expedite digital transformation and achieve a thriving digital economy.

The government's unwavering commitment to materialize digital technology in Ethiopia is paving the way for the implementation of the "Digital Ethiopia 2025" strategy.

This comprehensive strategy aligns with indigenous economic reform, a 10-year development plan, and Africa's digital transformation agenda.

In an exclusive interview with ENA, economist and policy advisor Costantinos Berhutesfa underscored the global significance of building a digital economy, a path the world is rapidly embracing.

He emphasized the pivotal role that



Costantinos Berhutesfa

Universities of Science and Technology must play in collaborating with the government and private sector to actualize the vision of a digital Ethiopia and disseminate technological advancements.

Costantinos commended the telecom sector's proactive measures to drive digitalization,

particularly lauding the expansion of the 5G network, which currently provides a favorable foundation for this approach.

Anticipating a reliable future energy supply, he noted that Ethiopia is primed to seize substantial opportunities for technological realization.

Highlighting the importance of conducive financial policies, the establishment of a robust capital market, and strengthening of incentives for foreign investment, he emphasized that these measures would empower the youth to actively participate in economic development through creative endeavors.

Costantinos stated that effective implementation of the strategy necessitates not only government and private sector collaboration but also the active involvement of universities.

Digital Ethiopia serves as a collaborative

platform, bringing together the government, private sector, and development agencies to facilitate the nation's digital journey while aligning it with the broader continental strategy, he noted.

Costantinos expressed encouragement at Ethiopia's concerted efforts to realize the strategy through developments in science, technology, and innovation sectors.

He emphasized the pivotal role of constructing a digital economy, which entails effective e-government management within the governmental system.

The strategy's successful implementation will enable digitalization across e-commerce, research activities, and the education sector as a whole, he noted.

The economist called for strengthened efforts to realize the digital economy in Ethiopia and ensure its youth reaps the benefits of this transformative journey.

AAU to kick-start ...

producing industry-based qualified professionals that fit the country's labor market.

He has also emphasized that the country needs a streamlined and well-articulated education system that help promote skilled human power and address knowledge and experience gaps in the labor market variability while joining the industry.

"The program is also open to other keen private stakeholders and partners who are interested to participate in accordance with the set legal frameworks and guidelines. It needs to go along with international standard apart from taking into consideration the interest of private sectors," Jeilu (PhD) noted.

In addition to discharging its prior responsibility attaining its aspirations,

he underscored that the program would be lucrative for the university which is in the transitional period to advance its own financial capacity.

He said: "To make the program implementation more successful and accessible, various full-fledged digital platforms will be deployed to reach the large segments of the society. It is also said to be an ideal mechanism to promote not only the national but also the international labor market competition."

So far, the university has been developing legal standards and procedures to facilitate the entire process, he added.

On the occasion, the iCapital Africa Institute CEO Gemechu Waktola (PhD) on his part stated that the 7th East African Financial Summit, which is to be held as



Photo: Hadushe Aberha

of today for two consecutive days under the theme: "Unlocking the Opportunities: Navigate the Forces Shaping the Future of Financial Sectors in East Africa" would be of a paramount significant to suggest sound and enabling financial ecosystems in the finance sector.

As the country is on the right track to join

and open its doors to local and international business partners, the summit would be a timely platform to create a competitive ecosystem through sound financial inputs, the CEO said.

He added that it is also believed to address regional financial opportunities and connect international experienced business actors.

Premier renews...

challenges, the call for peaceful dialogue echoes the need for unity and reconciliation to ensure a prosperous future for all of its citizens, demonstrators told local media.

The rally was attended by Deputy Prime

Minister Temesgen Tiruneh, House of Federation Speaker Aagnehu Teshager, and Chief Administrator of Oromia State Shimelis Abdisa, underscored the government's commitment to fostering peace and development in the state.

Embassy opens...

relations between our two countries," he stated.

Ethiopia is the closest allies of the U.S in sub-Saharan Africa. The two sides work together in diverse areas of cooperation including economic development, security, health care and education, among others, he mentioned.

The U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ambassador Ervin Massinga also added that thoughtfully selected photographs are presented in the exhibition, celebrating the milestones and connections between

Ethiopian and the U.S. in various sectors, such as health, education, agriculture, and economic development.

"Each image serves as a reminder of the strong, resilient, long-term bonds that unite us."

The diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and the U.S. were established in 1903 following the signing of a treaty of commerce by Emperor Menelik II and the U.S. representative, Robert Skinner in Ethiopia, it was learnt.

ENDC to identify...

ENDC Commissioner Yonas Adaye (PhD) told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the necessary preparations have been finalized to commence identification of the National Dialogue participants in Amhara state.

Last week, ENDC delegation, the state's officials, civic society representatives, and religious fathers discussed on the way to launch participant's identification in Bahir Dar city, it was learnt.

He mentioned that collaborative parties training offered previously in Gondar, Bahir Dar and Dessie cities. The preparation made to commence participants' identification by offering collaborators training in four areas.

According to him, participants' identification delayed in Amhara and Tigray States due to security issues. Now, preparations commenced to launch identification of

participants in Amhara state soon.

Logistics and other inputs preparation have been finalized to perform state level National Dialogue in Addis Ababa City Administration very soon. The administration, civic societies and competing parties provided unwavering support for the commission, he added.

According to the Commissioner, the discussion held twice with Tigray Interim government. And the interim administration gave a green light for it.

"There is a commitment and trust to solve Ethiopia's cumulated problems through discussion or dialogue," he indicated.

About 900 districts identified participants and collected agendas for National Dialogue process across the country. So far, citizens have been submitting dialogue agendas via e-mail and in person, he stated.

Opinion

Singing peace songs attracts paradise

BY MENGESHA AMARE

The golden adage by Albert Einstein stating, 'Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding,' attracts this writer to produce a piece about peace. Yes, understanding one another/each other whoever they may be is of paramount importance in bringing unwavering communal life and stable nation.

Every breath we take every step we make, every span we trek needs to be filled with peace, joy, serenity and tranquility. This can be well secured by discharging respected responsibilities posed to the elderly, senior citizens, women, the youth and all concerned. Yes, achieving peace is something that leaders have to work toward and the society needs to stand on the side of peace loving citizenry and their campaigners.

Ethiopians should walk the talk, discuss peace, serenity and tranquility just not in the same way they have done so far as the country and its people have been through some tumultuous scenarios these days. Everyone has to sing peace songs and recite the lovely lyrics of it thereby helping the nation and they themselves have a restful and intrepid life.

If one requests about whose duty is ensuring lasting peace, they can get an outright response, 'everyone's'. Besides, peace has always been among humanity's highest, even supreme values, and it is more important than all justice.

The legitimacy of a peace process refers to how much public support and legitimacy is the bedrock of peaceful society as it is instrumental in building more sustainable peace. No price has been tagged for peace, unquestionably.

Peace is also seen as concord, or harmony and stillness since it is viewed as peace of mind or quietude. Needless to say, peace is also distinctly put as a state of law or civil government, a state of justice or goodness, a balance or equilibrium of supremacy. True, the components of peace offer a complementary and multi-faceted depiction of it, encompassing political and personal aspects, as well as government provisions that are essential for well-functioning governance and administrative facets.

Looking towards the future, all citizens of the nation should be more optimistic about the prospects for peace due to their decisive place in due course of forming the nation. Peace is an inherently multi-dimensional concept, and requires, first and foremost, broader conceptions of harmony. These include consideration of justice, human rights, and other aspects of human security. Here the overall security in the country and its people, freedom of speech and fairness of the government, among others are respected in the presence

of peace, indeed!

In it well recognized that whether individual citizens feel more or less safe relative to what others sense is thus an important element in how people experience peace in their everyday lives.

As the perception of biased state behavior can significantly hinder individuals' trust in the country, which may have direct implications for peace prospects, public awareness about how to create peace and peaceful coexistence among the society through dissuasion and dialog has to be well embarked on. Yes, it is this time citizens of all walks of life can internalize and put into practice what they are told in practice as to come up with a peaceful and quite stable nation.

People's appraisal of peace does not necessarily rest upon objective developments or an accurate recollection of the conditions at the end of some sorts of conflicts or disagreements.

Understanding the durable merits of lasting peace in a country where skirmishes are becoming common, be they are sporadic or recurrent, has to be made a culture, and solving problems via close talks and amicable conversations should be well nurtured and truly exercised. In so doing, the vision of creating a stable nation would be made real.

Yes, a predictable course away from conflict and disagreements enhances trust in the government and encourages individuals to invest in their social, economic and political life. On the other hand, a lack of positive prospects for the country's trajectory could undermine the reconciliatory efforts achieved so far and signal individuals' fears about the stability of the country.

Surprisingly, it is important to request about how the populace perceives the quality of peace and stability of the nation. Is it the absence of gun sounds, or the intensity of social cohesion and amicable gesture among/between citizens or the safest way possible to carryout activities at every corner of the nation?

The prevalence of peace itself can reply to this concern, indeed, as one is tired of listing the advantages and bounties of peace. Though nature provides human creature with peace and its accessories, the latter is becoming restless all the time to spoil and abuse nonviolent ambiance.

Coming back to Ethiopia, some parts of the nation do these days need special attention as a number of citizens are suffering from lack of peace and security. Keeping this in mind, the government and other concerned bodies are doing all their best to restore peace through various ways. For instance, national dialog has been devised and well employed towards ensuring peace and serenity. It can help the country safeguard foundations for peace

by developing a new or revised framework for government-society, people-to-people, tribe-to-tribe, among others, relations.

Besides, peace processes share core principles of best practice, including wide public participation and fair representation of views and interests, but they are not always easily compatible. The imperatives of making peace may bring in stakeholders who appear ill-suited for leadership and administration, but can be well managed so long as everyone is doing for the sake of the wellbeing and stability of the same nation. Such realities do not contradict the potential for transformation of conflict actors, but they underscore the challenges of including controversial actors in constitutionally assigned government.

Basically, a peace process can be well fostered through wider public participation, representation and performance as elements of their legitimacy, transparency and accountability that potentially satisfy the requirements and parameters measuring peace and its dimensions. If all the processes and required procedures are right, the effort geared towards coming up with peace and peaceful scenario would be easy to reap. In such a way, it will be possible create harmonious society and peace can be sustained.

It is well comprehended that a peace process may involve all walks of life since no one can determine about the coolness and soothing state of mind on behalf of others. Truly speaking, at this specific juncture, the political elite, civil society and the people of Ethiopia in general face a difficult choice between adopting strategies to make the best of this constitution via amending it or rejecting its legitimacy altogether if lack of peace and security issues are tied with this concern, perhaps.

Anyway, whatsoever cause might be cited as a fueling factor exacerbating lack of peace across the nation, close talks and wider public discussions are the ever incomparable avenues to get all sorts of disagreement and conflict dried forever. The major point that has to be well swallowed is that all Ethiopians' willingness to compromise is greater than it has been at any time since the start of the peace process. Even this increased willingness and heartily move to compromise provides policymakers with greater room to maneuver. For that reason, the time is ripe to deal with lasting peace and national consensus. In order to frame such a process more positively for all Ethiopians, a long journey has been toured.

Understanding that public support for violence increases in an environment of greater pain and suffering, everyone has to sing the songs of peace and togetherness. No doubt, lack of normal personal or group interaction would potentially encourages

misperception and the desire to portray the other side negatively. Such a daunting scenario has to be well addressed.

In principle, political and security stability has the advantage of reducing the appeal of violence and improving the prospects for Ethiopian democracy by reducing threat perception. For all stable and pleasing life in Ethiopia, peace first, peace second and peace third as only progress and state of flourishing in the peace process can sustain stability and serenity and tranquility.

This is said not out of the blue, but in the absence of progress toward sustained stability and lasting peace, it is highly unlikely that Ethiopians will find their way to democracy, equality, freedom and good governance. If they do manage to produce a democracy under such adverse conditions, the country will be built on unwavering foundation.

Good, an Ethiopian transition to democracy and equality is likely to increase tolerance for dissent, reduce misperception, and thereby positively contributing to the goal of peace building and national consensus. Today, willingness to compromise is greater than it has been at any time since the country has badly demanded coexistence and firm social cohesion. Peace is in the minds of everyone, all human race and creatures of the planet; hence undertaking activities to nurture peace has to be a routine of the former.

As women, the youth, the elderly and others take on active roles before, during and after conflicts, they all have to work towards conflict prevention, build peace during conflict, deliver humanitarian support, and participate in post-conflict peace, truth and reconciliation processes. The national dialog is exercised towards facilitating the transition from war to peace is more than a means to end armed hostilities, disagreements and rivalry. Any conflict and dispute has to end through dialog and amicable discussions.

In a nutshell, public participation in peace processes should be well understood within the wider context of the right to effective participation in governance and decision-making. Principally, since no one can come and act accordingly to provide Ethiopians with peace and peaceful atmosphere, all citizens have to work for peace and serenity.

Plus to that, the assignment of ensuring peace and security should not be left only to the government, line ministries, and bodies working on the area; instead it requires the amalgamated effort of all. We all shall sing peace songs all the time and understand one another as peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by sympathetic mode!

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

Editorial

Advancing financial element in East Africa's economy

This year's East Africa Finance Summit is set to kick off today here in Addis Ababa under the theme "Exploring New Frontiers: Shaping the Future of Financial Landscape & Unlocking Opportunities for Collaboration in East Africa".

One of the focus areas of the summit is integrating regional opportunities through cross border trade and investments, harmonizing financial regulations through addressing inclusion challenges. Regional integration especially in trade and economy is a fundamental issue that the participants should give due attention in their two-day long summit.

Cross border trade is hot in the region either formally or informally. The willingness of governments in the region through bilateral decision as well under the framework of regional organization like IGD has also paved the way for the facilitation of trade along the borders in the region.

This is a good beginning that should be encouraged as the whole world gets closer due to the trend of globalization. In the same manner, the African continent is also working towards realizing the continental economic bloc, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The regional economic and trade integration is a vital step towards realizing the bigger goal of regional and continental integration. This continental economic bloc is highly anticipated to facilitate better trade exchange among the member states and contribute to speeding up their development. Therefore, the regional integration needs to be further bolstered so that it can lead to a smooth transition towards the continental integration.

The ongoing East Africa Finance Summit is also an opportune moment that should deal with issues that can speed up the implementation of regional trade and economic integration for the benefit of the people in the region and the continent in due course.

Finance is at the heart of integration, sharing of resources among people across borders. But in the current world order countries of their own respective currencies bound to their own economic and trade policies and attached to their sovereignty and interests. Even though most of the countries duly understand the advantages of regional economic integration, the difficulty lies in turning the initiative to reality by formulating shared policies, means of exchange and clearance, as well as designing the legal provisions in case of disputes among others.

Alongside the integration, the summit should also dwell on the need to improve the financial system in the region so that they can break the current trend of financial flow which is bound within their respective borders and enable the economies of the member countries obtain the necessary financial exchange to their development.

Furthermore, the leaders and policy makers should also take the summit as an important juncture to take action towards reinforcing the already operational digital financial systems, inclusive instant payment mechanisms as well as introducing more adaptable fin-tech to the region. They should work in mind that the region should not lag behind in reaping the multiple benefits of digital finance, payment systems and other features of fin-tech that the rest of the continent and the world are already utilizing.

This is the right forum to deal with the financial sector in East Africa which is an important element in addressing almost all of the prevailing issues in the region including poverty, unemployment, security and related crisis. Therefore, if effectively conducted, the outcomes of the summit are likely to render the region an exact fit to the future implementation of the continental free trade area.



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The Ethiopian Herald

Opinion

What Ethiopia suffers from being a landlocked country

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

For over three decades now Ethiopia is a landlocked country facing several economic disadvantages caused by the unfortunate loss of two ports which resulted from the independence of Eritrea from Ethiopia on May 24, 1993. The author of this article wishes to first dwell upon the economic disadvantages that the nation has faced for more than 30 years and continue with the alternative ports Ethiopia is to access.

Being landlocked implies that Ethiopia lacks direct access to sea routes which the nation used to enjoy for thousands of years. Relying on neighboring countries for access to maritime trade was indeed painstaking. This dependence on transit countries can increase transportation costs, transit times, and risks associated with disruptions in trade routes or political instability in transit countries. For Ethiopia Djibouti was the only port which handled the country's export import transactions.

Landlocked countries often incur higher transportation costs for imports and exports due to the need to transport goods over longer distances via multiple modes of transportation, including roads, railways, and pipelines. These additional costs had continued to reduce the competitiveness of Ethiopian products in international markets and hinder export-led growth.

For several decades Ethiopia has remained more vulnerable to trade barriers, but bureaucratic delays, and customs procedures imposed by transit countries. Border delays, tariffs, and non-tariff barriers can increase transaction costs and create uncertainties for traders, inhibiting cross-border trade and investment flows.

Without direct access to seaports, Ethiopia relies on neighboring countries' ports for its import and export activities. This dependence on external ports can constrain Ethiopia's ability to negotiate favorable terms for port access, port services, and transit fees, potentially leading to higher costs and logistical challenges for Ethiopian traders and businesses.

Landlocked countries like Ethiopia often face challenges related to inadequate transport infrastructure, including roads, railways, and customs facilities. Poor infrastructure and connectivity can hinder the efficient movement of goods and people, impeding economic growth, regional integration, and development efforts.

The landlocked status of Ethiopia has to a certain extent deterred foreign investors from establishing manufacturing facilities or distribution centers in Ethiopia due to concerns about logistics, transportation

costs, and supply chain disruptions. Limited access to international markets and higher operational costs can make landlocked countries less attractive destinations for foreign direct investment.

Given the fragile and volatile political, military and economic situation in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia continued to face the risk of economic isolation if they lack efficient transportation networks and trade linkages with neighboring countries and global markets. Limited connectivity can hinder economic diversification, technological innovation, and participation in global value chains, constraining long-term economic development prospects.

Access to multiple ports provides Ethiopian exporters with greater flexibility in choosing export destinations and accessing diverse markets. This can help expand Ethiopia's export base, increase export revenues, and promote trade diversification across different sectors.

The development of the corridor fosters closer economic cooperation and integration among countries in the Horn of Africa region. Collaborative efforts to improve infrastructure, trade facilitation, and regulatory frameworks can create a conducive environment for investment, trade, and economic development across borders.

This particular corridor enhances Ethiopia's maritime security by providing alternative port options and reducing reliance on a single port. This can mitigate risks associated with maritime piracy, political instability, and congestion at key ports, ensuring smoother and more secure maritime trade operations.

Despite these challenges, Ethiopia has been implementing various strategies to mitigate the economic disadvantages of its landlocked status, including investing in transport infrastructure, strengthening regional cooperation, and pursuing trade facilitation measures to improve connectivity and trade competitiveness.

Overall, the Lamu-Djibouti and Berbera Port corridor presents significant economic opportunities for Ethiopia, ranging from trade diversification and cost savings to industrial development and regional integration. By leveraging these advantages and investing in the necessary infrastructure and policy frameworks, Ethiopia can harness the full potential of the corridor to drive sustainable economic growth and prosperity.

Ethiopia will soon end her era of landlocked status and strive and thrive in the world economic competition using her resources for the betterment of the lives of her citizens but still there is more to be done.

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

Business & Economy

Tapping the renewable energy sources for sustainable development

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

The ever-growing giant manufacturing industries and other practices throughout the world have affected the environment through their harmful emissions. Therefore, the world should be united more than ever towards limiting the toxic Carbon emission into the environment.

Ethiopia is blessed with abundant renewable energy resources like hydro, wind, solar, and geothermal and is suitable for power production. Ethiopia's energy potentials can meet its own and the region's demand for clean energy. However, in spite of all the available potentials, the country's energy sector is still in its infancy. The majority of Ethiopia's population lives in the rural area without access to modern energy and is relied solely on traditional biomass energy sources.

Nowadays, Ethiopia has one of the lowest electricity consumption per capita in Africa. Recognizing that energy access and security are crucial factors to economic growth, Ethiopia needs to cope with key challenges related to energy security and diversification of energy supply. As a result, the country prioritizes investing in renewable energy sources to fulfill its demand in this regard.

According to the Ministry of Water and Energy, Ethiopia is one of the countries that has abundant solar energy resources in East Africa. The solar resource is relatively lower in the most populous northern, central and western highlands of the country while the rift valley regions and western and eastern lowlands of the country receive higher annual average radiant energy.

Even though abundant solar energy resources were available in the country, only about 14 MW of solar potentials have been used for telecom service, lighting, powering water pumps in rural areas, and water heating in major cities. The rural households that need low electricity consumption, off-grid solar solutions should be prioritized by the government as an immediate solution for un-electrified rural households that are far from the electric grid and not covered by the densification program in the short term.

Gebru Yohannes is an energy expert working as a consultant for Eco Friendly Energy. He said that everyone has a responsibility to contribute his/her part towards controlling climate change and environmental pollutions through utilizing renewable energy solutions. There are numerous international as well as local organizations working on supplying solar panels which brought tangible solutions to promote the habit of utilizing green energy and addressing the rural community's energy demand through providing sustainable solar energy technologies. The venture has proved that farmers have a greater demand for quality solar energy



Utilizing of solar energy has been expanding in the rural parts of the country

products and the suppliers' organizations have been working in the sector for two decades.

His organization is engaged in integrating the market and ensuring weather consumers are satisfied with the solar products. It works in partnership with regional and woreda level energy offices, microfinance institutions, solar product distributors, model farmers, and farmers' cooperatives, among others to avail latest solar technology products at the doorsteps of the farmers in the Central and Southern Nations and Nationalities Regions.

The company also avails loan opportunities from Vision fund microfinance, Omo microfinance and Metemamen microfinance to address the farmers' financial limitations to buy solar products. Some of the microfinance institutions have more than 25,000 members which will have a significant impact to distribute the solar products sustainably with guarantees and loans.

"Currently, there is a huge demand and supply gap in the environmentally friendly solar technologies among the rural community. The country's electricity access coverage is not more than 50 percent. And investing widely in the off-grid electricity access is fundamental to respond swiftly to the current electricity access challenges across the country," he said.

According to him, most rural residents in Ethiopia utilize charcoal, wood, and kerosene as a major source of energy. Thus, using the traditional source of energy affects socially and economically and harms the environment. According to the Ministry of Health recent report, respiratory health risk prevalent in the rural part due to in-house pollution is

responsible to 70 % of child mortality. Not only these, the reduction of trees and vegetation cover for household energy usage aggravates erosion, land degradation and desertification. As the result, the land productivity became dwindling which let them to stay in cycle of poverty. Therefore, utilizing the latest renewable source of energy like solar power is important to improve the farmers' way of life and ensure environmental safety.

However, it is proved that some solar panel suppliers who want to maximize their profit illegally found distributing, fake solar products to farmers. Other solar product traders also avail low standard solar products with lower prices usually 40 to 50 % compared to the original solar products to the farmers. The low-quality solar products exposed farmers to repetitive loss and to quit utilizing solar products due to their less durability compared to the original products.

Eco Friendly Energy has distributed more than 500 reliable solar panels to the farmers in the southern regions of Ethiopia and conducted a follow up the solar product's safety to do maintenance. Unfortunately, the rampant conflict, road closure and the instability have affected the company's aspiration to deliver up to 5,000 proven solar energy production technologies with affordable price to the rural community.

As to Gebru, the farmers choose solar products that are cheap in price but fake products sold on the streets. However, fake solar products do not serve more than a week or two weeks and cause pollution to the environment. Thus, it is important to identify fake solar products from the original products to curb the impact on the environment. The company also collects

the damaged solar products and put in safe disposal to protect the environment from contamination through its waste management technique.

Sustainable use of renewable energy solutions will have long-term social, economic, and environmental benefits. It is expected that by the year 2050 renewable energy sources will cover 50 % of the global energy supply.

Currently, there is a sustainable demand for solar energy products in the country. However, the penetration of fake solar energy products has affected the market and public reliance on renewable sources of energy.

He recommended that establishing legalized and proper solar marketing system, restricting fake and defective solar products circulation to the market, and carefully working in collaboration with stakeholders will help improve solar energy products usage in the country.

As to Gebru, currently, working and prioritizing on solar, biogas, and energy-saving stove technologies distribution in various rural parts of the country has been a priority agenda. The demand for solar technologies is increasing among the rural community following its affordability and easily accessible from the microfinance operating in the local places. The woreda offices are working in coordination with Eco Friendly energy solutions to increase the number of solar energy alternative users through identifying and distributing the real solar energy technologies.

Farmers and users of the solar energy products distributed by the woreda energy bureau in coordination with Eco Friendly Energy solutions witnessed that the technology has brought a tangible change in their life.

Some residents living in the central Ethiopia region informed a local media that the utilization of solar energy product brought immense benefit to them and to their family members. They gave up using kerosene for household lightening which can stay free of pollution at night in their home. They also said that their children have been facing different obstacles to study in the evening and now all problems related to the matter are resolved. They also advise other farmers to buy solar products get relief from the health problems posed by house hold pollutions due to usage of fuel wood for lightening.

Their children can study for long through utilizing solar energy. The youth also can attend their education at night in schools.

Health centers also works for long without power interruption through the usage of solar power. They also said that the micro finance institution established in their local areas has played pivotal role in facilitating financial credit for the purchasing of solar panels.

Art & Culture

Expecting the appearance of the great Ethiopian, African Novel

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

A novel from a country or a continent claims to be the standard bearer of greatness for many reasons; including its timelessness, the highly refined or sophisticated way it deals with a specific themes, or the artistic and linguistic refinement it introduces while developing its story line that make the work what critics call a classic. The general assumption is that timelessness comes first as a relatively more reliable yardstick to measure the greatness of a novel.

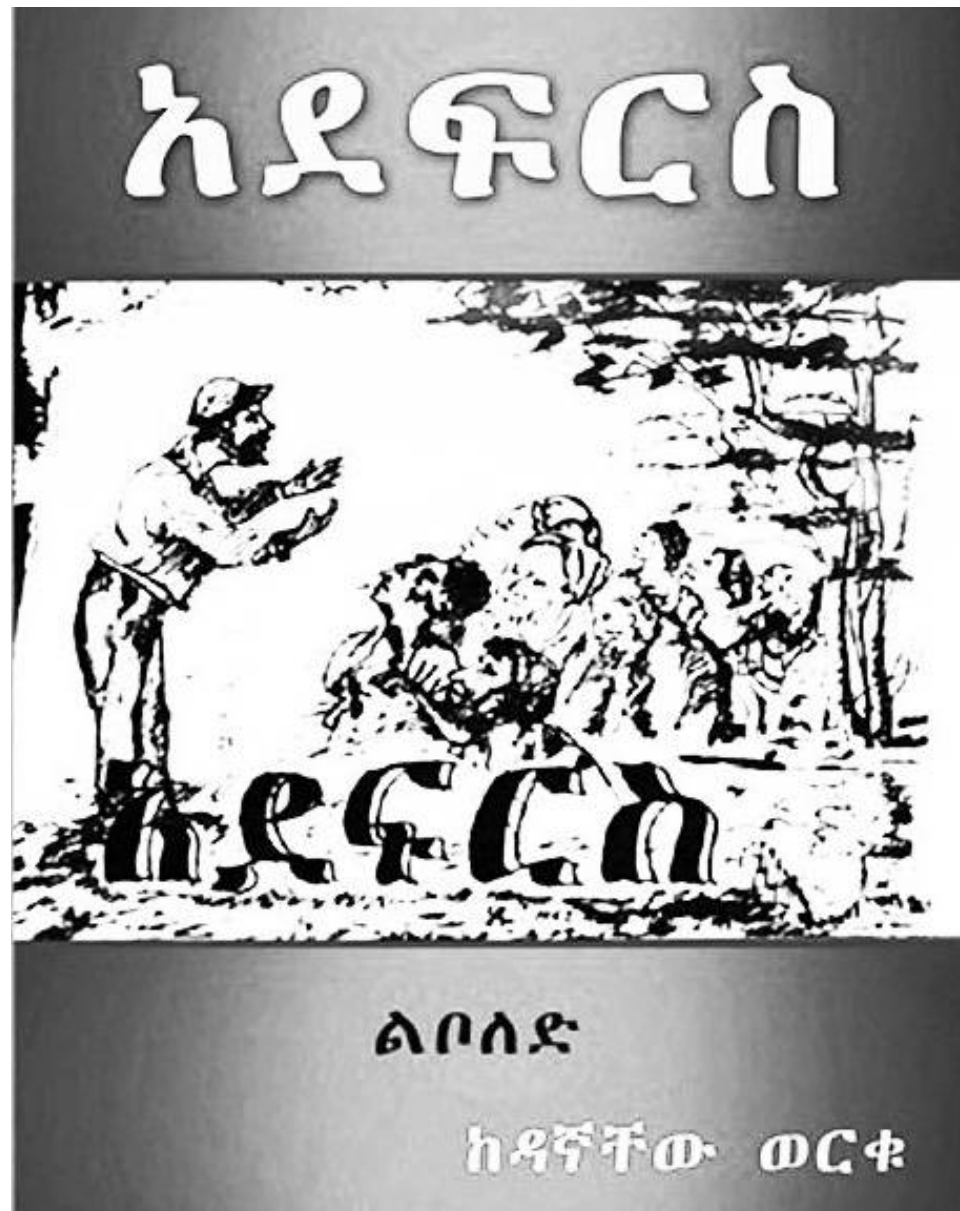
Homer's "Iliad and Odyssey" or "Don Quixote" by Spanish writer Cervantes are great works of literature because they have attained epic proportions and timelessness. Four hundred years after its publication, "Don Quixote" is still a great novel and a classic you can enjoy reading in any society. The same can be said about Victor Hugo's "Les Miserables" which is a great French classic work still widely read and even adapted to the stage.

Critics play a decisive role in attributing a novel the accolade of greatness. In countries where literary development is relatively advanced, critics have the decisive edge in separating the wheat from the chaff and in giving a kind classification to novels that are published at specific times in history. In countries where literature is at a lower level of development, the readers are mainly responsible for assuming a novel a great work or for neglecting it as mediocre. Their judgments are of course arbitrary based on personal whims and not on critical yardsticks.

If we take an example from our country, the Amharic novel entitled, "Adefres" by the late Dagnachew Werku was considered by readers as something of an abnormality or weird, to use a more modern lexicon. It was ignored for many years before it was recognized as a great work by critics of course, and before it was celebrated as a breakthrough novel relatively lately. It was not or is not of course what we may call, "The Great Ethiopian Novel". The rank of greatness was taken earlier by Haddis Alemayehu who published "Fiker Eske Mekaber" (Love Unto Death) long before Dagnachew published his remarkable novel.

If we look closely at "Adefres", we realize that what made it unpopular among the reading public right after it was published was the fact that it took a popular theme, that of a kind of critic of the generation of the 1960s and the social relations of the time to highlight the major existential discomfort educated people of the time felt vs a vis the political arrangements on the eve of the Ethiopian revolution of 1974.

This theme is remotely similar to Be'alu Girma's "Kadmas Bashager" (Beyond the Horizon) which also dealt with the intellectual and existential angst the leading characters were going through in their search for meaning of lives while dealing with the political and social constraints and facing the tragic fate of the educated men of the time. The two books did not assume the rank of



"classics" or "greatness" that the public and critics as well had accorded to the novel by Haddis Alemayehu which is still considered the best Ethiopian novel of all times if you like.

"Adefres" was a weird read at the time of its publication because it was written with a new technique known as "stream of consciousness" that delves into the consciousness of the protagonist and we 'hear' them thinking rather reading them. This technique was largely used by various European authors; among them the British author Virginia Woolf. The technique was in vogue starting from the 1930 and the most celebrated author who used this 'absurdity of language' is James Joyce, who has written a classic novel called "The Dubliners". Upon the publication of the novel, Joyce was quoted as saying that he had given critics an assignment that would last for 100 years trying to understand it meaning.

It is normal that literary trends come and go or change according to the times and conditions. For instance, what is known as "magical realism" was and still is popular among writers such as the late Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the author of "One Hundred Years of Solitude" and later on picked up by Salman Rushdie, the author of "Midnight's Children". Magical realism was very popular during the 1970s which is generally considered to be, "Latin America's literary boom" that brought forth many celebrated writers and the Latin American novels to international attention.

American critics are usually fond of looking for what they call "The Great American Novel" throughout their modern literary history and reaching the highest point in the post-1920s period with the publication of notable novels by some of the most respected authors of the time. Some of the great American novels include, "to Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee, "The Great Gatsby" Scott Fitzgerald, "the Catcher in the Rye" by Salinger and "Catch 22" by Joseph Heller.

When we come back to the situation in our country, we can observe that no "great Ethiopian novel" has appeared on the literary stage since the publication of "Love Unto Death" which is a novel written in the realistic mode and depicts the tragic love affair between two young people who rejected societal and political norms in order to consume their affections in the turbulent end-of-century feudal Ethiopia. "Oromay", another novel by Be'alu Girma could be considered a "great novel" if we judge it by the popularity it enjoyed right after it was published and caught the public imagination for a long time.

The sudden disappearance of the writer had added fuel to the popularity or notoriety of the work. Being a political novel based on the events of the time, it was not surprising that "Oromay" became a best seller of the time. However being a bestseller and a classic work are two different things. Yes, "Oromay" was a bestseller but it was not the great Ethiopian

novel, if we look at it from the point of view of its literary merits. It was not even better than Dagnachew's "Adefres".

The idea of a "great novel" or a "bestselling novel" not as a critical category but as a publishing categorization based on the number copies sold and the hype that results thereof. It came into existence in the Western world. It is not definitively an African or an Ethiopian concept. The idea was born following the literary booms of the 19th and 20th centuries when book publishing became a very lucrative industry and business after the advent of new printing technologies and media such as the radio and television subsequently making book publishing a great business.

If you ask me which book is "the great African novel", I may use the same Western standards and criteria to tell you that Chinua Achebe's "Things Fall Apart" can be one among many on the basis of its popularity and the critical applause it was welcomed with right after gained popularity after its publication. If you ask me who is the great contemporary writer I would say that the young Nigerian authoress, "Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie" can be considered one with her books "Americanha", can be considered a great contemporary African novel. Ben Okri is another Nigerian who wrote what can be considered a great modern African novel and is entitled, "The Famished Road".

Ethiopian literature at present is not in its glory days similar to the boom of the 1960s and 1970s or to the second boom of the 1990s and post-2000 periods. Of course books are written now and then but few catch the public attention while most of them are unimpressive. Most of them are not literary and deal with autobiographies, memoirs and political history.

When will the modern Ethiopian classic novel be written? No one can give an answer to this question because classics are not written with a time table but appear on the stage quite unexpectedly and surprise us with their dazzling novelty and their power and love that force us to read, reread them and celebrate their greatness without anyone telling about it.

In Africa, many countries have their own "great novels". We can take for instance the late Naguib Mahfouz from Egypt, Wole Soyinka who has published another novel after his debut novel entitled, and "The Interpreters" was published 40 years ago. Most of the other African writers have passed away and the younger generation of authors has not yet come of ages.

Ethiopia is rich in historical events about which many authors could have used as backgrounds to their literary narratives. We have enough materials that could fill dozens of good books but this is not the case so far. When will the great African and Ethiopian writers come up with their great novels? No one knows. If there is something that we can ascertain with some degree of confidence is that sooner or later, they are bound to be written.

Indepth

LDCs need concessional grants, not loans, say experts

Olaide Bankole was born and raised in Nigeria, and he observed how climate change was evident in the country with temperature rises and rainfall variability and how drought, desertification, and sea level rises have been affecting its people.

He is also aware of how rising sea levels threaten southern Nigerian cities like Lagos and coastal areas, increasing their vulnerability to flooding and waterborne diseases.

Bankole, who is now working as a policy analyst at the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) in Canada, joined the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Expo 2024 held recently in Dhaka to gain and share knowledge on NAP formulation.

In an interview with IPS on the sidelines of the conference, he said the available fund for climate change adaptation is not nearly enough.

In 2009, the IISD policy analyst said the developed countries promised that by 2020, billions of dollars a year would be given to poorer nations hit hard by worsening climate-fueled disasters.

“The developed countries promised USD 100 billion a year but they did not make good on such promises,” he said.

“Firstly, the developed countries must keep their promises and must meet at least the target of USD 100 billion. And then we can go for other funding. There is a process of funding and private sector finance and other finance windows can be assessed. But the progress is too slow, so we need to move fast, which is the topic of this NAP Expo—transformative adaptation,” Bankole told IPS.

Already, he said, many countries are in debt traps because of the loans they took from various lenders like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

“The money they are receiving for climate change adaptation should not be a loan facility. It should be concessional grants. These countries have already taken loans for their development, while the loans received to deal with climate change impacts will enhance their financial burden. So, I think the fund should not be loans; it should be concessional grants,” said Bankole.

Talking to IPS on the sidelines, Malik Fida A Khan, a panelist at NAP Expo 2024, said around 600 delegates and representatives from 104 countries participated in the adaptation meet



Panelists on the stage during the second day of NAP Expo 2024 at Banglabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) in Dhaka. Credit: Rafiqul Islam/IPS

and discussed the process of NAP formulation and finance in climate adaptation.

“Bangladesh requires USD 8.5 billion per year to implement the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) it adopted to cope with climate change impacts and we have been pushing the development partners to provide concessional loans,” he mentioned.

Fida A. Khan, Executive Director of the Dhaka-based think tank Center for Environmental and Geographic Information Services (CEGIS), said adaptation on its own will not work in addressing climate change impacts in Bangladesh after 2026, so carrying out mitigation programmes will be needed.

He too referred to the unmet promise from the developed nations to provide USD 100 billion per year to the climate-vulnerable countries by 2020.

“We have always been demanding grants, not loans, from the developed countries, which are responsible for global warming. If they are not able to provide a huge amount of grants to the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), which are highly vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks, they should provide concessional loans to these countries with a lower interest rate that will not exceed one percent,” he said.

Speaking on the inaugural day of the

“We have always been demanding grants, not loans, from the developed countries, which are responsible for global warming”

four-day NAP Expo 2024 on April 22, Bangladesh Minister for Environment, Forestry, and Climate Change, Saber Hossain Chowdhury, said Bangladesh had achieved remarkable progress in addressing climate change despite the manifold impacts of climate change on the country and its people.

He said that because of the unmet USD 100 billion pledge, an agreed definition of climate finance must be a definitive outcome of COP29, which will have a focus on finance, including the New Collective Quantified Goals. These goals will consider the increasing needs of climate-vulnerable countries, small island developing states and, of course, the LDCs.

Chowdhury said: “Time itself is running out; we need to restore global trust and solidarity and ensure that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as a global process delivers on its objectives and commitments and the National Adaptation Plan will continue to be an important pillar in this regard.”

The four-day UN Climate Adaptation Conference National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Expo 2024 was held at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) in Dhaka in April.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the conference.

(SOURCE: INTER PRESS SERVICE)

Law & Politics

A boon to Ethiopia's diplomatic clout

BY STAFF REPORTER

As one of the first members of the League of Nations, which eventually became the United Nations and the African Union, Ethiopia has been at the forefront of international diplomacy. Being the only free African nation, the country has achieved diplomatic success with the establishment of the Organization of African Union which headquarters in its capital Addis Ababa.

In addition to being the political and diplomatic hub of Africa, Addis Ababa, is also the world's third diplomatic hub. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), 134 nations currently have embassies in Addis Ababa. Cape Verde and Armenia have been the newest nations to have opened embassies in Addis Ababa.

Ethiopia actively engages with multilateral organizations such as the African Union, UN Security Council, and World Trade Organization, advocating Africa's interests on issues ranging from climate change to global governance. Ethiopia has sustained long and historic diplomacy and foreign relations which spanned from the neighbor states to overseas on wide ranges of areas.

Ethiopia's role in peacekeeping and peacemaking, its contribution of troops to the efforts of the UN to avert escalations of wars and conflicts beginning with the Korean War in the early 1950s and the crisis in Congo with the Katanga War in 1960 have been repeatedly acknowledged and deserved awards and recognitions in the international sphere. Ethiopia has also deserved the reputation as a peace loving country not being involved in any transgressions of international law.

The country has established itself as the anchor state driving regional cooperation and the diplomatic centre of the continent throughout the years, despite the ups and downs. It has been signing cooperative agreements to promote regional development in the Horn of Africa. The region is now connected to electricity and road networks thanks to the successful efforts. Furthermore, the nation has been promoting regional cooperation for sea access recently.

The country's leadership in regional organizations like the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), a regional body that advances development, security, and peace throughout the Horn of Africa, serves as evidence of its dedication to regional integration. Ethiopia has led the way in mediating disputes and encouraging communication between member states since it was a founding member.

In addition to its diplomatic endeavors, the nation has made a substantial contribution to tackling regional issues like food shortages, climate change, and refugee crises. The nation's commitment to humanitarian aid and regional solidarity is demonstrated by its readiness to take in around one million refugees from neighboring countries and



other areas.

Ethiopia is dedicated to using inclusive and varied diplomacy on bilateral and international stages to further its national objectives by strengthening the public's inclusive participation in contemporary diplomatic activities, and Ethiopia's diplomatic influence. Insightful panel discussions, the publication of two new books, and six thought-provoking study articles will all be included.

In addition to being the political and diplomatic hub of Africa, Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, also acts as the continent's third diplomatic seat. The great reputation of Addis Ababa as one of the world's leading diplomatic centers has far-reaching political, economic, and social ramifications. The diplomatic expo is evidence of Ethiopia's commitment to elevating Addis Ababa's status as a preeminent diplomatic hub.

Speaking to the media, Ambassador Birtukan Ayano, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, highlighted that some 134 countries have established embassies in Addis Ababa to date.

Stating that the number of countries opening and interested in opening their embassies in the capital is increasing, the State Minister said that this trend underscores Addis Ababa's enduring status as a diplomatic nucleus.

She said that by increasing the international competitiveness of the city and efficiently fulfilling the responsibilities expected of Ethiopia as a country, work will be done to ensure that the country becomes a global diplomatic epicenter.

In his previous interview, the spokesperson of the ministry, Nebyu Tedla said the interest of countries to open embassies in Addis Ababa is increasing. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs disclosed that several

The country's leadership in regional organizations like the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), a regional body that advances development, security, and peace throughout the Horn of Africa, serves as evidence of its dedication to regional integration

countries establishing embassies in Addis Ababa have reached 134.

He highlighted that 134 countries have their diplomatic missions in Addis Ababa. The number of African countries that have opened diplomatic missions in Addis Ababa

has reached 53, it was indicated.

"Thus, this demonstrates that Addis Ababa has become among the largest diplomatic hubs in the world," he said, adding efforts will continue to make Addis Ababa a comfortable seat to both the diplomatic community and international organizations.

Moreover, he elaborated that Ethiopia's political, economic and diplomatic ties with European countries are growing solid.

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Sied Muhumed Jibril, has presented his letter of credentials to the President of Iraq, Abdullatif Jemal Rashid, in a ceremony held at Salam Palace in Baghdad.

On the occasion, Ambassador Sied has conveyed the good wishes of President Sahle-Work Zewde to the President of Iraq, ENA reported.

He also underscored the existing close relations between the two countries and pledged to work towards the consolidation and strengthening of these bilateral ties in all areas with renewed vigour.

The Ambassador further expressed his gratitude to the Iraqi government for its initiative to re-open its embassy in Ethiopia and expressed the readiness of the Ethiopian government to provide the necessary assistance to Iraq.

President of the Republic of Iraq Abdullatif Jemal Rashid, on his part, expressed gratitude for the goodwill wishes of the Ethiopian president and stated that Iraq will continue to strengthen its bilateral and multilateral relations with Ethiopia.

To ensure this, the president stated that the Iraqi government will once again re-open its embassy in Ethiopia and expressed its gratitude for accepting its request to reopen its embassy in Ethiopia.

Women in Focus

Meron Hadero: An acclaimed, versatile writer

BY STAFF REPORTER

Many female authors of Ethiopian origins across the globe can put their mark in the literature world, become renowned, win awards and make a name for themselves as best fiction and non-fiction writers.

Among these successful female writers, Ethiopian-American novelists Maaza Mengiste, author of the novel titled. "The Shadow King" is the one.

Maaza, also a photographer, in her novel which narrates about a young Ethiopian woman who courageously helped to defend her homeland during the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, won various awards such as a 2021 Edgar Award for Best Short Story and a 2020 Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Aida Edemariam is the other Ethiopian Canadian Journalist and Writer who can achieve success and earn admiration for her outstanding non-fiction pieces. The book she wrote based on her grandmother's stories under the title "The Wife's Tale" won a Royal Society of Literature Jerwood Award for a work of non-fiction in progress and the 2019 Royal Society of Literature Ondaatje Prize for a vivid biography of her Ethiopian grandmother.

"The Wife's Tale" biography, which captures the hearts and minds of the readers from the beginning to the end, depicts the story of her grandmother, which occurred more than 100 years ago through female protagonists.

Meron Hadero is the other Ethiopian-American writer who became the first female Ethiopian author to win the biggest award in African literature, 'AKO Caine Prize' since the Prize's inception in 2000.

Novelist and short story writer, Meron, who is also sister of the singer Meklit Hadero, was born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It was during her childhood, she arrived in the United States as a refugee through Germany. She studied history and American studies at Princeton University, attended Yale Law School, and completed a master's program in creative writing at the University of Michigan.

As she mentioned repeatedly, she loves to read ever since she was a little kid, and her love of writing came from that. "I adore that writing is both analytical and imaginative, which I find fulfilling. I also love that writing asks for and creates empathy, and it embraces great compassion because if we are to make our characters feel human and real, they require our care. Because of that, writers have the great privilege of putting ourselves in the shoes of others, understanding and appreciating other lives, and if we are able to fully embody other characters, living many lives as well."

In her short stay with BBC Focus on Africa

following the award, and regarding her creative works, Meron said that stories of "refugees, immigrants and those at risk of being displaced" are always the "entry-point emotionally" to her work.

"With The Street Sweep, he has that threat looming. He is facing losing his ancestral home, and that's the real driver of the story that makes him take charge and try to re-write that outcome that seems kind of inevitable,"

Much of The Street Sweep is set in Addis Ababa's Sheraton hotel, where Getu is invited for a party. "Looking through his eyes, it is almost a culture shock when he goes there. I did want to paint that contrast... What does that access mean? And what does that bestow? That's the bigger question of what those open doors represent."

"I am absolutely thrilled, I'm in shock - being shortlisted in itself was a huge honor," she remarked while talking about winning this prestigious award.

While responding to a question for being the first Caine Prize winner from Ethiopia, a country full of literary talent, and how it feels to achieve this milestone, Meron said: "It is a huge honor for me, and hopefully it may inspire others from Ethiopia to write their own stories. I mentioned my mother before who decided to become a doctor after seeing a female doctor for the first time as a child. I think representation is important, and the more diversity the better—the more impact it can have, the more connection it can make."

Announcing the winner, the AKO Caine Prize jury stated that "The Street Sweep" is superbly crafted, the language fluid, and weighted with color and memorable symbolism.

"A Down Home Meal for These Difficult Times" [2022], is also the other short story collection of Meron Hadero, that centers on migrants, refugees, and those affected by displacement. It is about the highs, lows, and ordinary days of Ethiopian life. In her debut story collection, Addis Ababa-born Meron addresses Ethiopian Americans' struggles for acceptance, the painful ties between present and past, and the elusive meaning of home.

Appearing in Best American Short Stories, "The Suitcase" follows a woman visiting her country of origin for the first time and finds that an ordinary object opens up an unexpected, complex bridge between worlds. Shortlisted for the 2019 Caine Prize, "The Wall" portrays the intergenerational friendship between two refugees living in Iowa who have connections to Germany before the fall of the Berlin Wall.

While talking about her creative works, Meron said that all the stories in this collection focus on home; the idea of it, the characters are seeking it, dreaming of it,



Novelist Meron Hadero

Meron Hadero is the other Ethiopian-American writer who became the first female Ethiopian author to win the biggest award in African literature, 'AKO Caine Prize' since the Prize's inception in 2000

fighting for it, creating it, and abandoning it.

Meron reflected on the themes she is attracted to as an Ethiopian-American writer and explores what it is like to create the space between Ethiopia and the United States with the turn of the page.

"I find that writing keeps its own time. The writing process is long—there's the thinking/planning, the first draft, and also all the many revisions that follow. I thought a lot about the story before writing, then sat down to work on the first draft, which came together quite smoothly, but revisions after that were the longest part of the process."

The Caine Prize described "The Street Sweep" as a tale for the "young, ingenious generation determined to push open the doors previously closed to them." What are these doors; are they still closed today? And has your life, or anyone's you know, intersected with this larger struggle?

Meron's short stories have appeared in various journals and anthologies. In 2021, she became the first Ethiopian writer to receive the 'AKO Caine Prize' for African Writing for the short story "The Street Sweep," which is about the experience of an 18-year-old boy, an Ethiopian street sweeper who must contend with the power dynamics of foreign aid organizations.

Society

Mobilizing resources to ensure quality education

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Enhancing access and ensuring quality education for all is becoming more important than ever in order to equip students with the required knowledge and skills, helping to develop critical thinking skills in students and produce innovative and competent citizens who are competitors not only at home but also in the global labor market landscape.

With this in mind, countries are investing hugely to access quality education for all and ensure that no one is left behind because without education, achieving social, health, economic and political progress is unthinkable.

Ethiopia is also working committedly to access quality education for all. Mainly, over the past two or three decades, impressive progress has been seen in the education sector. Schools, from kindergarten to primary, from elementary to secondary and universities, were opened across the country. As a result, the number of students has seen significant increases, even though ensuring quality still remains unresolved challenges.

To this end, currently, more efforts are exerted at national level. In this regard, Oromia State is also engaged in productive activities to equip the younger generation with essential knowledge and skills, improve the livelihood of the community as well as to play constructive role in nation building; joining hands with Oromia Development Association.

Recently, *The Ethiopia Herald* had a short stay with the General Director of Oromia Development Association (ODA) Dejene Eticha to learn more about the activities the Association is doing in accessing and ensuring education in the State.

According to him, ODA is a development promoter and has a vision to realize a country where its citizens are self-reliant and have access to sufficient food at all times. To this effect, the Association is engaged in a number of development activities that could improve the social and economic status of the people by provision of services at proximities.

“To attain the goal, we have mobilized resources from the community and public servants in various approaches. For instance, last week we held resource mobilization programs to support two special boarding schools in Adama and Bishoftu towns- ODA Special Boarding School Adama Branch and ODA Special Boarding School Bishoftu Branch.

At the fund raising programs, all administrations in the State had taken part and the Association was able to collect over 22 million Birr. As part of the support, 15 zones of Oromia State provided 938 quintals of teff, 50 quintals of sugar as well as 6 oxen



Students of ODA Special Boarding School

and many more items.”

ODA is strengthening its involvement in ensuring quality education for all through mobilizing resources because of the high return that education could bring to the State and the country.

“In our ten years’ experience, we are able to produce international class students who are now active in the various disciplines. This tells us that if we act in unison, we can make a difference.”

According to him, the two special boarding schools are run by the Association and it provides dining as well as dormitory services. Each facility, the lab, the library and the sport fields are fulfilled. Both boarding schools offer quality education in a manner meeting the international standards, as to him.

The effort should be strengthened because there are a number of gaps that should be addressed and resolved through mobilizing resources and promoting peace among the community. “We are hopeful that residents and public servants will keep on supporting the ODA. At this juncture, we would like to encourage the Diaspora community and the development partners further to extend their support in organized fashion.”

As he stated, it is much more important now than before to keep on investing in education because education is the sole way to get out of poverty. “On behalf of the beneficiaries, we want to thank all parties who supported the ODA. We would like to remain a catalyst for development; we will succeed because the people are by our side.

As of now, the two boarding schools are providing education to students drawn from all parts of the State. It is also offering scholarship programs for those who passed the entrance exam. Over eight hundred students in both special boarding schools, one in Bishoftu Town from 9th to 10th graders and another in Adama Town from

11th to 12th graders, are attending their education.

The Association is also working with regular schools found in both towns in organizing special classes to ensure quality education and to feed the boarding schools with high performing students.

ODA Chairperson Aba Dulla Gemmeda on his part said that the boarding schools are becoming successful because they have been backed by the people from their inception to this day. “We are grateful for the backing of the people in every step and the leadership at each rank and level.”

ODA is working to ensure quality education because the skilled workforce is a gear shifter to break the vicious circle of poverty. What matters a lot is the commitment of the people, development partners and the Diaspora community working with the Association, not the amount of items or financial pledge.

Education helped a number of countries to chart their own future. Countries that have invested in education registered remarkable results and transformed their living standard and lifestyle from poverty to prosperity.

According to the Chairperson, the support, both in items and finance, will be more if it is possible to ensure peace throughout the State. To arrest this challenge, ODA would like to invite everyone to promote peace and unity because through collective efforts, it is possible to create a harmonious and cohesive society that stands for justice, truth and development.

He further noted the importance of engaging actively in mobilizing resources and building a sense of ownership as it could create collective spirit, reinforce social cohesion and bond among community members.

“We, all Ethiopians, should buckle up effort in ensuring lifelong learning and skill development. We can gain tremendous benefits. Through promoting education and providing opportunities for community members to learn new skills and emerging technology, we are able to empower individuals that could contribute effectively to society as well as to the continental and international labor market,” he remarked.

According to documents, ODA is a non-profit association established with a task to back development and improve the lives of people in Oromia State through sustainable integrated community based programs primarily focusing on improving livelihoods, empowerment, health, education, food security, environment and natural resource conservation.

Since its establishment ODA has implemented more than 3,640 community development and relief programs and projects mainly focusing on health, education, livelihood, gender and environmental conservation.

It is much more important now than before to keep on investing in education because education is the sole way to get out of poverty