



The Ethiopian Herald

Vol. LXXX 228 2 June 2024 - Ginbot 25, 2016

SUNDAY EDITION

Price Birr 10.00



Premier affirms gov't's determination to Nat'l Dialogue outcomes

• ENDC embarks on city-level agenda gathering

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA-The government is determined to implement conclusions made by the National Dialogue, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said.

Premier Abiy represented his government as one of the stakeholders of the National Dialogue process at the launching of the agenda gathering phase held at Adwa Victory Memorial Museum Hall yesterday.

In his speech at the occasion, he stated that

Ethiopia is a country that is going through war and is facing many fractures. Consultation is the only solution to get out of this history of war and rift.

"Today is a new chapter for Ethiopia," said the Prime Minister, calling on all of the stakeholders

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Neutral, wise diplomacy pivotal to secure nat'l interest: Scholar

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia has to maximize efforts to conduct successful diplomacy and secure national interests based on meticulousness and neutrality, Scholar suggested.

Political Science Scholar, Costentinos Berhetesfa (PhD) told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the country ought to capitalize on diplomatic efforts based on meticulous analysis

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Hanna Arayaselassie

Ethiopia employs digitization, reforms to vibrant private sector's formation

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Ethiopia, Morocco to establish joint commission

• Arab expatriates contribute to Ethiopia's investment, trade

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopia and Morocco plan to establish a joint commission that would facilitate the advancement of the existing relations and also consolidate the prospect of cooperation in various fields, the country's ambassador said.

In an exclusive interview with The Ethiopian Herald, Moroccan Ambassador Nezha Alaoui M'hammdi stated that the commission is expected to play a crucial

role in paving the way for the signing of various agreements and exchange of views about bilateral cooperation.

Indicating that the recent visit of Moroccan officials to Ethiopia focused on paving the way to the establishment of a joint commission and review of bilateral ties, the ambassador highlighted that the trend demonstrates the thriving relations and the room for further advancement. The visit also aimed to exchange views on the

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Ambassador Nezha Alaoui M'hammdi

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Domestic industrial minerals are increasing in demand

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Adama, Bole Lemi IPs maximize production, prioritizes import substitution

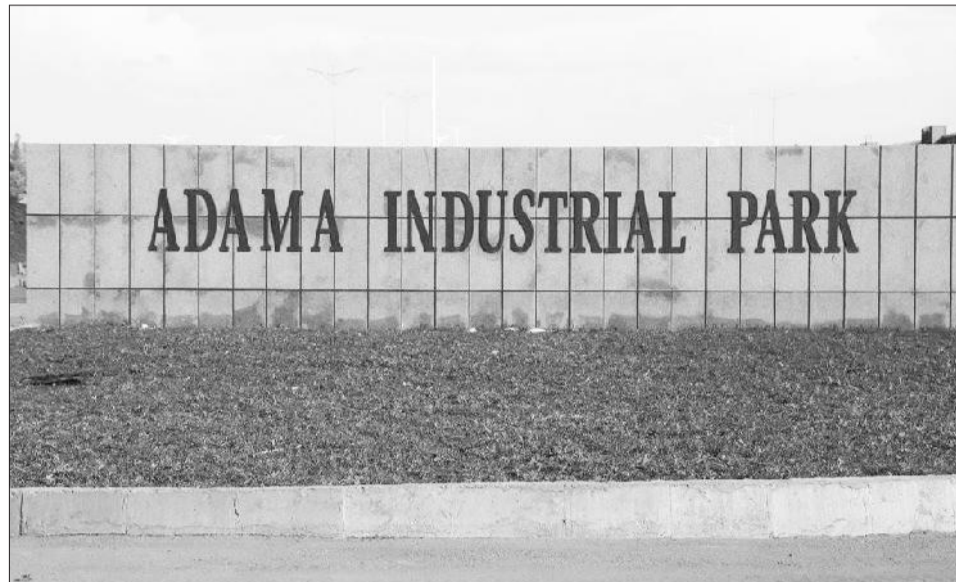
BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA-Adama and Bole Lemi Industrial Parks announced that they restored the normal production which was diminished because of the AGOA restriction and COVID- 19 pandemic over the past years.

Approached by the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Adama Industrial Park CEO, Gulilat Abebe said that seven investors entered into the park in the past 14 months, making the total number of investors 13... [] the manufacturing volume is now at a good level.

The industrial park has only five years of manufacturing history. Though, the progress is growing significantly. The total amount of manufacturing recorded in the past ten months is substantial. "About 1.8 billion USD worth of import substitution goods have been manufactured. Moreover, More than 15 million USD incomes have been generated from export."

Speaking about the manufacturing specialty of the IP, he said that garment and textile is the priority. Moreover, electro-mechanical and construction manufacturing companies are operating in the area.



"The industrial park still has free spaces with energy supply and IP infrastructures available for incoming investors."

Bole Lemi Industrial Park CEO, Tinsae Yimam also said that investors particularly from abroad are investing and their number is increasing in time.

Bole Lemi IP is known for its international standard infrastructural availability and waste management.

Some 19 companies have factories in the park, 14 of them are in active

operation. Also, new coming investors are constructing sheds so they will enter into production shortly, he said..

According to Tinsae, the overall infrastructure of the IP is based on the international standard. The IP has its own waste purification and disposal plant with a capacity of 2.1 million liters per a day. The energy supply is also fully free from wastage. "The electric energy is fully renewable, so investors can access energy with less environmental cost and lower price," he added.



Ethiopia deserves humanitarian energy support: Energy expert

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA-Ethiopia deserves humanitarian energy support from regional and international partners as the number of refugees is huge, energy supply experts said.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, a humanitarian energy expert, working as a Global Director at Mercy Corps' Enter Energy program, Emanuel Aziebor said that Ethiopia with more than a million of refugees deserves support particularly in the energy sector.

Ethiopia is a progressive country with a welcoming culture to refugees. The government is also committed to receiving refugees. But, it cannot supply all needed sources without the help of partners, he said adding, the Refugee and Returnees Service

and regional governments are collaborative to expand energy projects and off-grid stations critical to benefit refugees as well as the host community.

"Refugees need access to electricity not only for household works, but also for small businesses like carpenters and sewing." The energy to be provided to refugees should also be green energy and environmentally friendly, he emphasized.

Instead of using diesel generators and with a high cost of oil running, solar energy can help them to access relatively cheap energy. So, the mini grid stations that Mercy Corps commissioned in the Somali State, is now providing energy to 14000 refugees and their host community, he highlighted.

To him, the refugee crisis is continuing. Its rate is not reducing globally. Ethiopia, as

one of welcoming countries to refugees, needs energy to allow refugees to live together with the host community.

"We need to work together with the government, regulators and with the communities where these refugees are in need of energy supply. We also need to partner with the private sector. Government alone cannot do everything."

Energy Sector Regulation Director at the Ministry of Water and Energy, Yared Girma also said that the government of Ethiopia is collaborating to expand mini-grid and off-grid alternatives supplying energy to refugees.

"Several off-grid energy projects are also being carried out with the government budget in remote areas where refugees are also living."

Ethiopia's ambassador highlights Africa's surge in digital growth

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopian Ambassador to India, Demeke Atnafu underscored Africa's remarkable surge in digital growth, transforming various aspects of its socio-economic landscape.

Ambassador Demeke made the remark at the International Conference on Digital Growth in Africa to celebrate Africa Day 2024 at University of Delhi, organized by the Department of African Studies, according to the Embassy of Ethiopia in New Delhi.

As a Chief Guest, the ambassador delivered a speech on the topic with a prelude to the importance of celebrating African Day with reference to the independent movement in Africa.

Ambassador Demeke underscored Africa's remarkable surge in digital growth, transforming various aspects of its socio-economic landscape.

From the expansion of mobile connectivity to the proliferation of e-commerce platforms and the emergence of tech startups, digital technologies are reshaping how Africans interact, communicate, and do business.

With regard to Ethiopia, Ambassador Demeke highlighted that as a fast-growing economy, digitization is at the core of everything in Ethiopia, such as in agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, and services.

In 2020 Ethiopia initiated Digital Ethiopia 2025, a strategy that aims to leverage digitally enabled pathways to foster inclusive national prosperity through boosting economic growth, enhancing public services, and fostering social development.

Telecommunication reforms, including the liberalization of the telecom sector in 2020, have introduced competition, improved services, and made internet access more accessible and affordable.

In his concluding remark, Ambassador Demeke emphasized that through strengthened Africa-India relations, we can create a future where both regions thrive in the digital era, ENA reported.

Editorial

Ethiopia greets with outstretched hands those that scout for common growth

Not only Ethiopia's placement in East Africa Region but also its being a home to over 120 million people has allowed this ancient country to stand out from the crowd in the sphere of diplomacy.

Especially when we view its geopolitical advantage, it will not be a hyperbole to claim that Ethiopia is a bridge that connects Africa to the rest of the world. Add to that Ethiopian, which crisscrosses the world with a quality-service hallmark.

Ethiopia's propinquity to the Middle East and Europe has created the seedbed for the burgeoning of its relations in the socioeconomic and political domains.

It also boasts a salubrious climate, less expensive labor, easily trainable and knowledgeable manpower as well as untapped natural wealth, it is bountifully blessed with.

Among the qualities that afford the country preferential treatment is found its proclivity to joint action for common growth not to mention the salient characteristic feature of cordiality of its people.

In cognizance of this fact, leaders, diplomats, development partners and investors are disposed towards partnering with Ethiopia to pull off development-related activities. This growing trend harks back to the time the country embarked on the diplomatic journey.

Especially these days mindful of the investment potentials and alternatives of the country, espousing a win-win approach, a multitude of the aforementioned parties flock to Ethiopia unhampered by time and distance. Some are super active.

At this juncture, it is appropriate to mention the recent Ethiopian political and business forum held here. Over 80 Pakistanis investors had participated in the forum. Such clicking between the two countries is said to further cement the countries' economic relation homing in on trade and investment. During the event it was made known that Ethiopia has adopted a home-grown economic reform program. This scenario was applauded as one that swings various doors of opportunity for Pakistanis' chamber of commerce.

Paying homage to our industrial parks they have collected valuable information.

After the forum, showcases that Ethiopia is working towards solidifying its diplomatic relation with a multitude of countries in person and telephone communication were presented. It is not hard to surmise that the discussions it held with ministers and higher government officials from various countries: Qatar, Spain, Turkey, and New Zealand will take its relationship with these countries to a higher level.

It is believed that the National Dialogue the country has just embraced and the ball of Transitional Justice it is set to role are expected to play a significant role in ushering in all-rounded tranquility in this otherwise resilient country. Knowing full well the situation EU and other countries are fulfilling their pledges of support. Prognosis shows they will continue to do so.

Serene Ethiopia by defector shows peaceful Africa.

Those desirous of enduring peace in the narrow Red Sea corridor have pressed ahead with consolidating their relationship with Ethiopia. Ethiopia who sensed or detected this is striving to make the trade activities of the country open to interested members of the global community.

Here it is fit to raise the African Free Trade Zone. Awareness among cross-sections of society has sunk in following the sensitization works carried out. It as well is engaged in warming up exercises towards the required effect. Ethiopia has grasped the paramount significance of global diplomacy in this era (21 century) of red-hot competition and cutting-edge technology. As such, for common benefit and common growth Ethiopia works in concert with those having a kindred heart. This sagacious and cautious move precludes none. Hence, any country or partner that knocks Ethiopia's door for common growth could expect outstretched hand.



The Ethiopian Herald

Established in 1943

Published daily except Mondays
By The Ethiopian Press Agency

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The Ethiopian Herald

Opinion

Regional security can guarantee collective progress in all sectors

BY STAFF REPORTER

The very things that people used to propound as the basic needs of human beings existence for centuries are food clothing and shelter. It is undeniable that people can hardly survive on earth without these three. Yet one more vital and fundamental need can be added to them: peace and security. No matter how hard a country tries to respond to the people's needs for food, clothing and shelter, these are meaningless without security. All endeavours can be devastated if there is no security.

A government that takes all the necessary actions to secure its nation can manage to keep the country peaceful and secure. The government and the people's commitment and the price they pay can succeed in ensuring peace in the country.

Still, a country cannot claim to be fully secure without making sure that its neighbour or the region where it is found is also secure. Conflict and unrest are highly likely to be contagious by their nature, and various factors can drive them to spill over to a nearby country. No country is an island about ensuring security. Even though geographical proximity matters in the case of a conflict spreading across borders, it is only a matter of time until it engulfs those at a distance. Though those far away may not suffer the flame of the conflict directly, they may face indirect consequences like economic crisis, and refugee crisis, among others. Therefore, one can argue that security takes both regional and global nature. And every country thinks in terms of at least securing the entire region where it is found, and if possible securing the whole world.

Therefore it is normal for a country to work strongly towards ensuring regional security. It is almost the responsibility of a government to make regional security part of its national security agenda and contribute its share towards securing its region.

While some parts of the globe are relatively stable, and peaceful other parts of the world are notoriously known for being conflict-ridden or turbulent for a large part of their history. They either suffer protracted war or sporadic conflicts that are difficult to end easily. As a result, they are well known for being insecure, underdeveloped and unsafe.

Among such regions of the world are the East and Horn of Africa. Due to its strategic location at the crossroads of Africa, Asia and Europe, as well as the availability of economic potential among others, the region has been a victim of civil war, border war, and many other forms of unrest for many decades.

Ethiopia has also been a primary victim of the long-time problem in the East

and Horn of Africa. Even though it was considered a pacifying element in the region at some point, it was also forced to fall victim to sporadic conflict at home and in the region.

Despite the conflict that the country faces at home and across borders, Ethiopia shows a strong stance to ensure peace and security beyond its borders as it strongly believes that its economy and political progress are intertwined with the entire region. With this strong belief it has been working with strong commitment under the framework of the regional bloc, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and as well as continental organization African Union (AU)

Ethiopia has been actively participating in regional peace and security initiatives like peace deals, and peacekeeping mission, among others. This has somehow gained the country not only the recognition and acknowledgement of the nations but also benefits from the peace dividend in the region.

Hence, both Ethiopia and other economic and political partners have to give due attention to bolstering Ethiopia's role in ensuring peace and security in the region as the outcome will be of vital significance not only to Ethiopia but also to the region first and to the world next.

The other important agenda that should not be ignored is that, as mentioned above a country should play its role of securing itself beyond its borders, that is at the regional level first and then beyond the region where it has direct juxtaposition. In this regard, it is important to note that Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa are juxtaposed to the Red Sea region which is the most volatile region in the world. It is also clear that East and Horn of Africa have so far been suffering from the unrest and conflict that it passed through, not merely because of its internal issues, but due to its adjacency to this region which is a hotbed of conflicting global interests.

Safeguarding the security and stability of the Red Sea region can be a reality when all regions that have interests and stakes can actively and honestly participate. This calls for ensuring a due place for a nearby nation to participate in ensuring its security.

Ethiopia is the most populous, economically strong and rapidly growing as well as politically the most influential country in the region, both the red sea and the Horn of Africa. As much as it suffers the most when conflicts erupt, it can also contribute the most effective solution if given the right place. Keeping Ethiopia at bay in the matters of the region may cost Ethiopia a price, but the entire region and those that meddle in it would also suffer more.

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

Ethiopia employs digitization, reforms to vibrant private sector's formation

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – Apart from devising viable policies and creating a favorable business climate, establishing efficient digitalization and civil service reforms are instrumental to creating a vibrant private sector, the Ethiopia Investment Commission (EIC) said.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), EIC Commissioner Hanna Arayaselassie stated that the government has been carrying out significant digitization activities and civil service reforms to expand operations and lay the ground for the creation of a thriving private sector.

In addition to policy reforms, the government has also been taking bold steps to create a favorable business climate and to maximize the role and contribution of the private sector in the economy. The government is also working relentlessly to ease setbacks that the private sector has encountered in business-related operations, Hanna emphasized.

Accordingly, the ongoing civil service reform and digitalization are catalysts to promote online service provision and to curtail maladministration and challenges that businesspersons have been encountering during service delivery.

The Commissioner further noted that the EIC is giving due attention to investment promotion strategies to build the value chain approaches that help companies access inputs locally. Besides the policy reforms, revisions in tariffs and provision of imports of some items are boosting local manufacturing industries.

EIC is also working tirelessly to optimize efforts to smooth the business processing services and address bureaucratic chains in license provision, tax-related issues, and among many others.

According to her, the government has convened chains of forums along with the private sector thereby articulating valuable policy inputs. "In this regard, the private sector is expected to have well-aligned associations for effective consolidation of their concerns."

"Moreover, the Business Climate Initiative led by the Ministry of Industry is also on board to review, identify, and address the possible challenges that would hamper the progress of creating a conducive business climate in the country.

"Absence of strong associations in the private sector is impacting their capacity to influence the policymakers to keep their interest and to make government officials accountable for wrongdoings. Hence, the presence of an enabling environment coupled with vibrant private sector associations would be a better playground for a better policy environment for the sectors' thriving future."

The commissioner further highlighted that the joint efforts of the government and private sector are imperative to accelerate Ethiopia's economic progress whereby private businesses have played a leading role in the process. "As far as the favorable environment for the private sector is concerned, it is not merely changing policies, laws, and procedures; it is also about changing the mindset of public institutions towards private businesses."

Furthermore, other practical reforms that have been taking place are believed to address the pressing challenges witnessed in the business sector. The opening up of the local market for foreign actors is an opportunity to create competitions that not only benefit consumers but also suppliers.

By the same token, the structural shift of Ethiopia's economy is the transformation from low value-added sectors including agriculture to the more productive manufacturing industry, the commissioner remarked.

Stakeholders underscore manufacturing industry's auspicious performance

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Promoting the manufacturing industry can be possible via strengthening coordination, promoting the production and productivity of existing industries, producing food items, clothing and shelter as well as medication at the required quality.

The country is working hard to make the private sector an active participant by consolidating the internal connection. In so doing, the country would be in a position to hit the set targets along this line.

As learnt from stakeholders participating in the consultative forum recently organized, a number of ways have been cited as means of

augmenting the participation of the private sector in various development activities targeting at pushing the nation steps forward particularly in the manufacturing industry.

Technology Construction Building Materials Producing Factory, Manager Ababayehu Girma stated that the industry sector, with a particular reference to the manufacturing industry, has been prettily baffled by power interruption, financial constraint, problems in relation to peace and security, lack of streamlined working procedure, absence of well-defined infrastructure, among others.

Addis Ababa garage association chairman, Yilma Lemma on his part said that a

number of remarkable achievements have been gained following 'Ethiopia produces Initiative.' Yes, he said, change can be attained as people, individually or collectively, working on wood work, metal work, electric system garage work, have diligently run a range of lucrative activities.

Chito Trading Owner, Simon Sertsu on his part said steps which are being taken by the government to promote the sector need to be well strengthened for further progress.

Taking advantage of the ten year development roadmap set by the government, the manufacturing industry production capacity has risen from 50 to 85 percent on average, he added.

Neutral, wise...

about world politics and take a neutral position to secure its interests.

He mentioned that Ethiopia, as any of the world countries, had been joining various blocs to get financial or military support.

Currently, the western bloc is intimidating Third World countries with suspension of aid to deepen its ideology. However, African countries are struggling to detach from this influence, he noted.

On the other hand, Costentinos mentioned that nations are joining the BRICS plus bloc aimed

at achieving a multipolar world that ensures equality and mutual benefit. However, the creation of this bloc has become a nightmare for the western world.

And some countries are trying to stand neutral rather than joining either blocs, he said.

The abstaining of some countries from supporting the US or Russia during the recent UN General Assembly regarding the Russia-Ukraine war was a showcase to the growing preference of neutral position of many nations, he stated.

Accordingly, the Scholar noted that countries

are reaching common consensus on ending the monopoly of power by the developed countries including the US.

Despite having a neutral position in world politics, countries should support truth and be the voice for the voiceless, he stressed.

Therefore Ethiopia needs to refrain from becoming the main actor of a single bloc. It rather, requires taking a meticulous decision on current global diplomatic position and conducting strong international relation activities, according to Costentinos.

Ethiopia, Morocco...

prospect of launching future projects.

"The historical tie between Ethiopia and Morocco has not transformed into a higher level of trade and investment cooperation yet. Thus, the two countries must work to strengthen partnership in the economic frontier."

Ambassador Nezha further expressed Moroccan businesses' desire to be involved in fertilizer production in Ethiopia and to expand their presence in priority sectors including manufacturing and agriculture. "In this regard, our Embassy has played a due role particularly in convincing Moroccan companies to take part in Ethiopia's wider investment alternatives."

Concerning the Arab Expatriate Day celebration that was recently hosted by Morocco's

Embassy in Addis Ababa, she pointed out that the event aimed to recognize and honor the role of Arab expatriates worldwide, particularly in Ethiopia. "Those expatriates assist official diplomats in strengthening relations with the host country in our case with Ethiopia."

"Arab expatriates have been contributing to the flow of trade and investment, expertise sharing and fostering connections between countries. They have been serving as ambassadors for their respective nations, working to enhance the relationships with Ethiopia. Recognizing their efforts is crucial for strengthening official ties and expanding trade and investment opportunities."

"African governments face the challenge of addressing the root causes of migration

while respecting the rights of migrants, the Ambassador noted, adding that migration is a complex issue influenced by global trends, social media, and economic disparities. "Thus, collaborative efforts between countries of origin and destination are essential for managing migration effectively."

Morocco has implemented successful strategies to protect migrant rights and promote co-development initiatives. The country's experience serves as a valuable example for others seeking to address migration challenges, she remarked.

It was learned that the Arab Expatriate Day celebration was organized by the Arab Ambassadors Council.

Premier affirms gov't's...

actively participate in this new chapter.

PM Abiy pointed out that the purpose of the National Dialogue is to make Ethiopia a country of hope by strengthening relations and filling gaps instead of contradictions. "Making good use of this historic consultation opportunity, which is not repeated in the course of history, will make us all winners."

He called on no party to miss this National Dialogue opportunity. "The government has no intention of interfering in the work of the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission."

The Premier pointed out that his government is determined to implement the conclusions reached during the consultation and said that if there are agendas that it does not agree with, it will be resolved through a referendum.

"After the people have decided, every one of us should respect such decision. Efforts to resolve differences of opinion and disagreements

through the use of force will not lead to a permanent solution to our problems, beyond creating temporary winners and losers," Abiy remarked.

In a related development, the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) announced the launching of an agenda gathering phase involving all stakeholders at the Addis Ababa City Administration level in the presence of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) yesterday.

Addressing the gathering, the ENDC Chief Commissioner Prof. Mesfin Araya said that since establishment, the commission has overcome many challenges and it has been determined to bring about the rapprochement and understanding that many have been wishing for many years.

Having conducted agenda gathering consultation in more than 1,000 districts in ten states and two city administrations, the commission embarked

on agenda gathering in Addis Ababa by electing representatives.

Prof. Mesfin confirmed that the ENDC will work hard to facilitate the door of peace for all parties in any place through the consultation process to bring Ethiopia's problems to a national solution.

The Chief Commissioner, who pointed out that any Ethiopian can bring the agenda to the commission individually or jointly, confirmed that the consultation will be inclusive and the process will be done in a transparent and credible manner.

Representatives of different segments of the community, political parties, the three government bodies namely the legislative, judiciary and the executive, representatives of different institutions and associations and prominent individuals participated in the city-wide agenda gathering phase that started at Adwa Victory Memorial Museum Hall.

Opinion

Gender Model Family: From tradition to transformation

BY BAHIRU SETEGNE

The Gender Model Family (GMF) initiative is enabling a transformative shift, empowering farmers to actively participate in traditionally women's work.

Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) has piloted an innovative Gender Model Family (GMF) approach as part of its Participatory Small-scale Irrigation Development Programme (PASIDP II).

This gradual, profound change in mindset and behavior is at the heart of the GMF approach. By challenging deep-rooted patriarchal norms and structures, the initiative is empowering both men and women to redefine their roles and responsibilities within the agricultural context.

To further expand on the experiences and learnings from PASIDP II, the Ministry of Agriculture, in collaboration with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Centre for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF), the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), and the Alliance of Biodiversity International and the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), is organizing a national workshop here in Addis Ababa.

The workshop, titled "Securing Women's Resource Rights Through Gender Transformative Approaches", will bring together a diverse group of implementers, development partners, Gender Model Family (GMF), and stakeholders committed to advancing gender equality in the agriculture sector.

This workshop is a critical platform to share the successes and challenges of the GMF approach, learn from other Gender Transformative Approaches (GTA) implementations across Ethiopia, and raise awareness about the transformative potential of these strategies, according to Samson.

As Ethiopia strives to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth in the agricultural sector, the Ministry of Agriculture's pioneering efforts with the GMF model and the upcoming workshop underscore the country's commitment to empowering women and addressing the root causes of gender inequality.

In online opening remarks, Hai Ha Vu Thi on behalf of IFAD commended Ethiopia's efforts in pioneering gender transformative approaches in the agricultural sector.

"IFAD is deeply encouraged to see Ethiopia at the forefront of integrating gender transformative approaches into agricultural development," Vu Thi stated.

"By challenging traditional gender norms and power dynamics, Ethiopia is paving the way for a more equitable and inclusive future for its farming communities," she said.

Vu Thi applauded the Gender Model Family (GMF) initiative, noting how it enables the creation of model households that redefine gender roles and responsibilities. "This innovative approach has the potential to catalyze systemic change, empowering women as equal partners in agricultural decision-making and production," she added.

Addressing the workshop participants, Vu



Thi emphasized the importance of sharing experiences and fostering cross-learning.

IFAD, Vu Thi remarked, stands ready to support Ethiopia's continued efforts in this domain. "We are committed to being a steadfast partner in your journey towards gender equality and sustainable agricultural transformation," she said.

The representative of Women and Social Affairs Inclusive Executive, Samson Adane, delivered a speech regarding to Gender Transformative Approaches.

The GMF model, implemented between 2019 and 2024, has provided valuable insights into how Gender Transformative Approaches (GTAs) can foster sustainable agricultural development and improve the livelihoods of rural households, especially for women.

As to Samson, the GMF approach has been a game-changer in challenging traditional gender norms and engaging men in taking on household responsibilities traditionally seen as 'women's work'.

This has not only empowered women but also strengthened the overall resilience and productivity of rural families, Samson stated.

According to Samson, Gender Transformative Approaches (GTA) have emerged as a crucial strategy to address deep-rooted gender inequalities that hinder agricultural development and equitable resource access, especially for women in rural areas. By challenging and changing the underlying causes of these inequalities, GTAs offer a pathway to more inclusive and effective agricultural practices, he said.

Nuredin Asaro, the national coordinator of Participatory Agriculture and Community Transformation (PACT) highlighted how the Gender Model Family (GMF) approach is enabling the creation of model families in different areas of the nation. The project is designed to be gender and nutrition inclusive, the coordinator remarked.

Nuredin emphasized the need to change community attitudes to foster more Gender



Gender Transformative Approaches in practice: sharing household chores

Model Families. He stressed the importance of transferring best practices from region to region, woreda to woreda, and even village to village.

Finally, Nuredin noted that PACT has the responsibility of sustaining and scaling up these best practices in various areas.

Gender and Nutrition Specialist in PACT, Yaregal Zelalem, presented that a total of 5,283 households have implemented the Gender Model Family (GMF) initiative across 64 irrigation institutions and 5 regional states. As to his report, the tasks that were previously not undertaken by husbands, but are now being performed include providing firewood, fetching water, and caring for children. Husbands have started cooking, which has enabled women to have more time to participate in agricultural development.

Moreover, household-level decision-making has begun to be made jointly, with both spouses involved. Wives have started to participate and decide in resource management, which was previously solely the husband's responsibility. Improved communication and cooperation within the family have begun, Yaregal presented.

As a result, households have been able to reduce expenses, and husbands are allocating more time to their families. They have also started to take care of, bring in, and manage livestock.

During the panel discussions, farmer participants (both women and male households) have shared their experiences and firsthand accounts of how they now freely and willingly conduct their wives' duties as regular tasks, rather than viewing them as burdensome chores outside of their domain.

A participant remarked, "Initially, we may not have seemed inclined to participate in traditionally female tasks, but through the GMF activities, we have come to appreciate the importance of these responsibilities and now take them on as a regular part of my daily routine."

Furthermore, the model farmer participants highlighted an additional responsibility that has emerged from this shift in gender dynamics; the imperative to raise wise children who engage in women's work and share burdens and resources equally.

"As we have embraced this change within our own households, we now recognize the

importance of instilling these values in the next generation.

Therefore, it is our duty to create a future where our sons and daughters grow up understanding the importance of shared responsibilities and the equitable distribution of resources, the farmers remarked.

"By teaching our children to participate in traditionally female tasks, we are sowing the seeds of a more just and inclusive society, where gender norms are redefined, and everyone contributes to the prosperity of the household and the community."

This holistic perspective, encompassing both the present-day transformation and the long-term vision for the future, is a testament to the depth and breadth of the GMF program. "We are not just changing ourselves, but shaping the mindsets and behaviors of the generations to come," another participant emphasized. "This is how we ensure that the progress we've made today is sustained and amplified in the years ahead."

The model farmer participants' commitment to raising wise, gender-equitable children underscores the transformative potential of the Gender Model Family initiative. By empowering both adults and youth to challenge traditional gender roles and responsibilities, this program is poised to catalyze lasting, systemic change in Ethiopia's agricultural sector and beyond. Participants highlighted that the workshop has provided a valuable platform to exchange best practices and inspire one another. "Seeing how our peers have embraced this transformation has been truly motivating. We are now able to take these learnings back to our communities and further integrate gender-inclusive practices into our daily lives and farming activities."

By enabling farmers to actively participate in traditionally women's work, the Gender Model Family initiative is creating a ripple effect that extends beyond the household, unlocking the full potential of women as equal partners in decision-making and production.

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

Business & Economy

Domestic industrial minerals are increasing in demand

BY BACHA ZEWDIE

Among the resources Ethiopia has been blessed by nature, there are minerals used for industrial inputs. These minerals, like coal, kaolin, dolomite, quartz, feldspar, diatomite, bentonite, which are used as raw materials for various industries, are numerous in terms of reserves.

While these minerals exist locally, factories used to import most of them until recently. Since these minerals have started to be produced in the country, however, many factories have begun to return to domestic products. An example of this is coal. The country has started to become self-sufficient in coal production. Cement factories use a lot of coal and Kaolin mineral is sought by waterworks. Data indicate that the demand for minerals is increasing at a time when industries are expanding.

Industry Minerals Corporation is also known for producing minerals used for industrial inputs for a long time. According to Sadik Kebir, senior expert in minerals and geologist at the corporation, Ethiopia has many types of industrial minerals. The corporation has been working on kaolin, dolomite, quartz, feldspar, diatomite and bentonite among them. Currently, it is building a factory in Oromia region, Guji zone, Ardajla district, and is generating income by producing kaolin, an industrial mineral, at a factory level.

As he said, Kaolin mineral has many benefits. Mainly the water purification of the country is done by this mineral. The corporation is the only manufacturer and supplier of kaolin ore in the country. This company adds value to the mineral and supplies the product to drinking water producers.

"If the production of kaolin ore is interrupted, drinking water production is also considered to be out of business. That is why the Corporation has taken a big responsibility and is working on Kaolin. Kaolin is used for water purification as well as raw material for paper and ceramic factories.

Recalling that the corporation was producing industrial minerals dolomite, quartz, feldspar, and tantalum earlier, he said that especially tantalum and dolomite minerals were produced at a factory level set up in the Kentecha area. He stated that when the tantalum production is stopped, the dolomite production also stopped. The minerals such as dolomite, quartz and feldspar were to be produced only at the level of small associations, so that associations were organized and produced according to the direction set.

Work to restart tantalum production is underway. Alongside the production of tantalum, quartz and feldspar are also value added and marketed. Currently, these minerals are used as inputs for steel and similar factories, and arrangements have been made to purchase the raw materials from manufacturers and provide them by adding value. At the same time, works are being done to modernize the factory that produces kaolin so that the factory can produce it at a better level and use it for different resources. An expansion budget is being prepared for this, he explained.

He also mentioned that an environmental



Dolomite-mineral

impact assessment has been conducted for the production of diatomite in the Zuway area.

"Diatomite has many uses such as a filter for breweries, soft drinks and juice factories. This mineral now comes from China and various foreign countries with high foreign exchange," he said, adding that work is being done to replace the imported mineral by producing it domestically using modern technology.

He also mentioned that diatomite is used to produce pesticides. He recalled that in the past, the corporation used to produce this ore and supply it to factories producing pesticides. However, the job of producing the mineral is currently given to unemployed youths organized as small producers, and indicated that the corporation is working to produce the mineral at a high level using technology.

According to Sadik's explanation, the corporation has been producing kaolin for a long time and is supplying it to factories like the Awash Melkassa Aluminum Sulphate Factory, where it is added value and used for drinking water purification. Now, the factory produces 3500 to 5000 tons of kaolin ore per year. The factory is producing products to meet the demand in the country. It has been possible to create job opportunities for 130 people in this sector.

He pointed out that although the kaolin produced by the factory is sufficient for the domestic market, paper and ceramic factories import the raw material. While explaining the reason behind, the factories mention that the factory is 430 kilometers away from Addis Ababa. There is a large amount of kaolin ore that can meet domestic demand, and the corporation is working to build a modern factory keeping this in mind. There is also a large reserve of diatomite ore that can be supplied to foreign markets beyond the country.

While diatomite ore can be produced locally, breweries and soft drink factories are currently using imported product that needs adjustment in the way the factories encourage domestic production. They should not see the benefit of only for themselves, but from the high

foreign currency side that the country spends. If it is possible to continue the work that the corporation is doing on diatomite minerals in the future, it will be possible to produce sufficient production, he stated.

According to him, Kaolin production accounts for the highest revenue of the corporation. One ton of kaolin is sold between 13,000 and 15,000 Birr. It is planned to produce 5,000 tons of kaolin in this fiscal year and it has been possible to produce more than planned.

"The demand for industrial minerals is increasing. The more large factories are built, the more the demand for industrial minerals will increase," Sadik said. The previously undemanding (unwanted minerals) are becoming in demand. The increasing demand for coal production can be cited as an example. The increase in factories will create a good opportunity to increase the demand for industrial minerals. The corporation is known for industrial minerals' production, and many factories have come to the corporation and asked whether it will produce the minerals they need, he added.

He further elucidated that the corporation is engaged in searching for other minerals in addition to what it produces based on the mineral demand of the factories. As industrial demand for minerals increases, the corporation works to increase the quantity and quantity of mineral products it produces.

Sadiq pointed out that there are many challenges in the development of industrial minerals. One of these challenges is that the corporation cannot produce industrial minerals directly. In the past, there were mismatches with the unions that produce the minerals. Currently, improvements are being seen. The worked is underway with small-scale organizations that are engaged in the production of minerals. The corporation is helping the associations by creating conditions that enable them to work together and by subsidizing them and sharing a percentage.

The corporation is required to produce the minerals using technology. The expansion of industries has brought increase in demand to

a high level, so that more work is expected on industrial minerals, he indicated.

Explaining from the market point of view, he said that the corporation will conduct a survey of the demand for industrial minerals and start work. After identifying the quality and quantity of the type of minerals required by the factories, they will produce it. The quality required by factories varies, and it will be prepared and made according to the standard they ask for.

Minerals are not of equal quality by nature. The quality of a mineral in one place may differ from the one elsewhere. After the minerals are tested in the laboratory, the quality level of the ore is specified to the factories and the supply is done, Sadik said.

He underscored that technology is of great importance to increase the quality of minerals. The problem with the quality of the minerals produced in the country is related to washing. The imported minerals are washed using technology. Besides, the situation where minerals are presented to the market as soon as they are produced causes quality problems.

Currently, a coal washing plant is being established in the country. Thus, coal will be washed and supplied to factories. The presence of such factories will increase the quality of mineral products.

In the future, with the help of technology, work on industrial minerals will continue to be strengthened. Works to modernize the kaolin plant to produce a technology-assisted product will be applied. Preparations are being made to engage in coal production. Many works are being done to produce other industrial minerals like marble, he communicated.

In general, the corporation is required to carry out activities to develop the minerals that are found in the country, so capacity building activities are being done there. Since the government is also helping in the mining sector, it is planned to do many jobs in the industrial and metallic minerals' sector. A five-year strategy has been designed and implemented by organizing the workforce, he said.

Planet Earth



Ethiopia boosting enset plantation to ensure food security, environmental sustainability

BY FIKADU BELAY

Enset is a large, tree-like herbaceous plant that has been cultivated and consumed in the southern and southwestern regions of Ethiopia for centuries. While it is commonly referred to as the “false banana,” enset is actually more closely related to bananas. Unlike bananas, the edible parts of the enset plant are the underground stem and the leaf bases, rather than the fruit.

As the impacts of climate change continue to intensify across East Africa, the government of Ethiopia is increasingly looking to an indigenous enset crop as a key part of its strategy to ensure long-term food security for its rapidly growing population.

“Enset has been the dietary staple and insurance crop for millions of Ethiopians living in the highland regions of the country for generations,” explains Usman Surur, Agriculture and Rural Development Sector Coordinator and Head of Agriculture Bureau at Central Ethiopia State.

“As the climate has become more unpredictable and extreme weather events more common, we are seeing enset emerge as an increasingly important food security crop that can withstand drought, flooding, and other climate-related stresses that have devastated Ethiopia’s traditional cereal and root crops.”

In addition to climate resilience, the state is attempting to ensure food security for Ethiopia. Not only Ethiopia, but we are also working to make the country a beacon of nutrition at the African level, he mentioned.

Adisu Fikadu (PhD), the Coordinator and Researcher of the Enset Project at Arba Minch University, stated that Enset is a remarkable crop that can be grown without the use of chemical fertilizers, herbicides, or pesticides, making it a cost-effective and environmentally-friendly solution for food security.

Unlike other crops, enset can produce a significant yield on a relatively small plot of land. He noted that an area of just two square

meters can yield up to 250 kilograms of food from a single enset plant, far exceeding the output of other cereal crops planted for five or ten years.

However, despite enset’s importance, the crop has long been overlooked and underutilized at the national level in Ethiopia. This is beginning to change, as the Ethiopian government and various international development organizations have in recent years started to prioritize enset as a key element of the country’s food security strategy.

Adisu said that this inspiration involves providing training and technical support to smallholder farmers, establishing community-based enset processing and storage facilities, and conducting research to develop higher-yielding and more disease-resistant enset varieties.

In addition to its climate resilience, enset also offers significant nutritional benefits. The underground stem of the enset plant is high in carbohydrates, fiber, and various vitamins and minerals. It can be processed into starchy flour that is used to make a variety of traditional Ethiopian dishes, including the ubiquitous staple food called “kocho.” The leaves and leaf bases of the plant are also edible and nutritious.

Enset is a nutritious crop, providing carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins, and minerals. It is particularly rich in vitamin B6, potassium, and manganese, making it a valuable addition to the diet, especially in regions prone to food insecurity, Adisu said.

In addition to its use as a staple food, enset has multiple other applications. It can be used as animal feed, the fiber can be woven into ropes and mats, and the plant’s sap can be used for traditional medicinal purposes. This versatility allows enset to be integrated into various aspects of rural livelihoods. By further exploring the benefits and versatility of enset, Ethiopia can promote sustainable agriculture, ultimately contributing to the country’s overall development and resilience, as he underlined.

Since its establishment, significant progress has been made to develop the region.

Among the key initiatives, efforts have been undertaken to prevent the extinction of enset plants and to expand these efforts to various locations. Under the 40:40:20 initiatives, a farmer in central Ethiopia will have 100 enset plants within three years, Usman noted.

Apart from preserving the environment’s beauty, these initiatives play a crucial role in maintaining the balance of the ecosystem and climate, improving soil fertility, and addressing drought challenges, which is part of the green legacy program, he said.

Despite its widespread use in Ethiopia, enset remains an underutilized crop globally. Increased research and investment in enset cultivation, processing, and product development could unlock its full potential, not only in the southern part of Ethiopia but also in other regions with similar agro-ecological conditions, Adisu noted.

State Minister of Agriculture Melese Mekonen (PhD), stated that the national enset development program has been designed and implemented, with extensive activities carried out in the Oromia, Southwest, Central, and Southern regions of Ethiopia.

Historically, enset has been a crucial component of the traditional “enset-based farming system” practiced by state zones like the Gurage, Hadiya, Kambata, and Sidama in southern Ethiopia. In this integrated agricultural system, enset is grown alongside other important food and cash crops. The enset plant’s resilience, ability to be stored for long periods, and versatility in culinary uses have made it a dietary mainstay and a type of “living savings account” for these communities, he said.

Adisu emphasized that enset’s benefits extend beyond food security. The crop also plays a crucial role in maintaining soil fertility and mitigating the effects of climate change, including drought. Moreover, the cultivation of enset is often integrated into agroforestry systems, where it is grown alongside other crops and trees, like coffee, fruit, and spice crops. This diversified approach helps maintain soil fertility, reduce erosion, and enhance

the overall resilience of the farming system, making it a versatile choice for farmers.

In the past year, the Central Ethiopia Region planted 87 million saplings, covering 37,000 hectares of land. The plan is to further increase this to over 90 million saplings in the coming year, Usman mentioned.

The state minister stated that the enset plant has emerged as a valuable food source for over 25 million citizens, offering benefits beyond just nutrition. Currently, enset is cultivated on over 1 million hectares of land, with plans to expand it to 2.4 million hectares in the next seven years.

Additionally, the program aims to increase the number of households benefiting from it from the current 5.1 million to 10 million, he said.

Indeed, the Ethiopian government has set an ambitious target of nearly tripling the country’s enset production by 2030, with the goal of making it a dietary staple for at least 40 million Ethiopians - up from around 20 million currently. This expansion will require significant investments in agricultural extension services, research and development, and infrastructure to process and store enset.

Collaborations with research institutes and universities are also underway to address the diseases related to the plant. Moreover, universities and agricultural research centers are conducting various studies to explore the potential of enset as a source of foreign exchange.

To address the laborious process of preparing food from enset, Adisu stated that the Arba Minch University Research Center is working to reduce the time it takes to turn enset into a consumable food product from several months to just seven days and to further enhance the efficiency of the crop. Also, the government is working to integrate technology and improve efficiency.

Besides, the Ethiopian government’s efforts are focused on ensuring food security, promoting nutrition, and leveraging the enset plant as a valuable resource for economic development and environmental sustainability.

Art & Culture

Letting viewers experience E-motions (energy in motions/ vibrations)

(An emerging Ethiopian painter stamping footprints in nonrepresentational art)

BY NAOL GIRMA

A South African multidisciplinary artist Chrisél Attewell, once defined Ethiopia as a Country, whose cultures and artistic traditions kept for its-self because of its remoteness throughout the millennia. In other words, the Country has been continuously fighting for independence from colonial and invading forces for centuries, with its hard topography inaccessible and protective against external forces. According to the artist, in Ethiopia, popular art ranges from early Christian art, seen in manuscripts, murals, and artifacts, to modern art movements, such as realism, expressionism, and world-class contemporary art.

Since the history of art in Ethiopia goes back to the rise and fall of several ancient kingdoms and the present day, several artists have been coming up with styles that embraced the visual arts with their unique styles and creativity.

Ruth Getachew is an artist of the modern age. She believes that even though human beings are visual creatures, there's a great mystery lying on the opposite side of what they think they perceive every day. She says that in her works of art, she has been trying to make people experience different E-motions (energy in motions/ vibrations). She also chose the abstract collage technique because she loves magazines as well as cutting, and attaching things.

Explaining how she was introduced to the world of arts she said, as far as she remembered her past, self-creating visual art was part of her whole life. My parents say I started it at an early age. "My father used to give me pens or pencils with papers to get me occupied while my parents had to work around. So, sitting near my father I used to draw. That is how my talent showed up initially." The artist also told The Ethiopian Herald that her parents sent her to a summer art class at Abyssinia Fine Arts & Modeling School when she was 7 years old. "I continued the summer art class for another 5 consecutive years too. It also enabled me to participate in the group art exhibitions the school organized at the end of those summers. The school made me to take other classes with the adults."

Ruth also remembers that an art piece, she came up with when very young, proved very influential in the school. As such it was displayed in the school compound for students and parents to feast their eyes on.

"My childhood wasn't confined to creativity related to drawing or painting things, I also grew up displaying various kinds of talents and creativity both at school and home. I also took one-to-one art classes under tutorship of visual artist Dawit Adnew and visual artist Leikun Nahusenay in 2015", she says.

Later on, as a 10th and 11th grader, in 2015 1st 2016, she attended several arts competitions organized by numerous



actors including the Addis Ababa City Administration and its Culture and Tourism Bureau.

She also recalls participating in various "Africa and Art" related conferences, workshops, and other programs (with different associations and centers) as she, most of the time, contributed her artworks.

"I was a second-year architecture student at EiABC at that time but the following year I chose to move to Alle School of Fine Arts and Design (AAU) from where I received a BFA degree in 2023 GC. After that here I am working dominantly on the theme I graduated on," she added.

Ruth adores colors as they inspire her when she sees them in different places especially fitting each other by accident on things that are randomly placed. The other inspiration for the young artist is nature. "I have a great connection with flowers, their colors, delicacy, and so on. I am inspired by colors, patterns, shapes, etc., on people's clothes buildings while I walk around streets," she adds.

The things that inspire this particular artist include other people's works of art, listening to or reading biographies of visual artists she admires, and engaging in conversations with them. She indicates that magazines are one of the main reasons which led her to the technique of collage.

Speaking of what her works of art indicate, she says, one of the primary themes she depicts now is titled "Vibration". "I do nonrepresentational collage artworks, which evoke different E-MOTIONS (energy in motions) by their colors, shapes, etc. arrangements as they are perceived. Emotions are our vibrations." According to her, if someone is angry, s/ he is vibrating at 150 Hz. If people are in joy, the measure will be 540 Hz, and so on. In this case, she explains that her artwork has an impact on people's vibrations.

"I believe in this world; we have been giving so much focus to what is seen; what quantum physics says is only 0.00001% of anything. And not only the unseen 99.99999% of anything, which is just energy, is the major constituent of reality, the fact that it is in constant vibration also affects everything, including our lives."

She also believes that people's eyes are

limited and cannot see, but everything is just energy at a constant vibration, including things that are perceived as solid to the eyes, be it a stone or even body parts.

She also says that it is scientifically proven that human beings' vibration affects their awareness level, their proper thinking capacity, and their health. According to her, people's vibrations attract other things with similar vibrations. It is her perception that human beings' vibrations attract abundance or scarcity to their lives too. Vibrations are contagious. Higher vibrations heal. The artist relates this to reality and the reason why people's sickness subsides when they start listening to their favorite music. "It is because it changes your vibration. And no one vibrating high (love 500 Hz, joy 540 Hz, peace 600 Hz, enlightenment 700 + Hz) wants to kill another human being or eradicate the earth for a selfish need," she underlines.

She also strongly suggests the importance of giving more attention and purposefully associating and thinking about the above concept in any of people's activities. "I want my viewers to consciously sense their vibrations as they see the different colors, sizes, textures, and forms or arrangements found in my artworks. My main target is to get us into an activity of conscious vibration sensing and checking from inside of us," she noted.

The second primary theme the artist explores is "Vibration and Africa." She says, "I do my compositions like my first theme, but I include elements that talk about Africa inside them, most of the time not in a nonrepresentational way in this case."

When Ruth explained the process of doing her current themes, she first cut papers from magazines that she bought or collected. Then she arranges them based on color, texture, and size. On the other hand, she ground papers, let them dry, and did one or multiple of the following, which are: painting, printing, drawing, and coloring, dotting, some sort of marking, and writing. She also tries to create different textures and appearances using different techniques and materials. "Then I start randomly trying different

arrangements on a canvas, MDF board, or paper, sometimes which were initially painted some specific or general color. I attach when I find a satisfying combination."

The composition then develops further based on her intuition and thoughts on art elements and principles. "It can be a texture I saw on something or found on some newly found magazine piece, or it can be a pattern I created later on. I may also make additional marks or apply some pencil colors to the already attached collage pieces. Sometimes I find good compositions accidentally arranged on their own from gathered magazine pieces, my paintings, etc. cut-out papers. I take advantage of this kind of moment too."

The artist also does various composition sketches, usually just using pens and pencils on small papers. Sometimes she uses them as a springboard.

"When it comes to my theme, "Vibration and Africa," I consider the information I gathered and thought of Africa alongside the process I mentioned above. And the concept of "vibration" was something I researched and reflected on mentally for a long time while I was attending my last years at university and after graduation. Even if I didn't stop gathering information or reflecting, I am more focused on the other parts of my art creation and self-learning processes," she adds.

According to Ruth, nonrepresentational art is not that much celebrated in the society we live in and there are still parts of the community who constantly reflect their limited, discouraging opinions on visual art and artists making a life out of it. "Well, don't regard such misconceptions, but I try my best to stay grounded in my beliefs. But there is still so much to do with elevating this industry, and awareness and attitude also contribute." In addition to the misconceptions, she believes that art materials in Addis Ababa have become even more expensive and scarce, which is somehow related to the things she mentioned above. She notes that renting or staying rented in one's studio has its struggles and difficulties too, especially for a woman artist. In general, most of the visual artists she has ever known closely, especially those who are emerging artists are most of the time challenged financially, according to her.

In this case, she also agrees that it is a better time for better self-exposure and also for capturing opportunities if used to one's advantage. "Anyways, I believe it is a matter of process, patience, and also not giving up. I choose to use things that are available and accessible and still keep working instead of giving up at times of financial shortages. And I try to take advantage of it when money is found. There are personal life hardships that cast their shadows on your artistic career too. For that, I pray and read encouraging books, and I try to see how far I have come and also how I tackled obstacles before."

Society

Strengthen national health system through enhancing capacity

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Health professionals affirm that vaccines are one of the most powerful tools in the health care system, playing a crucial role in fighting a number of infectious diseases that are caused by various types of microorganisms, such as germs, bacteria, viruses, fungi, or any other, and in maintaining public health and preventing the spread of infectious diseases.

As part of the efforts carried out to strengthen the health system, Ethiopia has been striving to provide effective services in a bid to produce a healthy, productive human capital. Accordingly, the country is undertaking several activities, joining hands with various governmental and nongovernmental organizations, stakeholders, and partners. Mainly, by expanding vaccine's manufacturing industries and strengthening its capacity to produce vaccines at home, it is working to reduce the burden of infectious diseases and protect public health.

In essence, according to the Ministry of Health, Ethiopia is embarking on an ambitious plan to produce 60 percent of its vaccine demand domestically by 2040 for the reason that manufacturing vaccines locally is an essential step in the nation's health system as it has an inevitable role in arresting infectious diseases through immunizing citizens.

Speaking to the media, State Minister with the Ministry of Health Frehiwot Abebe said that the country is undertaking several works to produce 60 percent of vaccines in the next 16 years.

One of the most important national strategic activities that are being carried out by the government is to increase domestic production including medical resources, and making quality health services fairly accessible to citizens by substituting imported products, she highlighted.

As to the State Minister, the African continent consumes nearly 25 percent of the globally produced vaccines to cover the 99 percent of the supply. Ethiopia also imports 99 percent of the vaccines it requires, she added.

The Ministry of Health is collaborating with relevant stakeholders and partners to capacitate and support manufacturers in the health industry to produce vaccines and health ingredients domestically, she indicated.

Ethiopia has an existing indigenous knowledge and culture of using its natural resources for medicinal purposes. Accordingly, traditional medicine is widely practiced in the country.

Therefore, the Ministry of Health is carrying out multifaceted activities to develop and produce the medicines scientifically through paying strategic attention to research and creating a self-sufficient organization in the sphere, according to the State Minister.

Frehiwot also called upon concerned bodies to strengthen their support, combine this valuable indigenous knowledge with modern medical practices, and turn it into results.



“Setting a target to produce vaccines at home is an encouraging move because it could bring a number of benefits, like job opportunities and saving foreign currency,” said Ayer Tena Health Science and Business College Instructor Mulatu Gebemariam in an exclusive interview held with regard to the nation's ambition to produce immunization nationally.

Aiming to meet 60 percent of its needs for vaccines by producing them at home, Ethiopia is taking a significant step towards ensuring health security. Local vaccine production reduces dependency on global supply chains, which can be disrupted during emergencies and other similar cases, and ensures a more reliable and timely supply of vaccines for the population.

Vaccination is not only beneficial to individuals but also to communities through the concept of herd immunity, a way that a large portion of a community (the herd) becomes immune to a disease, thus making the spread of disease from person to person unlikely. As to him, when a significant portion of the population is immunized, the spread of infectious diseases can be curtailed, protecting those who are not vaccinated, such as individuals with certain medical conditions or those who are too young to be vaccinated.

According to him, providing vaccines has a

number of benefits in preventing disease and saving the lives of children. As vaccines are designed to build immunity against various infectious diseases, they can prevent illness and save lives by stimulating the body's immune system and fighting pathogens. Thus, manufacturing the vaccines at home can meaningfully reduce the burden of infectious diseases and advance the health system, aside from securing hard currency that may be spent for purchasing vaccines.

Diseases such as polio, measles, and whooping cough, which once caused significant morbidity and mortality, have been drastically reduced or even eradicated in many parts of the world due to widespread vaccination.

He furthered that by increasing vaccine coverage, a country can prevent the outbreak of vaccine-preventable diseases, reducing the burden on the healthcare system and saving countless lives. Producing at their own facilities means citizens have access to vaccination and to be vaccinated easily.

Speaking on its economic benefits, Mulatu underlined that vaccination programs offer significant economic benefits because the breadwinner communities who are in the age range of 24–40 could be protected or lower the chance of getting infected with transmittable infectious diseases.

“Preventing diseases through vaccination

reduces healthcare costs associated with treating illnesses. This includes not only direct medical costs but also indirect costs such as productivity loss due to illness or caretaking responsibilities.

Investing in vaccines can also stimulate economic growth by reducing the burden of diseases on communities. Healthy populations are more productive; and children who got vaccinated are more likely to attend school regularly, contributing to better educational outcomes and future economic stability.

Furthermore, vaccination programs often serve as a gateway to other health services, improving access to healthcare and encouraging regular health check-ups and preventive care.

As Ethiopia advances towards this ambition, the importance of producing vaccines in the nation's health system cannot be neglected or overstated. Vaccines are a cornerstone of public health, providing immense benefits that extend beyond individual protection to encompass economic growth, health security, and overall societal well-being, he remarked.

What is more, the production of vaccines demands high technology and a skilled workforce. Above all, it is capital intensive. Thus, pertinent stakeholders, development partners as well as individual investors engaged in the healthcare industry should come together and support the effort, he underlined.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health announced that it will hold the first Domestic Medical Resource Production, Innovation Exhibition from June 22 to 27.

As Health State Minister Frehiwot Abebe stated, at the exhibition organized under the theme ‘Our Health is our products’, more than 150 small, medium and high-end medical equipment manufacturers will display their products.

Law & Politics

Any exclusionist move in the Red Sea risks instability

BY EYUEL KIFLU

In addition to posing security threats, Ethiopia's landlocked status also creates logistical and geographical obstacles in its attempts to access international economic routes. The nation relies on a single Djibouti port for its import and export activities.

The instability of the Red Sea region has especially a direct negative impact on the country because a significant portion of international trade is through the region.

So, the country's push for having sea access is founded on solid rationales. The region is becoming the hub of piracy and other things, and especially in recent years, the instability of the region has worsened. So, the country should protect its property in the region. As well as in collaboration with different countries, it needs to pacify the region's instability.

The region is a powerhouse when it comes to global trade and energy markets. The Red Sea covers around 400,000; it handles a staggering 15% of all international commerce. This includes a remarkable 30% of global container traffic, underscoring its central role in facilitating the movement of goods around the world.

The importance of the region extends beyond general trade; it is also a key player in the global energy arena. Notably, the region handles around 12% of the total global seaborne oil trade, a testament to its status as a critical maritime artery for energy shipments. Additionally, approximately 8% of global liquefied natural gas (LNG) trade now passes through the Red Sea.

So, to pacify the region, it needs collective action, and the dialogue that excludes Ethiopia is not fruitful. The country is working in this regard to prepare a dialogue with different countries' officials and experts. This week also saw the 2nd Red Sea Dialogue held in Addis Ababa, which was prepared by the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA). The dialogue is held under the theme "Regional Consultative Forum on Red Sea Security Dynamics: The Need for Dialogue and Cooperation at a Time of Global Geopolitical Shifts."

In a speech delivered at the occasion, Jefar Bedru, the Executive Director of IFA, emphasized the significance of the Red Sea as a critical global trade route. He stressed the importance of discursive engagement from all stakeholders to address the security challenges in the region.

He highlighted the need for concerned states to carefully craft mechanisms of concerted action to maintain the stability and suitability of the Red Sea and its surrounding area for sustainable peace and development. He underscored the role of forums like this one in bringing together scholars, opinion makers, and policymakers to entertain diverse opinions and produce alternative policies.



Addressing the exclusion of Ethiopia from previous discussions on Red Sea security, he argued that any regional or continental institution established to address the issues of the region must reflect the interests of Ethiopia. He emphasized Ethiopia's proximity to the Red Sea, its economic and demographic significance, and its historical presence in the region, making it a significant player.

Jefar also discussed the recent Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland to advance Ethiopia's presence in the Gulf of Aden. He believes this MOU is a step towards regional integration, sustainable development, and prosperity.

He added that the regional consultative forum organized by the IFA aimed to address four key issues: the changing security environment in the Red Sea and its impact on Ethiopia and the region; access to the sea and port analysis; opportunities for collaboration among Red Sea states and beyond; and exploring models of regional cooperation and best practices from other maritime regions.

Ambassador Eshete Tilahun, Director General of Europe and American Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, highlighted the immense significance of the Red Sea region for global trade.

He stated that around 15% of the world's annual trade, worth approximately one trillion dollars, passes through this strategic waterway. However, he expressed concern about the current tensions in the region, which have led to a 50% drop in goods transported through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait and the Suez Channel.

Addressing the challenges, the ambassador emphasized Ethiopia's advocacy for a collective and multilateral approach

to make the region peaceful. He called for the establishment of a collective security mechanism to pacify the region and recalled Ethiopia's successful peacekeeping missions in various locations and times—these experiences in the country support stabilizing the region.

He stressed that the future prosperity of the Red Sea region depends on the ability of all stakeholders to work together, fostering a spirit of mutual respect. He expressed his wish for the region to achieve lasting peace and development through this collective engagement.

This kind of regional consultative forum provided a platform for policymakers, experts, and regional representatives to discuss the evolving security dynamics in the Red Sea and explore collaborative solutions to address the pressing challenges.

In addition to its importance for economic strategy, the Red Sea region is a focus for security issues. Zerubabel Getachew (PhD), a senior diplomat and international security researcher at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated as much.

Additionally, he said that food shortages in the Middle East and Africa are made worse by maritime instability, which impacts the most vulnerable communities. The economic significance of safeguarding the Red Sea is highlighted by the considerable expense of rerouting ships throughout Africa. Ethiopia's direct participation in the area thus presents a chance to improve security cooperation and eliminate risks.

Israeli security researcher Yuval Eylon, speaking at the dialogue, reiterated the need for increased security cooperation in response to growing terrorist threats across the Red Sea.

The economic significance of safeguarding the Red Sea is highlighted by the considerable expense of rerouting ships throughout Africa



Ephrem Endale
Contributor

Between you & me

'Conflict' Catches You... if You Allow it to!

A guy we know goes to this place as part of a peacemaking group to try to stitch up a friendship that was supposed to remain strong and intact for eternity. The two guys weren't only best friends. They have moved beyond that and were like flesh and bone brothers. However for reasons both didn't want to tell things started going wrong after decades of the strongest, the purest of friendships. Things didn't come as one big "Bang!" The breakup was a slow process as things went from bad to worse away from the eyes of even the closet family members of both. The story here is that both never showed their fast declining feelings for each other in public. Maybe things would have continued getting worse indefinitely had it not been for someone who sees them arguing like hell at a corner table in a very deserted bar. All he needed to suspect that all was not well was witnessing their physical actions with hands flying all over the place. However he had no idea what it was all about because, to their credit, they kept their voices low even in times of sizzling emotions. So this guy spills what he saw. Then, as they say, one thing leads to the other and to the shock of many the real story of a friendship on the rocks becomes public knowledge.

So members of the group mentioned above manage to get the approval of both to talk face to face in their presence. Mind you, no one in the group still had any idea of the real reason tearing apart the friendship. Maybe the group would have managed to stitch a tear or two had it not been for a happening for which they weren't ready; both came with their wives! This

guy we know tells us, completely turned around the narratives. The talking was done by the wives both of them acting like angry tigresses. Still there was so much name-calling and the 'we-the-victims-narrative' it was impossible to understand what led to all this bad blood. One member of the group manages to call the names of the friends and asking them, "We want to hear what you two have to say." That did it! Both wives go into the nuke mode and turn their guns towards members of the group. The guy telling us the story said as middle-aged as he was he doesn't remember any time in his life being called all the names the two ladies threw at him and members of the group. And even as the ladies downloaded the shocking volume of insults on the peacemakers the two guys remain mute.

"We went to resolve the conflict between our friends and ended up diving into conflicts ourselves!" That's what the visibly offended fellow told us. The story gets even more bizarre by the minute. One of the peacemakers was so enraged by the insults of one of the ladies he says, "We came here to try to resolve the problem between our two friends not to be insulted. We aren't kids and you shouldn't call us such names. On my part I'm very offended by what you're saying." Now you would think that would have mellowed the two wives. Alas, that never happened! In fact both start accusing the group members of being jealous of their hubbies! What the hell was going on! Only the wives, and maybe their hubbies knew. But group members had had enough and just got up and

practically rushed without much goodbyes.

What happens later? Well the two friends refused to answer the phones of group members and one said he didn't want to talk them ever again. What was wrong that the peacemakers did? Why is it that they were subjected to so much abuse by the wives while the main parties in the conflict chose to remain silent.

Why is it that these days it's so easy to find yourself in some conflict for which you weren't ready and couldn't even tell why it happened! I mean, think about it, could anything be more frustrating than being entangled in some conflict even though you did nothing wrong. Now the foursome was trying to do what real friends should have done and look where they ended up. I mean it robs you of the confidence that you might be able to mend a troubled friendship or marriage using the power of conviction. Well, the world seems to have stopped working that way.

These days you don't have to go out looking for conflicts. It finds you on the most unlikely of places in the most unlikely of circumstances. Look at the doormen, or, to be politically correct, the security personnel at the gates of enterprises. These people, believe me, is a very interesting species. Their behaviors and treatment of customers could be so divers and so far apart sliding to the extremes of human behaviors you sometimes wonder how they actually train them. Just to enquire as innocently as possible, we are forced to ask "Are the extremes in customer handling part of their training manuals!"

Anyways you go to their big enterprise and offer yourself for frisking.

"Where are you going?" You tell the no-nonsense doorman to which office you are going.

"He is not in." the finality in their voices when they talk could turn your blood ice cold.

"Then I have to give these documents to his secretary. They're important."

"I said he's not in!" You could the sense "Get lost, or else!" loud and clear.

"But these are very important documents. If I don't hand them in today..."

"Go away! Do you think we don't know the likes of you crooks?"

What! Did he just call you a crook? Yes, he did. Don't try any 'Rambo' or 'The Punisher' Hollywood-tuned confrontation. Just keep your cool and inform what happened to your superiors. Of course many of these heavyweights would do nothing much than telling you to take it easy and that the doormen were overworked. There, dear readers, conflict you didn't call catches you by the collar. So the smart thing to do is keep one's cool and refrain from impulses which might lead you to the ugliest of scenarios. You don't deserve it. Most of the time it's better to sleep over it as the cool and comfortably at ease mind could do wonders. Let your mind do the wonders while you tame your emotions. Otherwise, I don't think conflict would let go of your collar anytime soon.

Is GREED Driving Price Increase?

We were rushing from one side to the other trying to board minibuses going to home or other places. It is Saturday midday and the crowd rush is like you've never seen it before. The aids to the chauffeurs of minibuses, who in their own ways are kings and five star generals throw the verbal abuses at almost everybody irrespective of age and gender, pull and push potential passengers, set illegal exorbitant fares seeing the rush all around them and go away with all they do. The most telling action of the inhuman when it comes to chauffeurs and their aids they increase the fare by fifty, sixty or even hundred percent in the worst cases. And most of the times they go away with it.

The outstanding issue here is our urge to capitalize on the discomfort of others. Believe me when you see the elderly and the frail being abused mostly by urchins who are barely out of their teens and seem to lack proper upbringing. You feel sad knowing that you can probably do nothing about it. Things in many parts could be dangerously fluid in that when you try to assure your rights the responses could be so crude and cruel. In fact the common response to your, "I know my rights..." would be laughter. Yes laughter which could send the deepest stabs all over your anatomy and you'd actually feel the pain.

Now these sudden and unjustified price increases have become so common the question remains, "Where are the keepers whose job should be making sure the public is protected from the selfish and greedy acts of any in the business community.

Prices, prices, prices! Could there be any

more important agenda at a time when every cent and birr you part with matters. Price increases could mean going to bed hungry for entire families; Price increases could be being unable to cover even mediocre medical bills; Price increases could mean keeping the tatted and practically useless jacket on your shudders with no idea when you can financially manage to replace it. Until that happens you have to do with the merciless heat of a very cruel and the chill of an equally notorious winter; Price increases could mean turmoil in households as many times disagreements arise as to what should be the priorities. Though couples don't dispute the price increases and the financial strains they bring about the stories could be different when it comes to priorities. Price increases mean families suddenly unable to send their kids to private schools. This means that they firstly have to search for government schools willing enough to take in their kids. This is not as easy as it sounds. With the student population swelling as it is there the question of overcrowding and government school could find it hard to take in more than they could accommodate. Then there is the psychological readiness of the kids themselves in making the transitions. It is not a question of quality of the education offered but about belongingness. Making new friends and getting acquainted with the new surroundings and atmosphere one isn't familiar with could take time and perseverance. Price increases mean already charted out projects which were being readied for launch have to be scrapped.

So when we talk about price increases we're not talking only about the costs of items

and services but also about the minor and major earthquakes individually or within households and communities.

In the old days we used to talk about many truthful business people who seldom try to capitalize on the vulnerabilities of others. And we even had names to propose. "You should go Ato so and so's shop. He never makes unnecessary and unjustified price increases and he never tries to cheat his customers. On one side many of such people being spiritually strong and uncompromising their actions aren't led only based on earthly public anger but also on the heavenly response they might generate. They don't want to anger God as that would mean the gates of heaven would slam in their faces and all they have been praying almost their entire lives would go down the drain. Believe me they would do anything to avoid such endings to their lives.

On the other hand there were those who led their lives on principles 'carved in stone' and they would do nothing which would jeopardize their principled lives. I'm not saying that these days there aren't the spiritually strong and also those who lead their lives based on principles and principles only in the business community. Not at all! Such carpet bombing would be not only unfair but also unhelpful. The only thing is that such people aren't very easy to find as they probably must have been during previous times when reputations mattered. I mean there were times when reputations really mattered and people did their best to prevent their names from being dragged in the dust.

Most of us believe that the quest for getting

filthy rich as soon as possible has taken many of the tracks and everything is about boosting bank accounts as fast as possible. And the talk of the town is many manage to do so. Such scenarios lead us to conclude lives based on principles are becoming things of the past. But then though the numbers could be minimal there still could be business people who try to be fair and principled in treating customers and the larger public.

So, when price increases are neither fair nor justified economic considerations but about greed of the foulest kind, it is the public that suffers the brunt of the aftereffects. And unfortunately price increases have become not only common but many times drastic amounts you wonder if things would be improved anytime soon. The days when you choose the things you want to buy and allot the correct amount of funds seem to be on the way out if things continue at the present pace. By the time you hit the traditional marketplaces, the supermarkets and the neighborhood shops the prices of five of the seven at times you planned to purchase might have gone up. The only thing you can do in such other than keeping your cool to save your gastritis from going berserk is to eliminate the least important items. Remember, the seven items were supposed to be the most important items! Unfortunately this world of ours isn't nice enough as to allow you to have your every wish. When greed drives price increases you can't tell where things start going to lower gears and where the red light draws nearer.

Believe me, when greed drives price increases we need the red light! And pronto, too!

In Pictures

National Dialogue enters new chapter

BY DARGIE KAHSAY



ENDC agenda-gathering opening session in Addis Ababa

The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) organized the first agenda-gathering session of the national dialogue process in Addis Ababa on Wednesday, this week. More than 2,000 participants representing diverse communities in the metropolis attended the session.

According to ENDC the participants represented diverse communities of the metropolis, such as farmers, business community, women, youths, Edir, elders, civil servants, teachers, people living with disability, among others.

Religious Elders, fathers open National Dialogue agenda-gathering session with blessing

The ENDC's agenda gathering session in Addis Ababa was started with the blessings of religious fathers and elders of the metropolis. The religious fathers and the elders started the session with blessings and called up on the participants to fulfill their responsibilities as they become part of this critical national agenda.

Addis Ababa's agenda gathering dialogue is ongoing at Adwa Victory Memorial in the presence of participants meticulously identified from all corners of the community.



Participants' identifying agendas in group discussion

Following the overall discussion and briefings, participants of the agenda-gathering session of the national dialogue in Addis Ababa sat in groups to identify the agendas of the community they represent. The pictures show participants discussing to identify major issues of their community.



Metropolis elected 121 representatives for the National Dialogue

During the national dialogue's agenda-gathering session of Addis Ababa, more than 2,000 representatives who attended the session elected 121 representatives who will be represent the capital in the national dialogue.

The elected representatives will join other participants from regions and other stakeholders for a national dialogue to be conducted at national level to troubleshoot the problems of the country. The above picture shows participants of the agenda-gathering session electing representatives of the capital for the national dialogue.



Inclusiveness of the national dialogue

Making the national dialogue inclusive, both in representation and in entertaining diverse views is a must to achieve the goal. ENDC is working and committed to making the national dialogue inclusive and is working to see to every segment of society represented and participate in the national dialogue.

Youths, physically disable people, women, businesses community, elders, farmers, government and private companies' employees and other community members were represented in the session.

