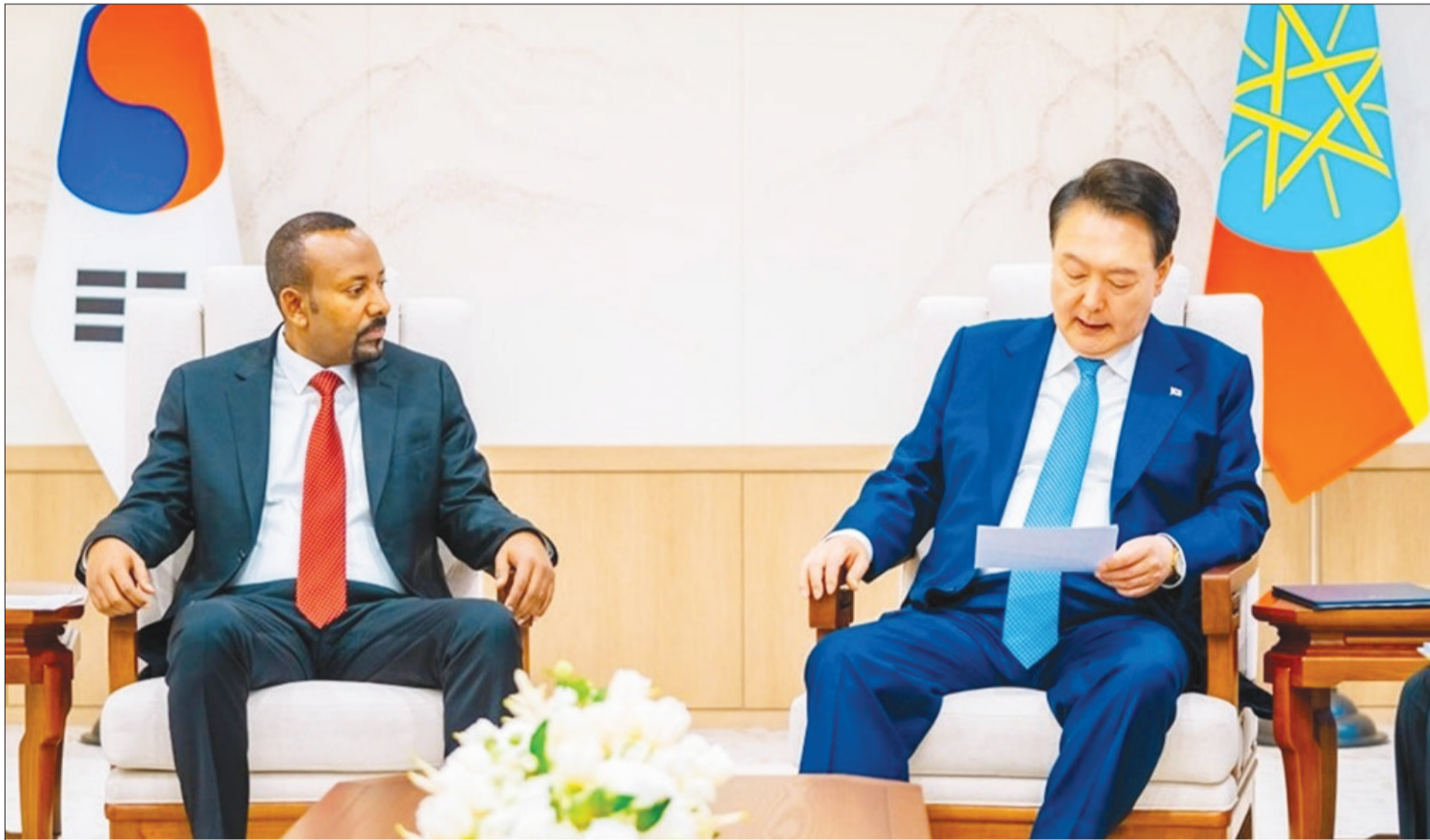




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# Ethiopia,

## South Korea vow to bolster ties

• Ink 1 billion USD financing framework agreement

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia and South Korea have agreed to consolidate bilateral economic cooperation as leaders of the two

talked in Seoul ahead of the Korea-Africa summit.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) and his South Korean counterpart President Yoon Suk Yeol have talked on the two countries

bilateral relations and expressed commitment to bolster economic cooperation.

Abiy who arrived in Seoul on the second of

See Ethiopia, ... page 3

## Participants weigh on political parties' partake in Nat'l Dialogue

• Push to make agenda-gathering ensure common good

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA - Cognizant of their due role for the success of the National Dialogue, contending political parties that have been excluding themselves should join the agenda gathering consultation phase, participants said.

Approached by the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), an executive member of the Ezema Party GirmaSefiu emphasized the need for political parties that have not taken part in the dialogue to join the process.

According to Girma, who is also the Head of Addis Ababa Investment Bureau, contending political parties that have not yet involved in the historic process are expected to leave their footprints as it may take long to get similar opportunity.

The politician further noted that political parties could submit their

See Participants ... page 3



Zemedeneh Negatu

## Gov't takes big stake in private sector's growing economic share

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA - The government has been formulating viable policies that prioritize the private sector's economic engagement

See Gov't takes ... page 3

## Ethiopia commits to fostering startup ecosystems

• To host 2024 Continental Startup Awards

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia remains committed to strengthen floods of emerging startups encompassing technology and innovation to expedite the socioeconomic development aspirations, the Deputy Prime Minister said.

The Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen Tiruneh made the above remark yesterday while opening the prestigious Ethiopian startup awards event organized by the Ministry of Labor and Skills (MoLS) in partnership with the Global Startup Awards

in the presence of senior government officials, development partners among many dignitaries.

Temesgen further remarked that the government has been heeding prime attention to initiatives which are firmly believed as engines for development through spearheaded initiatives thereby garnering global recognitions.

He said: "Following the reform, the government along with other stakeholders has been supporting and amplifying efforts

See Ethiopia commits ... page 3



# News

## Aviation security reforms contributing to ensure safety: NISS

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

**ADDIS ABABA** – The comprehensive institutional aviation sector reforms have contributed to ensure aviation safety, said the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS).

The NISS in collaboration with the Ethiopian Civil Aviation Authority (ECAA) and others stakeholders has launched hosting the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) universal security audit program-continuous monitoring approach (USAP-CMA) yesterday.

Speaking at the occasion, the NISS Deputy Director and Chairperson of National Civil Aviation Technical Committee SisayTolasaid that Ethiopia prioritizes sustainable growth while uploading the highest standard of aviation security considering as part of national security endeavors.

He stated that the country has been investing



in infrastructure, cutting - edge technologies and others to detect the potential threat.

The international and regional collaboration remains critical to ensure aviation safety, he said, adding that the comprehensive institutional reforms in aviation security sector contributed to establish the organizational structure and allocating

appropriate leadership that is responsible and accountable.

As to him, Ethiopian Airlines achieved a significant role in aviation landscape in Africa for handling around 14 million passengers annually and managing the special cargos creating an extensive network with 46 countries worldwide.

Sisay noted that the country has been expanding more airports so as to accommodate more than 100 million passengers annually. Hence, the NISS has a commitment to provide the highest security services as per international standards.

For his part, the NISS Civil Aviation Security Director General Asrat Keje lastated that the country has been providing significant regular capacity building, equipment and technology and training for security officers to ensure effective aviation security measures.

Moreover, he said, it requires developing sufficient manpower to the effective execution of aviation security operation.

He further stated that Ethiopia is always committed to ensure international standards and best practices since a sustainable aviation security system requires standards in investments regarding infrastructure development, training, technologies and others.



## ECSU featuring specialty in conducting research

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA** - Ethiopian Civil Service University (ECSU) announced that it has seen a significant improvement in research conducting capacity since its designation as a research university.

During the opening of its 9<sup>th</sup> National Research Conference on Public Sector Transformation and Development, University President, Professor Fikre Desalegn highlighted that all research papers presented at the conference focuses on public service delivery and policy implementation performance within government institutions.

"ECSU has a specialty in conducting research on government administration issues and services. Our mandate is to make recommendations to government institutions based on our research findings. It is expected that institutions will voluntarily implement these recommendations," he stated.

The conference featured research on various topics, including government policy implementation in poverty reduction, public service delivery, public servants' capacity, technological development related to economic issues, and other fundamental government institutional performances.

"For instance, research on public servants' capacity revealed that a significant number of government employees with degree certificates require further training. ECSU is prepared to provide this training, pending institutional agreements," Prof. Fikre noted.

He also mentioned that ECSU is in the initial preoperational stage of becoming autonomous.

"The University will be fully autonomous in four years, allowing it to manage academic and administrative matters independently and with full responsibility," he emphasized.

## Reform supports DBE to achieve remarkable success

• *Bank records 4 bln Birr profit in nine-month*

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDISABABA** - Reforms conducted in the past five years have enabled Development Bank of Ethiopia (DBE) reduce bad credit and increase total capital to 39.7 billion Birr.

Presenting the nine month work performance and the five year implementation plan of the bank to the Public Development Enterprises Affairs standing committee of the parliament, DBE's CEO Yohannes Ayalew (PhD) said yesterday that the bank has been conducting various reforms, particularly in the past five years, to improve the service provision and maximize customers' satisfaction.

He mentioned that the total capital of the bank was reduced from 7.5 billion Birr before the reform and the accumulation of bad credit was reached 57.1%.

However, he said, the total capital of the bank has now reached 39.7 billion Birr and the bad credit is also reduced to 7.8 % at present, which is attributed to the government's injection of 21.8 billion Birr along with the bank's endeavor.

The bank has secured 4 billion Birr profit in the past nine months thereby it has planned to reduce the bad credit to 2 % in the future, he expressed.

According to him, funds from development partners, Ministry of Finance and bond sale are the alternative financial sources of the bank.

He further stated that the bank has been providing capacity building training apart



Yohannes Ayalew (PhD)

from finance loan provision to maximize the mutual benefit of the people and itself.

Though the bank strives to address various challenges, lack of adequate foreign currency, infrastructure limitation, skilled human power gap, sporadic conflict, and the likes are serious problems hindering DBE to register better performance, he disclosed.

Yohannes noted that the bank succeeded 91.7% of its plan in terms of returning loan in the past nine months of this fiscal year.

Similarly, the bank in cooperation with the World Bank, has provided training for 123,278 small and middle level enterprises' trainees, he mentioned.

"Depending on the field, the bank provides loan with low interest (20 Years) 7%, 13%, and 11.5% loan to agriculture, industry, and middle level enterprises," he stated.

Moreover, the bank has drawn important lesson from Brazil, South Korea, China, and Singapore in order to modernize its service supported by technology, he added.

# News

## Ethiopia commits to...

in a bid to enhancing innovative ideas and new ways of thinking to tailor new business models."

So far, the country has convened chains of startup events and exhibitions, thus fetching valuable experiences that help address possible setbacks witnessed in the sector, the DPM said.

Aside from promoting creativity, startups have also huge contributions towards creating national and global business interconnections and accelerating the country's foreign direct investment, Temesgen remarked stressing the need to promoting further cooperation.

The successfulness of Ethiopian youth would have a decisive significance for continental destiny, he added.

Mentioning the emergence of the startup trends across the continent, he emphasized that the ecosystem requires continental consolidated efforts for mutual economic growth.

Emphasizing the government's unwavering commitment to be on the vanguards of the initiative, he said that it will be among the priorities to glorify and lift up Ethiopia to a highest position.

On her part, MoLS Minister Muferihat Kamil stated that as part of Ethiopia's ten-year strategic plan, the ministry has been vigorously employing innovation and entrepreneurship in a streamlined manner, and bearing fruits as well.

Given to its immense untapped potentials and skills, the minister this kind of event would be of a significant milestone to facilitate, explore, capacitate and harness the emerging startups via mentorship, training and capacity building to spur global connectivity as well.

Moreover, she said the country highly requires knowledge-led innovative solutions for resilient economic development and Pan-Africanism spirit promotion.

She said: "This event also connects African fellows together which help address frame ideal solutions for African solutions for African problems in reality."

It was learnt that about 731 Ethiopian startups has involved in the 2023 completion. And among them 68 were selected

to get participate in the coming 2024 global startup competition.

It was also indicated at the occasion that Ethiopia is set to host the 2024 continental startup awards in October.

## Ethiopia, South Korea vow to...

June 2024 for an official working visit has also reaffirmed Ethiopia's commitment to work together with South Korea to further enhance partnership between the two countries.

He expressed views on social media mentioning that the two countries share a long history spanning over six decades, rooted in Ethiopia's support during the Korean War.

"I am confident that we will work together to further enhance our partnership," Abiy wrote.

According to Ethiopian Ambassador to South Korea, Dessie Dalkie, the Premier's state visit to Seoul helps to transform the bilateral relations into a new chapter.

He said that the visit is an important incident to initiate new cooperation and consolidate the existing friendship between the two as the leaders have expressed commitment to deepening cooperation in various areas including finance, trade and investment, technology, and agricultural development among others.

Efforts are also underway to bolster the two

nations' ties in people to people relations, culture, education and tourism, Dessie added.

On Sunday, Ethiopia and South Korea also signed a 1 billion USD financing framework agreement, which would help to foster the economic relation.

According to Finance Minister Ahmed Shide, the agreement is a demonstration for the commitment of the two countries to reinforce economic cooperation.

He stated that the financing framework agreement targets projects related to infrastructural development, science and technology, capacity building, health and urban development that would be implemented in the next four years.

So far, the Prime Minister with his delegation, has laid a wreath at the monument of Ethiopian veterans of the Korean War who fought alongside South Korean and United Nations forces.

During his stay, Abiy and his ministerial delegation, will participate in the Korea-

Africa Summit, that will be held today and tomorrow, under the theme: "The Future We Make Together: Shared Growth, Sustainability, and Solidarity."

Ambassador Dessie described the summit as a historic event for offering good opportunity for African countries to learn more about Korea's economic development experience.

"I hope, both side expand cooperation," he told Korean media.

Considering the geographic and historic importance, and huge population, Ethiopia is at the center of Korea-Africa economic cooperation, he said, adding that the advanced connectivity backed by well-developed transportation contributes to the improvement of the bilateral cooperation.

The bilateral relations between the two nations was began in 1951 following Ethiopia's participation in the Korean War alongside the South Korean and UN soldiers and this incident also initiated Korea's relationship with Africa, according to the Ambassador.

## Gov't takes big stake in...

and pave the way for a competitive business environment, a noted economic expert said. Global Chairman of Fairfax Africa Fund Zemedeneh Negatu told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the country is carrying out policy shifts to break up the monopolistic business model to competitive approach and to materialize economic stability.

The formulation of a viable policy framework is also a significant milestone that has played a huge role in Ethiopia's economic transformation and building a vibrant private sector.

Zemedeneh, an economist by profession, further noted that the country has untapped investment opportunities in agriculture, technology, infrastructure and other priority sectors that could lure the attention of foreign companies.

Commending the government's commitment to maximize the economic role of the private sector, he underscored that financial policy change is also critical to reverse the old model of easy money-profit making to a value added economic model. "Ethiopia has an untapped productive market potential,

growing local market and affordable labor cost to attract private investment in the manufacturing industry."

Citing various countries' development experiences as benchmark, the economist stressed the need to strengthen the Public-Private-Partnership scheme as a key to enhance the product and productivity of the manufacturing sector and help it to grow from the current early stage of development. "Ethiopia also requires a well-articulated education system and industrialization and infrastructure are also the hugely-contributing factors for a stabilized macroeconomic environment, to arrest the soaring inflations and help foreign investors to make the right decision.

According to Zemedeneh, the government is taking bold steps with various initiatives including the 'Let Ethiopia produce' movement in a bid to attract foreign investors' involvement in Ethiopia's economy and pave the way for private sector development, promote import substitution and foreign exchange earnings.

In the same vein, the National Bank of

Ethiopia is also working tirelessly to ensure macroeconomic stability and to bring down inflation and promote access to foreign exchange.

The allocation of 80 percent of financial loans for private businesses demonstrated the government's priority for the private sector development. "Here, it is also highly required to encompass national champions in the manufacturing sector as part of the government strategy."

Furthermore, the emerging capital market and stock exchange would also be critical for the private sector to get adequate financing securities and financing, the economist emphasized.

According to information obtained from the IMF, Ethiopia has the fifth largest GDP in Africa and third among sub-Saharan African countries.

He attributed Ethiopia's remarkable GDP growth to the government's immense engagement to widen the economic space for the private sector's engagement and create the playfields for a stable macroeconomic environment.

## Participants weigh on political parties'...

agenda through possible alternatives to the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) which makes them available to concerned bodies.

Commending efforts which are being exerted to open a new chapter in Ethiopia's history through the National Dialogue, he stressed that knowing what agenda is going to be tabled is a huge step by itself. Political parties have organized their agendas through the agenda gathering consultation phase.

"The process that the ENDC has gone so far is an achievement; however, utmost efforts need to be put for the successful realization of the dialogue."

Political parties need to take the opportunity to reflect their opinions on Ethiopia's major issue. Thus, they are expected to join the National Dialogue or send their agenda to the commission through different platforms, Girmaemphasized.

Sharing the above rationale, Representative from Public Figures MergiyaBekele stated the holistic participation of every stakeholder is critical to make the National Dialogue a success. The agenda gathering consultation phase would serve as a prerequisite for having a common agenda on major issues that are needed to address at the National Dialogue.

Mergiya also stated that individual and joint efforts that have been exerting to address

the age-long contentious problems though the process have failed to address the gaps at grass root level.

"The way to resolve the challenges is through all inclusive participation of the public in the dialogue. Thus, the first phase of agenda gathering would play an essential role in presenting well-structured agenda that are vital to unity in this regard."

Despite the fact that participants are expressing their opinion without any reservation, they need to be willing to sacrifice their personal needs for the sake of maintaining the nation for the future generation, the representative stressed.

Individuals, political parties, and the

government will pass on and only a nation could sustain forever. Therefore, we need to prioritize the well-being of the nation and put aside our personal aspirations for the sake of the entire nation.

"While the government shoulders the prime responsibility to implement the National Dialogue's outcomes, all representatives and participants need to underline that Ethiopia is their common denominator and everything comes after a nation."

Emphasizing that only little has been done in sensitizing the society, Mergiyaindicated that media institutions have huge responsibility in carrying out awareness raising activities about the National Dialogue.

# Opinion

## Difficulties of building consensus, means to come up with solution

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Building consensus is an effective means of conflict resolution. Because of the inbuilt social composition, the nature of power relations in the country is subjected to social interests. But, the individual interests within political parties and groups may not allow for consensus building. Instead of building sporadic group consensus, a reform may be needed to reach an all inclusive means of reaching an agreement. Preparation to the national dialogue underway in Ethiopia will pave the way for the agreement.

Also, there is need for the crafting of an ideology which will facilitate the cohesion of people with divergent origins in the country. The assimilation and association of people with a political ideology is instrumental in managing power relations with minimum conflict and maximized consensus. Though consensus is a traditional concept, it has been instrumental in settling current political disputes and skirmishes. It is used for making dialogue on peace using cultural affinity, attractions and empathy.

The culture of peace and stability encourages consensus building within communities immersed in conflicts. The building of consensus is supposed to create an approach to be adopted by Ethiopian communities. They aspire for resolving some of the intractable social conflicts they are entangled with. In a few cases, the resolution of these conflicts takes time. Consensus is, therefore, a mechanism that is derivable from the culture of conflict resolution. Currently, it is a product of skills used by elders in conflict resolution.

In case of serious regional social conflicts, international negotiators and mediators are recruited to settle disputes within and between countries. This mechanism was applied during the negotiations for peace at the end of some of the long civil wars in some African countries. Consensus building is applied in resolving some of the current ethnic, tribal or religious wars and conflicts in the continent. It is believed that consensus building will provide the cornerstone for building peace in conflict areas and zones.

Social scientists think that consensus building is sufficiently suitable to varieties of the political processes in Africa, including Ethiopia, in which conflicts are rising. In relation to this situation, a number of NGOs dedicated to “consensus advocacy” are operating with the prospect of generating peace. Most of these organizations have solicited funding from international agencies to organize

meetings, seminars and workshops, and conduct dialogue for consensus building. They also ought to support processes of dialogue in action such as in the case of Ethiopia.

Policy revision might be essential in some situations. In Rwanda, for example, the educational curriculum has been reformulated with the goal of reintegrating students into the communities. In so doing, they begin to cultivate attitudes that may create the environment for consensus building in their communities. By the time these students take leadership of their society and country, they may create an environment for peaceful coexistence.

Researchers have studied the positive outcomes of consensus advocacy in countries infested with conflicts. Their studies exposed that the type of power struggle at the level of the State in Africa does not succumb to consensus as a tool for conflict resolution. However, the dialogue and consensus strategy, which does not take the State at the centre, will have little chance of success.

In other words, most of the conflicts in Africa are politically motivated, even when they seem to be religious. The reason is that most of these conflicts are generated by the struggle for access to political power. In this situation, the effort to build consensus becomes futile and worthless. Political scientists, therefore, analyze the relations of power, conflict and consensus in relation with political rivalry at the level of the State. They are convinced that at the level of the State, political parties are dominant and remain the major actors in Africa. They also believe that these parties do not seem to accept consensus. The political scientists seem to have reached a conclusion that the approaches applied by some governments, international agencies and NGOs may not achieve results without dialogue and advocacy. In such cases, national dialogue will be the way out.

Conflicts may also be created by differences in socio-cultural traditions, personal beliefs or ideologies. According to Louis Kriesberg, “Constructive conflicts” (2006), conflicts may have many dimensions including ethnic, religious, cultural, economic, political and ideological, social, and others. Conflicts also involve open clashes between social forces with incompatible differences of goals. It is believed that social conflict is the most creative force that leads to a change.

Political scientists assert that societies and social groups are tied together “not by consensus” but by constraint, not by agreements but by coercion. The value system is mostly that of the ruling party and not that of the common people. There

is no need for general acceptance by the citizens. Any conflict may generate change, but “constraints” may lead to conflicts, creating a vicious circle. It is believed that conflicts are created wherever human beings formed social organizations. Social scientists assert that constraints create issues that lead to conflicts.

However, for those supporting “consensus advocacy” some conflicts may be resolved through building consensus.

By its nature, consensus represents stability, harmony and equilibrium in society. Like in the national dialogue, it covers a broad agreement which does embrace the majority, involving unity, identity and coordination. It also refers to a collective opinion revealing acceptance of a “middle ground” in an issue of general importance. Thus, it is a position of “no winner, no loser” or “no victor, no vanquished.” It represents a “give and take” situation, which may be used in many difficult socio-political crises and conflicts in Africa, including Ethiopia.

The conflict resolution strategy views individual or group relationships in all structures of power. But, the consensus building strategy emphasizes the predominance of legitimate authority in the society. This strategy takes power as dependant on consensus, specifically referring to the absence of the use of overt physical force. The strategists believe that the proper functioning of society regulates the individual conduct. This is guaranteed by the “incentive or threat” of sanctions.

It is argued that the possibility of imposing sanctions on individuals or groups is the real source of power. It is also believed that established customs are nothing but ruling standards or laws. These are defended by the endorsing and authorizing agencies within the society and those who control them. But, the law is the command of the sovereign, which is enforced by the ruling class. This reveals the structure of power in the society that determines the extent to which consensus or conflict is permitted.

Since power is at the hand of the people that elects its representatives to make decisions on behalf of them for the sake of the people’s good and mutual interest, those in the ruling position should be obedient for the people’s interest. They should act in the way they maintain peaceful coexistence of the general public.

The inability to reconcile consensus and conflict at all levels of society is the root cause of social problems. Yet, both conflict and consensus do exist in the same society at all times. Political scientists think that the consensus and conflict debate is not an “empirical debate” and cannot be resolved through empirical investigation.

But, political scientists give emphasis to structure of power that is expressed at the level of the current state of the society.

The question is whether there is more consensus or conflict in the society at a particular point in time. The experts use terms like “crisis, conflict, war,” which are all connected with the structure and struggle for power. As observed by these experts, the situations which attract open and hidden uses of force do not accommodate consensus as a serious political option. This is related to the nature of political power itself, which is the root cause of most issues resulting in conflicts.

The major difficulties of building consensus to resolve social conflicts are essentially ideological in their nature. Political contenders use ideology as a strategy to access and maintain power. Efforts are made to internalize constructive and guiding principles in the attainment of power. These enable politicians to take control of the society and develop knowledge and expertise about it. Here, nationalism is used as the ruling ideology for African states, including Ethiopia.

According to Antonio Gramsci, 1971, nationalism refers to collective feelings and identities, emotions, behavior, and values which develop the spirit of nationhood above all other political elements and characteristics. It involves common beliefs and common goal of one people in the country. Political experts observe that there are sub-cultures, which remains a common cultural value which binds the people of a single nationhood. Their attitudes, beliefs and behavior become influenced by that common cultural value. Nationalism is evolved and built by nation-builders who surface with the values.

The values of the emergent leadership become higher and dominant in Africa, including Ethiopia. They may be accepted by the people anywhere any time. Consequently, both the leadership and the people stand to maintain and defend their values. In several cases this development may be related to the idea of building control by the people through the national ideology of democratic processes. However, critical to the success of national ideology is that the ideology has to be indigenous.

Thus, applying customary dispute resolution mechanisms and the long lasted dialogue culture in Ethiopia will positively help its people to come to common grand narration instead of sticking on individuals’ or groups’ narratives.

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

# Editorial

## Spearheading Africa-Korea relations

Ethiopia-Korean ties has a historical base dating back to the 1950s. The five successive Ethiopia's Kagenew Battalions sacrificed and contributed to the reigning of peace in the Korean Peninsula deployed under the United Nations Command in Korea. Ethiopia has been fulfilling its responsibility to maintain international peace and security since the Korean War.

The noble sacrifice and contribution during the Korean War was a historical pivot that laid the foundation for strong, nascent ties between South Korea and Africa.

It is worth noting that South Korea honors Ethiopia and the soldiers of the Imperial Body Guard who were deployed there, as well as those who lost their lives during the war, by building a memorial park. Even more than that, Korea is also working to reciprocate this historical price by upholding the relations in various sectors.

A very important issue that the two sides should bolster is that there are a lot of things that Africans can emulate from Korea in their pursuit of economic and cultural advancement. Historical records indicate that by the time many African countries achieved their independence from colonialists, they maintained close economic conditions and relative economic standing with each other. But the diverse global crisis, and pressures from the West had their toll on Africa, which rendered the continent so poor, fragile and dependent on them, while throughout the time Korea found its way out of the dire situation.

Therefore, it is time for the two sides to get closer and work more on bolstering their cooperation as the two sides have lots of values that they can share or exchange for a shared bright future. Korea can assist Africa in technology, just to mention a few.

Despite the developmental challenges that it suffers from at the moment, Africa still thrives as a land of remarkable potential for collaboration in social and economic fields. As a result of its attractive potential, it is now beefing up its ties with various economic giants of the world in different corners. The African Continental Free trade Area (AfCFTA) was launched with the goal of achieving a single market of 1.3 billion Africans. Korea can go at an equal pace with the rest of the world in cementing its partnership with Africa in both helping the continent speed up the implementation of AfCFTA as well as making the best of it.

The Korea-Africa Summit, where Ethiopia is a key player, can be taken as an opportune event to pave the way for the effective engagement of the two sides in mutually beneficial activities.

Alongside Korea's endeavor to boost its ties with the entire continent, the effort that it is making to consolidate development assistance is worth gratifying. According to data obtained from the Office of the Prime Minister's social media post, the Korean government has signed a finance package of 1 billion USD for cooperation projects between the two countries that are going to be implemented in the coming four years.

The agreement comes at the right time when Ethiopia is striving to carry on its development effort while confronting local and international challenges. Ethiopia will also continue its usual primary role in bolstering both its bilateral ties and Korea Africa relations.



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The Ethiopian Herald

# Opinion

## What youth representatives gain from participating in national dialogue

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Ethiopia is a country of the youth. Close to 70% of the population constitute the youth which is a decisive force in the socio-economic and political developments in the country.

Undoubtedly, today, the Ethiopian youth can play a crucial role in promoting national dialogue in Ethiopia. Their involvement is essential due to several factors:

Ethiopia has a predominantly young population, with a large percentage under the age of 30. This demographic significance means that youth perspectives and engagement are vital for any meaningful and inclusive national dialogue.

As stated above, the Ethiopian youth were often at the forefront of social and political movements in the country. Their energy, creativity, and willingness to challenge the status quo make them effective agents of change. In the context of national dialogue, young people can drive conversations about democracy, governance, and social justice.

Young people in Ethiopia are expected to bring fresh ideas and innovative solutions to longstanding issues. Their familiarity with technology and social media can help in mobilizing and spreading awareness about national dialogue initiatives, ensuring wider participation and inclusivity.

Youth can act as bridges between different communities and generations. Their relatively neutral stance in historical and ethnic conflicts allows them to facilitate dialogue and promote understanding among diverse groups. This bridging role is crucial in a multi-ethnic society like Ethiopia, where historical grievances and ethnic tensions often impede national cohesion.

The Ethiopian youth have promoted their country in the context of Olympic games and other world recognized athletic competitions hoisting the Ethiopian national tricolor on major global sports completions. Today, this has continued more than ever.

The Ethiopian youth have shown their potential capacity in the areas of IT, robotics, computer programing and other forms of modern technological innovations.

Young Ethiopians can advocate for policies and reforms that reflect their aspirations and needs. By participating in civic activities, they can hold leaders accountable and push for transparency and responsiveness in the political process. Their engagement in civil society organizations, student unions, and local community groups further strengthens the democratic fabric.

Educating and building the capacity of young Ethiopians to engage in dialogue processes is essential. Programs that focus on leadership, conflict resolution, and negotiation skills empower youth to take active roles in national discourse. Such education ensures that they are well-equipped to contribute constructively to national dialogue efforts.

For national dialogue to result in sustainable peace, it must include the voices of youth. Their participation ensures that the outcomes of dialogue processes are not only reflective of the present needs but are also sustainable for future generations. By involving youth, Ethiopia can

foster a culture of peace and cooperation that transcends generations.

Civil society organizations like the Ethiopian Youth Federation can engages young people in political and social issues, encouraging them to participate in dialogue and decision-making processes.

Various grassroots movements and organizations led by young Ethiopians focus on promoting peace, development, and social justice. To fully leverage the potential of youth in national dialogue, there must be support systems in place.

Training and resources to build the skills necessary for effective participation of the youth in national dialogue is very important to help them speak in one voice instead of voicing ethnic oriented views that may affect the general interest of the youth here and overseas.

By recognizing and harnessing the potential of youth, Ethiopia can ensure that its national dialogue efforts are more inclusive, representative, and geared towards creating a more cohesive and peaceful society.

The youth in Ethiopia, both in rural and urban settings have several challenges that they can forward in any level of national dialogue process. Unemployment is one of the major challenges that the youth are facing in this country. Hundreds and thousands of youth are still wasting their times in undesirable places simply because they have no place to go. It is true that the government is doing its best to build and equip youth centers across the country and also preparing various recreational and sports centers which could contribute to wholesome development of young persons.

Although the youth have a number of challenges that they can mention on the national dialogue, young women have special issues and challenges that they could voice to draw the attention of the participants in the dialogue process. Gender based violence including rape and other forms of crimes against young women need to be discussed in detail. Preventive strategies and action plans as well as further legal enactments should be implemented to ensure the democratic and human rights of young women.

Nonetheless, youth with disabilities must be provided to articulate their concerns, challenges and demands so that their plights could be accordingly addressed. Besides, displaced youth and victims of war crimes and human rights violations must be supported to express their state of affairs in national dialogue processes both at regional and federal levels.

Ethiopian youth may have differences among themselves but they are certainly duty bound to cooperate on issues of nation building and promotion of economic and technological reforms in the country. They need to promote civil nationalism instead of engaging in divisive and disruptive activities that will not serve their interests.

The current generation of youth must engage in strategic thinking and reflect their opinions in a more dignified and respectful manner adhering to the ground rules outlined for the conduct of the national dialogue.

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

# Business & Economy



Import substitution salvages billions of dollars

## Boosting import substitution via prioritizing manufacturing industry

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

In the last two decades and half, the incumbent has taken various measures to stabilize the nation's macro-economic imbalances. Opening the economic space to the private sector, introducing laws helpful to attract foreign investment, boost export, enhance the nation's foreign currency garnering capacity, accumulating capital, tackling inflation and others can be mentioned in this regard.

Demis Chanyalw (PhD) is a long serving economist working as a consultant for various firms. While making an interview with local media recently, said that Ethiopia is an agrarian country in which agriculture is the means of living for 85% of the population, contributes 78% of foreign currency earnings, supply inputs to the agro-industries and food to the market.

Yet, the sector is vulnerable to extreme climate conditions and unless the nation brings structural change through shifting agricultural labor to the manufacturing and service sectors, attaining sustainable development is unrealistic.

As to him, cognizant of these since long ago, the government has tried its level best to bring structural change and in this regard it has shown dedication by allocating its time and budget for the expansion of manufacturing industry.

As a result, it constructed industrial parks in various parts of the country, supplied electric power and internet services, clean water and rented shades in lower price, provided banking services which simplified doing business there.

Attracted by the created enabling environments, foreign investors from Turkey, India, China and others came here and engaged in textile and garment, pharmaceuticals, beverage and food, floriculture, vegetable and fruits and enabled to create job opportunities to hundreds of thousands.

Most of the industrial parks and the flower farms are located adjacent to the Ethio-Djibouti rail way which reduced transaction cost of exporting products and importing industrial inputs from abroad.

As to Demis, flourishing of the manufacturing industry brought multi-faceted benefit to the country. It attracted both foreign and local

investment and broadens the role of the private sector in the economy; created job opportunity to the unemployed; created linkage with the agriculture sector by utilizing raw materials from the sector; encouraged innovation and entrepreneurs, and boosted export and substituted imports.

The economic- development of the Asian Tiger countries such as Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong tells that how the manufacturing played pivotal role in attaining structural change and economic development.

Forty years ago, these countries' economy was predominantly agrarian but after reforming the economy and attaining structural change, they were changed from net importers of goods in to net exporters. As the result, they could increase their hard currency reserves and earning capacity and become the manufacturing hub of not only the region, but also the world.

Earlier to bringing structural change, they used to export agricultural products to the foreign market without value addition. The unprocessed agricultural products exported to abroad were less competent in the market which put the exporting countries in disadvantageous position.

After achieving structural change, their manufacturing products were produced with less production cost and exported with value addition which enhanced their market competition so that, gain more profit. Because of the expanding of manufacturing, they enabled to shift stranded agricultural labor to the manufacturing sector. The labor force engaged in manufacturing, unlike those engaged in subsistence seasonal farming, produce on daily bases which increases working time and productivity.

Import substitution helped countries to use more local resources as input in the industrial production and create market opportunities to farmers and raises their income which in turn utilize more agricultural inputs that enhances productivity. Currently, the four Asian Tigers are high growth economies. They have been fueled by exports, rapid industrialization and have achieved high level economic growth since 1960s and joined the ranks of the world wealthiest nations. They have shared common characteristics including sharp focus on exports and educated people and increased saving rates.

Recently, the Ministry of Industry announced that Ethiopia's import substitution strategy

has started bearing fruit by substituting goods worth 2.26 billion USD over the last fiscal year alone.

Although Ethiopia is endowed with immense resources vital for the development of manufacturing industries, the country's production capacity is only 38% of its potential. The remaining 62% is imported with huge amount of foreign currency.

According to the Ministry of Industry, the country has not yet ensured its production sovereignty despite the abundant natural resources and productive labor force vital for the development of industries. Ethiopia imports fertilizer, engineering technology, machineries, and chemicals, among others. Therefore, as to the Ministry, Ethiopia is a consumer nation.

Nevertheless, the Government has been working to reverse this reality with a view to expediting the development of the country by strengthening the manufacturing industry sector. In this regard, enhancing import substitution has been given the utmost priority.

Ethiopia's import substitution strategy has been bearing fruit and the nation was able to substitute products such as textiles and food stuffs. Some 96 product items are identified, among which some have already been successfully accomplished. For instance, military uniforms that used to be imported are now fully substituted with domestic products.

In addition 100% of beer barley seed demand of the country has also been covered with domestic products. According to the Ministry, the nation has even begun exporting beer barely seeds as the country was able to produce surplus.

In addition, the country has been engaged in domestic production of various foodstuffs for the treatment of Moderate Acute Malnutrition and the results are encouraging.

The production of such item, including beverages, has enabled the nation to save 1.36 billion USD. Recently, the World Food Program purchased food products from Ethiopia, supporting the country to alleviate foreign currency shortages.

Ethiopia has also been encouraged to produce student uniforms and bags as the domestic demand for the products is very huge with a total population of around 30 million students.

The import substitution strategy of Ethiopia also promotes strong consumers that prefer domestic products. The State Minister of industry, Tarekegn Bululta, stressed that import substitution is key to alleviate the shortage of foreign currency. Besides, the strategy encourages local industries to enhance their productive capacity.

According to Demis, Ethiopia is endowed with abundant resources and it is one of the populous countries in Africa next to Nigeria. This indicates that, the nation has huge labor force which can produce more and can be consumer. But both the natural and human resources are not sufficiently utilized and through taping the resource and expanding the manufacturing, increasing production, productivity and export can be possible.

Though the country is agrarian, sadly it imports foods, edible oil and others that can be produced locally and for the importation of such products the nation allocates its meager hard currency that would have been reallocated to the other sector.

Ethiopia produces oil seeds and exports in its raw form. Paradoxically, it imports edible oil from abroad and spends more than two billion Dollars annually. In such situation, attaining sustainable development is impossible, Demis said.

In fact, there are some local companies which are engaged in edible oil production but still, they import inputs vital for the production process.

According to studies, Ethiopia has huge resources of pulp growing in various parts of the country which can be used as inputs for paper production but it is not exploited. Some private companies appealed to engage in pulp and paper production to the pertinent institutions but due to bureaucratic hurdles, they are unable to start production. On the other hand, the nation spends millions of Dollar for the importation of paper.

Currently, due to the rising of paper price in the world market, the allotment of hard currency for the importation is doubling. The printing cost of texts and newspapers is also increasing from time to time. Therefore, substituting paper products should be taken as a way out so that saving the hard currency can be realized.

In addition, the volume of the products does not meet the local demand. Hence, scaling up the production and expanding manufacturing industries is essential.

# In the Sphere of Diplomacy

## A summit of like-minded

COMPILED BY STAFF REPORTER

Africa and South Korea are holding the first joint Summit in Seoul. The Summit aims at fostering better-structured bilateral cooperation and strengthening the partnership between the two sides. The Summit will be jointly co-hosted by South Korea and Mauritius with the theme “The Future We Make Together: Shared Growth, Sustainability and Solidarity”.

The Summit follows the launching of President Yoon Suk Yeol, foreign policy of making the Republic of Korea (RoK) “The Global Pivotal State (GPS)”. The GPS policy aims to create a country capable of altering the distribution of power creating or maintaining stability within the international political order and expanding networks and cooperation with like-minded nations that share South Korea’s identity, values, and strategic cooperation. By becoming so, RoK has to strengthen its economic, trade, military and global cultural influence.

Africa is a key partner for Korea in realizing its foreign policy aspiration of becoming a Global Pivotal State, President Yoon.

There is a huge difference and impact between the Korea-Pacific Island Summit with the Korea-Africa Summit. Africa, home of 1.4 billion people with a GDP of 3.1 trillion U.S dollars and vast natural resources signifies a strategic position in the Korean economy. It’s clear, that Korea needs more of Africa than vice versa. Africa contributes three per cent of Korean exports and one per cent of its imports.

This year, RoK joins the UN Security Council (UNSC) as a non-permanent member of the 2024-25 terms together with Japan, Switzerland, Ecuador, Guyana, Mozambique, Malta, Sierra Leone, Algeria and Slovenia. As a new NATO partner, RoK is expected to hold a significant card in the UNSC. Through RoK in UNSC, Africa should push the agenda of Africa should begin to use its potential as a bargaining chip for its sustainability and welfare.

Cho Tae-yul, chairperson of the Korea-Africa Summit Preparatory Commission and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of RoK declared President Yoon’s summit target. These targets are the desire to work with Africa in transmitting RoK into a global pivotal state. The second is its interest in joining the “scramble” for resources in Africa and the last is the trade opportunity of RoK in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmad (Ph.D.) and First Lady Zinash Tayachew arrived in Seoul, Republic of Korea for an official visit. During his stay, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in tandem with the ministerial delegation will participate in the Korea-African summit, local media reported.

In their bilateral meeting, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and President Yoon Suk Yeol



**The Republic of Korea has affirmed its commitment to strengthen trade and investment ties with Ethiopia and support development activities in the country through financial assistance as the two leaders further agreed to work more closely in areas of technology transfer and agricultural transformation**

discussed ways of further strengthening the longstanding and historical relations between Ethiopia and the Republic of Korea, Ahmed Shide noted.

According to the Minister, the Republic of Korea has affirmed its commitment to strengthen trade and investment ties with Ethiopia and support development activities in the country through financial assistance as the two leaders further agreed to work more closely in areas of technology transfer and agricultural transformation.

The financing cooperation agreement signed between the two countries will be implemented during the coming four years, he added.

According to the agreement, the finance will be used for infrastructure, science and technology capacity building, health and Urban Development works.

The Minister for Government Communication Service, Legesse Tulu (PhD) said the Republic of Korea has an immense experience harmonized with its progress, and those bilateral talks between the two leaders paved the way for further cooperation in experience sharing among the two countries.

The Republic of Korea has pledged commitment to share its best experiences in technology and economic sectors with Ethiopia, the Minister pointed out.

Abiy has reaffirmed his country’s commitment to work together with South Korea to further enhance partnership between the two countries.

The Prime Minister who is in South Korea for an official working visit also appreciated South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol for a warm welcome to his delegation.

“I (would) like to thank President Yoon Suk Yeol for receiving us today. Our countries share a long history spanning over six decades, rooted in Ethiopia’s support during the Korean War,” the premier shared on his social media channels.

Prime Minister Abiy added that: “I am confident that we will work together to

further enhance our partnership.”

The visit of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) and his delegation to Seoul will bring the historical relationship between Ethiopia and the Republic of Korea to the next level, Ambassador of Ethiopia to the Republic of Korea, Dessie Dalke said.

He described the visit as a milestone in cementing the historical relationship and paving the way for new areas of cooperation between the two countries in the future.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol have signed a 1 billion US dollar financing framework agreement today.

The financing framework agreement targets projects to be implemented over the next four years, according to the Office of the Prime Minister.

Ethiopia and South Korea with their respective delegations also held bilateral discussions and signed an MOU between Ethiopia’s Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission and the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission of the Republic of Korea.

The Finance Minister Ahmed Shide stated that the agreement signed between Ethiopia and the Republic of Korea an instrumental in further enhancing the historical relationship between the two countries.

According to the Minister, the Government of the Republic of Korea has affirmed its commitment to strengthen trade and investment ties with Ethiopia and support development activities in the country through financial assistance as the two leaders further agreed to work more closely in areas of technology transfer and agricultural transformation.

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# Law & Politics

## A defining moment in National Dialogue

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

It is now more than two years since the National Dialogue Commission has been established with its guidelines and rules so that it operates within a certain legal framework. It is accountable to the House of Peoples Representatives. That is not to the Executive branch of government as some critics have tried to discredit its neutrality and denigrate the efforts of the Commission.

It is known that the Commission is composed of knowledgeable professionals who have been serving their country in various capacities and are disciplined and experienced in their fields of study. Besides, they are not members of any political parties but are all the same passionate about the affairs of their country and voluntarily engage their time to actively take part in running the responsibilities of the Commission. In other words, these people have not come to the Commission in search of a vacancy. They have been convinced to take part in the duties of the Commission well aware of the importance of their activities.

The time has come that the country should resolve all its uncertainties and the woes of certain segments of the population who continue to voice their complaints alleging that there have been historical wrongs committed against their constituencies.

The history of Ethiopia tells us that there have been many forces which have tried to undermine the country's peace, stability and hence government and take control of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state.

Ethiopia realizes that its enemies and adversaries never sleep but try to extract an advantage when they believe that things are going wrong. It has survived them with indissoluble unity, utmost vigour and vast mobilization of its people. This has made them bacon of resistance and resilience in keeping their identity in dignity, pride and freedom. This has earned Ethiopia a reputation as a vanguard in the struggle for the liberation of African states and the foundation of Pan-Africanism once dominated by colonialists and imperialists. Africa is still fighting for its deserved status in the international world order by claiming what is due to it. We can observe that there are certain neocolonial forces still operating in attempts to subdue the continent via economic muscles and the control the natural resources.

In this respect, the country has been very resistant throughout its existence because it has had the advantage of never being colonized. Hence its culture and civilization have not been subjected to foreign influence. Even today we observe certain tendencies to undermine the sovereignty of Ethiopia through forces that aim to depose the government. Letting Ethiopia be a colony would amount to a betrayal of the bitter sacrifices of Ethiopian patriots to guarantee the survival of a free state in dignity. Bowing to any alien force is not in the DNA of Ethiopians even in the face of

superior arms.

There are indications that certain forces operating in Ethiopia are directly linked to these external forces. These aim to destabilise the country and eventually balkanise it.

However, Ethiopia cannot be another Yugoslavia. Ethiopian communities have a long history of fusion and intermingling as well as harmonious cohabitation. They have lived together with tolerance and affection facing their common enemies together and defeating them. They have come to know that their unity has been instrumental to exist freely and not be exposed to division irrespective of the diversity in ethnic identity, culture, languages and faiths. They have always known that in division they could be exposed to invaders and interferences in their domestic affairs.

Such a sense of freedom has always been a source of discontent among the so-called powerful nations which are always bent on subjugating Africa and Africans to fulfil their national interests and advantages with little consideration for the native populations. Ethiopians will always combat these influences because they have a historic responsibility to preserve their identity and culture that have come through centuries of resistance. No Ethiopian would accept to be shoved to subjugation.

There are always attempts to influence the political establishment of Ethiopia alleging various pretexts such as violations of human rights and the subjugation of certain communities by the federal government and so forth. These forces believe that they know better how Ethiopia should look and how it should be governed. But they always underestimate the iron willpower of Ethiopians not to be lured by temporary benefits. The exceptions are those who try to collaborate with these external forces and try to come to power allying themselves with these elements. It is clear that their operations are dangerous.

The country is now on a new trajectory of development despite these obstacles. A population of more than 120 million, most of whom are young, and with immense resources that can be capitalized upon, cannot afford to continually be distracted by these splinter groups which are organized under various names and pretexts.

Ethiopia is engaged in trying to come out of perennial poverty and join the community of developed countries because it knows it has the potential to do so. But to do that it must capitalize on all of its human resources including those who are now rejecting its offer. That is why it insists that all parties and forces, both formal and informal, come to the table abandoning their violent operations. They are urged to put down their arms and join the table of discussions in which the entire state is now immersed.

The old method of trying to depose a government by force has had its days. Today it is inconceivable. Citizens know that there is little to gain from siding with these forces. They know that without peace there can never be development and

progress. These forces are seen engaging in not only preventing certain development activities but also destroying all that has been constructed.

The formation of the National Dialogue Commission could be the final opportunity to resolve all the outstanding issues of these forces and any others who have grievances with the establishment and the incumbent. In a recent remark Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has said that given there will be elections within two years, there will be the opportunity for these forces to come and take part in the contest. If they succeed in having enough votes they could even propose an amendment of the constitution with the consensus of the population. In the end, the constitution is a social contract between the government and citizens. It can be reviewed and amended or even replaced by another one depending on the decision of citizens.

This is how all modern and civilized states operate because violent methods to advance political aims have become obsolete. We have seen them failing repeatedly. Only through a series of discussions and compromises can a community survive and flourish and this must be the ultimate goal of Ethiopians through the National Dialogue Commission. In the long run, these methods should be adopted to be part of our tradition and way of life.

For the National Dialogue to succeed the contribution of every citizen is crucial because there should be a sense of ownership in the process. No one group will be excluded from the process. That is why there is a kind of mobilization of every sector of the population in every woreda of the country including in places where there are forces that persist in their hostilities to the law and order of the nation.

Ethiopians should learn to solve their differences through an open dialogue and discussion expressing their thoughts candidly and honestly without resorting to calling names or generalizations that have been borne from certain negative and false narratives. On Monday 29<sup>th</sup> May, the selection process of the agenda for discussion has been launched in Addis Ababa. The process will last seven days. This is a very important step because it is the very basis on which the issues will be distinguished and presented for deliberations. That is why everyone should propose as an agenda the most important issues that need to be considered by the National Dialogue Commission and be a subject of the final discussions and deliberations.

The way the process is carried out will be crucial for its credibility. There should be no excuses for the refusal of the results. The Commission will of course select the key issues affecting the country and those that are crucial to reach a consensus without prevarications and uncertainties. We have seen that many countries have used this system to address their major challenges through thorough discussions and there is no reason why we cannot achieve the same result if we have the right commitment and will.

## Ethiopians

**should learn to solve their differences through an open dialogue and discussion expressing their thoughts candidly and honestly without resorting to calling names or generalizations that have been borne from certain negative and false narratives**



# Society

## Small efforts lead to big results

BY STAFF REPORTER

It is common knowledge that volunteerism has irreplaceable contributions in terms of addressing a range of socio-economic challenges, fulfilling the needs of the community, reducing the level of poverty and promoting community development.

In the same way, being a volunteer and engaging in volunteering also opens a number of important opportunities for individual volunteers. It helps to establish rapport and expand networks with a range of participants that might not be possible otherwise, to draw valuable experiences, develop new skills and share talents aside from boosting self-image and confidence and yielding psychological benefits.

What is more, the service fosters a sense of belonging and identity and builds trust between individual volunteers and the people who are receiving the services.

In Ethiopia, extending a helping hand and lessening the burden of those people who are in need of some kind of support has been one of the deeply seated cultures of the community. Ethiopians, no matter what, are always kind and sympathetic to helping others.

Mainly, through their traditional institutions such as 'Equb' 'Idir' and 'Mahiber', Ethiopians always stand by the side of their fellow people to lessen their burden. In addition, to these socially constructed norms, Ethiopians have a track record of lending a helping hand not only within their social circles even beyond both in good and bad times. Their arms are always open to the needy and the unfortunate ones in various forms- by donating monetary and non-monetary assistance, giving time and skills to bring about a positive impact on the lives of people who are in need of help.

These days, the deep rooted culture of the community is performed in a more organized manner. Principally, since the past five years, following the initiatives taken by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the National Volunteer Community Service Program, a wide ranging activity have been carried out at national level. The program, as it is stated at the National Volunteer Community Service Program document, was launched with the aim to foster a sense of national unity, integration, build a cohesive society at peace with each other, enhance respect for diversity, strengthen social cohesion and peaceful coexistence, at the end of the day contribute to sustainable peace and stability in the country.

As a result, over the years, subsequent to the activities carried out at different times in various areas by involving millions of young volunteers, including in renovation houses of destitute people, seedling plantation, among others, encouraging outcomes, that benefit the community and the society at large, are registered.

For instance, following the National



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Green Legacy campaign launched in 2019, Ethiopia has planted more than 25 billion seedlings merely in the first phase of the campaign.

Recently, the Dire Dawa City Administration launched a summer (Kiremt) volunteers' service program under the theme "Virtue for National Unity".

Launching the program, Dire Dawa City Administration Mayor Kedir Juhar said that the activities that have been started to support and benefit low income sections of the society in the city will be sustained in a coordinated manner.

According to him, reducing the socio-economic burden of the low income earners of the society and solving their basic problems is one way that leads to growth and prosperity. In this respect, development works carried out during both summer and winter seasons of the past years targeting

the low-income sections of the society have brought about meaningful changes in terms of alleviating the challenges of the disadvantaged ones.

Mayor Kedir, who is also leading the volunteer service program, said that more efforts will be applied in order to elevate the program to a higher level by strengthening collaboration among the government, development partners, institutions and the community at all levels.

The activities set out by the City Administration to support the needy will continue and strengthen in a coordinated manner. What is more, the actions and the outcomes of the work will also be reviewed on a regular basis, he added.

"There should be coordination in activities that are carried out by mobilizing the community in terms of planning and execution so that the voluntary works implemented in the rainy months to be effective."

Prosperity Party Dire Dawa Branch Head Ibrahim Yusuf on his part said that the voluntary works carried out following the national reforms have addressed the needs of the needy.

Mentioning that a plan is set to renovate over 200 dilapidated houses of the disadvantaged groups and low earners as well as carry out numerous socio-economic development activities in this rainy season, he urged all concerned bodies, stakeholders and the community to fulfill their societal responsibilities accordingly and attain the desired outcome.

Dire Dawa City Administration Youth and Sport Commissioner Khalid Mohamed also stated that volunteering and supporting each other is the defining value of Dire Dawa.

The activities of supporting each other and volunteerism have been institutionalized so as to solve the challenges of the community. Accordingly, more than 86,000 young volunteers and other members of the society have been prepared to achieve the target.

The Head also presented a document that was prepared to ensure social and economic development, sustain peace and good governance in the coming rainy seasons and discussed thoroughly.

At this rainy season, it is planned to carry out various development activities such as construction and renovation of the depleted houses of the poor, giving care for the disabled ones, providing tutorial education and health care services, undertake tree planting and beautification works among others estimated to be over 120 million birr, it was learnt.

During the event, Mayor Kedir Juhar and Deputy Speaker of the Council of Administration Kerima Ali, who are in charge of the program, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the sector institutions.

# Planet Earth

## Our environment our source of livelihood

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of June every year, the world is marking World Environment Day with various thematic declarations. The theme of World Environment Day 2024 is 'land restoration, desertification, and drought resilience'. World Environment Day is celebrated to raise awareness and promote environmental conservation

The occasion is marked with the purpose of mobilizing individuals, communities, and governments to take action in restoring the health of our planet's lands, which is essential for sustainable development and climate resilience. Activities and events will be held worldwide, encouraging participation and engagement from various sectors to foster environmental stewardship and sustainable practices.

Globally, ecosystems are continuously threatened. From forests and drylands to farmlands and lakes, natural spaces on which humanity's existence depends are reaching a tipping point.

According to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, up to 40 per cent of the planet's land is degraded, directly affecting half of the world's population. The number and duration of droughts has increased by 29 per cent since 2000 – without urgent action, droughts may affect over three-quarters of the world's population by 2050.

Land restoration is a key pillar of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030), a rallying call for the protection and revival of ecosystems all around the world, which is critical to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

That is why World Environment Day 2024 focuses on land restoration, halting desertification and building drought resilience under the slogan "Our land Our future. We are #Generation Restoration." We cannot turn back time, but we can grow forests, revive water sources, and bring back soils. We are the generation that can make peace with land.

2024 will mark the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. The sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 16) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) will be held in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, from 2 to 13 December 2024.

Ever since the formulation of Ethiopia's Climate Resilient Green Economy Policy in 2011 and the consequent socio-economic and environmental measures taken over the last several decades, the nation has not only championed the issue of environment protection and development but has vividly demonstrated to the world that the country is markedly contributing to towards the mitigation of climate change and its devastating effects.

Since 2018, under the leadership of Prime

Minister Abiy and his cabinet, Ethiopia embarked on a series of integrated development programs that primarily focused on creating carbon free country by 2030, utilization of non-fossil fuel energy resources in hydropower development programs like GERD, Koyisha HEP and a number of other hydroelectric sources across the country.

Ethiopia embarked on National Green Legacy Initiative with the vision and objective of greening the entire country and conserving the flora and fauna resources of the country by planting an average of 6 billion tree seedlings adding up to more than 30 billion trees over the last five years.

On the other hand, through a series of home grown initiatives of dining for the nation, Addis Ababa and the country as well as the future generation eco-tourism projects were developed across the country all contributing to the protection, use and development of

Over the last 50 years and probably beyond, Ethiopia suffered from climate change induced drought which seriously affected the country's agriculture and plunged her into a vicious circle of food insecurity. On the other hand, the lion's share of the country's GDP comes from the agriculture sector.

Apart from globally recognized climate change mitigation achievements, Ethiopia conducted remarkable climate diplomacy over the last several years.

Ethiopia is currently utilizing a railway network to Djibouti that utilizes hydroelectric power and has also stopped import of fossil fuel based vehicles for home and institutional use. The country forwarded a policy of encouraging the production and utilization of electric vehicles as part of the national effort to free the country from carbon that is emitted from vehicles.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has recently launched a nationwide green and clean cities development across the country. In Addis Ababa, both clean and green cities program has already been launched along with city corridor development program and riverside ecotourism development all of which are currently in progress. All these projects hinge around a national development policy to create a livable and healthy environment for citizens.

Ethiopia has already started to conduct climate diplomacy both at the regional and global level by actively engaging in all COP and all relevant international activities pertaining to climate change and protection of the global environment.

Besides, all development programs in the country and activities in all sectors of economic activities are fully considering and conducting environmental impact assessment in view of balancing all development programs with the protection of natural environment resources and assets

across the country.

Why is Ethiopia seriously focusing on climate diplomacy as an important component of its diplomatic activities? Several answers could be given for this but the main point is Ethiopia cannot withstand the effects of climate change in standalone mode as the issue is not limited to the country but has huge global dimensions. On the other hand without multi-lateral support and coordination, the country cannot fully finance its climate change programs at least for the forth coming several decades.

Climate diplomacy calls for preparing appropriate risk assessment and risk management strategies at a global strategic level. "Climate diplomacy also means prioritizing climate action with partners worldwide in diplomatic dialogues, public diplomacy and external policy instruments. This includes reaching out to partner countries bilaterally and making the case for more ambitious climate action."

This definition stresses on the use of climate diplomacy as a tool for peace building and multi-lateral approach as a strategy for conducting this modern area of diplomacy that is also an additive to the conduct of foreign policy and diplomacy in modern international relations. Ethiopia has huge potentials in successfully blending domestic climate change mitigation efforts with her climate diplomacy initiatives in the context of multi-lateral undertakings.

In Ethiopia, the issue of climate and climate diplomacy started to gain currency with the initiatives taken by the late Prime Minister of Ethiopia Meles Zenawi in 2009 as a major national departure from fossil fuel based development to a climate change resilient sustainable development. Climate diplomacy was accentuated in the first national climate change conference which took place on January 15, 2009, and was attended by high level government officials, CSOs, UN, bilateral and multilateral organizations, as well as the private sector.

The conference culminated in the creation of the Climate Change Forum-Ethiopia (CCF-E) in order to ensure a coordinated effort in addressing climate change. The conference also helped in bringing different actors together and aligning Ethiopia with regional and global movements. Former P.M. Meles also proposed having a strategy that would guide the country to follow a green development path. This resulted in the formulation of a national Climate Resilient Green Economy strategy (CRGES) IN 2011, with its vision of making Ethiopia middle-income country with a carbon neutral economy by 2025.

Moreover, at the regional level, Meles masterminded the establishment of The Conference of African Heads of State on Climate Change (CAHOSCC) in 2009 by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government meeting, held 1-3 July 2009 in Sirte, Libya. The CAHOSCC started its work in earnest during COP15 held

in Copenhagen, Denmark and continued through to COP21. There were ten member states at the establishment including: Algeria, Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Uganda, and South Africa, plus the chairperson of the African Union.

The first CAHOSCC meeting resolved that Ethiopia should lead CAHOSCC. Hence, Meles Zenawi led the CAHOSCC for two terms from COP15 to COP17—which were held in Copenhagen, Cancun and Durban respectively. Most climate change related meetings held in Ethiopia are also done in close collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia.

For instance, Ethiopia has been working closely with the African Union member states since the establishment of CAHOSCC, and also working closely with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)-African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) in the preparation for annual conferences on Climate Change and Development in Africa.

The African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) has been established to serve as a center for knowledge generation on climate change in Africa. Ethiopia was also chosen to chair the deliberations of the 20 less developed countries with the highest vulnerability rate to the effects of climate change.

As nations mark World Environment Day, the author of this article believes that the negative impacts of wars and conflicts across the world and the plight of refugees across countries can directly or indirectly exacerbate heavy human dependence on environmental resources affecting the natural balance of the environment on earth.

Countries like Ethiopia need sustained support from partner agencies and international organization like UNEP to make researches on the impact of economic development projects on the balance of nature and the environment in their respective countries. Universities and institutes of higher learning in Ethiopia are expected to conduct researches that will help to promote the protection of the environment in the country. The issues related to the protection of the environment should be included in school curriculums and special programs need to be developed on enhancing public consciousness on the need to protect the environment in a more participatory and responsible manner.

Law enforcement bodies should be able to draw special laws and regulations that will be observed by the public. New and specific laws need to be put in place to protect vulnerable species of the national flora and fauna resources in the country.

The above analysis indicates that Ethiopia has already spearheaded the regional effort to protect the environment through multi-faceted and integrated national environmental development projects.