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Mesfin Tasew

Photo: Dagne Abera

Ethiopian offers expertise to boost local institutions' service quality

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopian Airlines Group has expressed its readiness to share its expertise and best practices with other Ethiopian institutions to help strengthen their capacity and enhance service delivery.

At a panel discussion on service and product quality organized by the Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration (MoTRI) yesterday,

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Ethiopia's traditional bone setting practices under scrutiny

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

Ethiopia has long relied on traditional medicine, including Traditional Bone Setting (TBS) for treating injuries. However, the

practice is now under scrutiny for causing severe complications such as preventable deaths, limb loss, and permanent disabilities.

The Ethiopian Society of Orthopedics and

Traumatology (ESOT) recently released a national study on Bone Setting Associated Disability (BOSAD) to advocate for better

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Flagship dam to upsurge East Africa's economic growth

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA- Beyond enhancing Ethiopia's global standing and boosting its investment prospects, the completion of its flagship dam project is expected to significantly improve power supply

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Diaspora fuels economic growth with 30-bln Birr investment

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - Over the past six years, around 500 members of the Ethiopian Diaspora have invested in projects worth 30 billion Birr, according to the Ethiopian Diaspora Service (EDS). This investment surge has created thousands of jobs and contributed significantly to the nation's development.

EDS Communication Director Wondoson Girma stated that the Diaspora's involvement extends beyond investment to include technology and skill transfer, public diplomacy, and remittances. "About 700 Diaspora members have provided training in health, human resources, and education, and donated medical equipment," he noted.

Ethiopia receives an average of four to five billion USD in remittances annually from the Diaspora community, a figure that

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Sisay Sirgu (MD)

St. Paul's Hospital on fast track to excellence

- Cutting service time, expanding advanced care

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – St. Paul's Hospital Millennium Medical College (SPHMMC) is advancing its mission to become a center of excellence in service delivery, research, and education.

SPHMMC's Provost Sisay Sirgu (MD) told The Ethiopian Herald that the hospital is undertaking various initiatives to enhance healthcare quality and achieve administrative excellence. The hospital currently employs 4,350 staff members, including 300 specialists. One of the key improvements has been reducing service time from 30 minutes to 15 minutes, significantly boosting patient satisfaction.

Additionally, SPHMMC has launched a 976 free call center to schedule appointments for patients needing treatment. In emergency services, the hospital has cut down the bureaucratic process from 40% to 30% and aims to reduce it further to 23%, Sisay noted.

The hospital is also finalizing the construction of three new specialized centers focused on cancer, cardiac, colon and liver care, as well as implantation, reproduction, and fertility treatments. These centers will be equipped with advanced technology and will add 110 treatment beds, enhancing the hospital's overall capabilities.

Furthermore, SPHMMC is striving to attain accreditation as a center of excellence in various services. While the hospital has been certified and licensed 13 times for its laboratory services, it has yet to achieve full accreditation. "We are working diligently to secure accreditation and are steadily progressing towards becoming a center of excellence," the Provost emphasized.

Despite these efforts, he acknowledged that challenges remain, particularly in bridging the doctor-patient gap. The hospital continues to work on addressing these issues to provide the highest quality care.

Ethiopia reaffirms commitment to African-led peace initiatives

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA- Ahead of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) ministerial session, Ethiopia has reaffirmed its commitment to contributing to Africa's peace and stability and called on Japan and the international community to support African-led solutions.

Speaking at the TICAD Summit 2024, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Misganu Arga, emphasized the importance of promoting African ownership and leadership in addressing regional peace and security challenges, guided by the principle of "African solutions to African problems," according to a report by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Ambassador Misganu highlighted the Pretoria Agreement, which successfully ended hostilities between the Ethiopian government and the TPLF, as a notable example of Africa's ability to resolve security challenges independently. He urged the TICAD process to continue backing Africa's efforts to maintain peace and stability throughout the continent.

The TICAD Ministerial Meeting serves as a crucial step towards TICAD 9, scheduled for 2025. This year's meeting in Tokyo, Japan, was held under the theme "Co-create Innovative Solutions with Africa."

Prior to the Ministerial Meeting, Ambassador



Misganu met with Kazunori Sakai, Executive Vice President and COO of Toppan Holdings Inc., and expressed Ethiopia's support for their joint investment initiatives in the country. "He expressed his appreciation to Toppan Holdings for their exemplary efforts in partnering with Ethiopian investment groups, particularly in the printing sector," the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported. The Ambassador also highlighted Ethiopia's untapped investment opportunities and substantial market potential.

The State Minister invited Toppan Holdings to explore new sectors such as digitization, ICT, and packaging. Additionally, he held discussions with Shoichi Kobayashi, Chairman of the Japan Development Institute (JDI), reiterating Ethiopia's commitment to supporting Japanese investments. Ambassador Misganu underscored the opportunities available and the ongoing macro-economic reforms implemented by the Ethiopian government to attract foreign investors.

Ethiopia boosts road infrastructure with enhanced research

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia is ramping up capacity-building efforts to enhance project execution in road infrastructure, supported by effective research, the Road Research Center has announced.

Worku Asratie (PhD), Director of the Ethiopian Roads Administration (ERA) Road Research Center, stated that the center is undertaking initiatives to improve the quality of research and the skills of researchers. These efforts are aimed at supporting the industry, ensuring more effective execution of road projects.

Highlighting the center's contributions, the director noted that it has been conducting domestic research through both in-house capabilities and collaborative efforts. Its laboratory is open for research, design, and construction projects, providing a valuable resource for the sector.

The center currently employs 40 professional researchers and is focused on boosting their expertise in road infrastructure. The goal is to



Worku Asratie (PhD)

empower these professionals to lead domestic projects independently and achieve self-sufficiency.

"The center is dedicated to building researchers' capacities and empowering domestic institutions, including contractors, to improve project performance and complete their road projects on schedule," Worku remarked.

The center collaborates with local universities, international professionals, and institutions on

research, specialized training, consultancy, document reviews, seminars, and experience exchanges. Notably, it has partnered with Kyoto, Addis Ababa, and Jinka universities to bolster these efforts.

The Ethiopian Roads Administration established the research center with a mission to support the sector through research and development and to build institutional capacity in the road sector. The center aims to achieve the three main objectives of the national road sector development program (RSDP).

The director elaborated that the Road Research Center is conducting research to identify, investigate, and mitigate problems related to road construction and maintenance. The center coordinates all road and transportation-related research in the country, seeks international certification for management, and offers research facilities to other African countries. It also maintains collaborative relationships with global transport research institutes to facilitate information exchange and enhance the capacity of Ethiopia's road sector.

EEU generates 43 bln Birr in 2023/24,

- Expands customer base

ADDIS ABABA – The Ethiopian Electricity Utility (EEU) has announced that it generated 43 billion Birr in revenue from various sources in the 2023/24 fiscal year.

EEU Chief Executive Officer Shiferaw Telila stated that the utility is working tirelessly to provide efficient and reliable electricity services

to the public. He revealed to local media that the company added over 427,000 new customers during the 2023/24 fiscal year.

Shiferaw highlighted that the 43 billion Birr revenue was sourced from various income streams. He also mentioned that EEU is collaborating with relevant stakeholders to

address issues related to power outages.

Additionally, Shiferaw noted that efforts are underway to increase the capacity of electric transmission lines and to conduct regular checks and repairs to ensure reliable service.

EEU, a public enterprise, is responsible for the distribution of electric power throughout Ethiopia.



Shiferaw Telila

Ethiopia's traditional bone setting ...

care for musculoskeletal injury patients and reduce preventable complications.

According to a World Health Organization (WHO) report, approximately 4.4 million people die annually from injuries related to accidents, violence, drowning, conflicts, and falls. Of these deaths, about 25% are caused by road traffic accidents, and the complication rates from such injuries exceed those caused by TB, HIV/AIDS, and malaria by more than 32%.

Orthopedic and Trauma Surgeon Mengistu Gebreyohannes (MD) noted that TBS practices are widespread across Ethiopia, and a team conducted studies on pediatric, adult, and community levels that revealed severe complications from TBS, including death and disability.

The study also found that about 26.7% of patients visited a health facility before seeking TBS. Increased risks of complications were linked to open fractures, rural residency, poverty, and lack of formal education.

The Ministry of Health Policy, Strategy, and Research Lead Executive Officer Endegen Abebe (MD) emphasized the need for integrated efforts to balance cultural preservation with the benefits of modern orthopedic care. The study aims to bridge gaps between policymakers and researchers.

ESOT President Ephrem Gebrehana (MD) mentioned the paradox between the availability of modern orthopedic care



and the high rates of complications from TBS due to a lack of proper planning and regulation. The study's main goal is to ensure safe, affordable, and accessible healthcare for all musculoskeletal injury patients, particularly children in rural areas.

Bahir Dar University's Public Health Professor Fentie Ambaw highlighted that many TBS practitioners inherit their skills from family traditions and often lack formal training, leading to inconsistent and sometimes dangerous treatment methods. The study suggests providing TBS practitioners with proper training and establishing regulations to ensure safer practices and avoiding harmful practices

like tight bandaging and massaging.

Orthopedic and Pediatric Orthopedic Subspecialist Bekalu Wubshet (MD) advocated for legal protections for children, first aid training in schools, and a societal shift towards modern trauma care to reduce TBS-related complications.

ESOT is now disseminating the study's findings to relevant stakeholders, including policymakers, healthcare professionals, and communities, to raise awareness and promote safer healthcare practices. Training modules, advocacy materials, and public information campaigns are also being developed to support this initiative.

Ethiopian offers ...

Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mesfin Tassew stated that the airline is committed to supporting institutions in their efforts to improve service delivery over the long term. The Group is keen to collaborate with relevant bodies and institutions to fulfill this responsibility.

Improving service delivery, Mesfin emphasized, requires strong leadership commitment and robust government support. It also involves customizing standards, procedures, and inspection processes. "In the future, we will hold forums to facilitate this effort. Such practices require the commitment of the institutions involved. By doing so, we can achieve significant changes in collaboration with other institutions," he noted.

Ethiopian Airlines has developed a comprehensive risk management system that continuously identifies and mitigates risks, allowing it to maintain uninterrupted services for its customers. The company is proactive in revising its risk strategies to address emerging challenges.

The CEO also highlighted that several organized associations from the Oromia State have been supplying various products and inputs that meet size and quality standards. However, he pointed out a challenge in the continuity of local supply, which has led the airline to import some products and inputs from abroad to meet demand. Ethiopian Airlines remains eager to work with local suppliers to meet its product and input needs, provided they adhere to the necessary standards and requirements.

MoTRI Minister Kassahun Gofe (PhD) emphasized the government's commitment to maintaining product and service quality to support import substitution and increase local production. He stressed that maintaining quality standards is essential for global market competitiveness and should be the foundation for driving the country's economic growth and development.

Diaspora fuels economic ...

continues to grow alongside their investment participation. Wondoson also mentioned that recent macro-economic reforms have opened new opportunities for Diaspora engagement in trade, further boosting their contribution to the economy.

Despite these efforts, the country is not yet fully capitalizing on the Diaspora's potential, though ongoing initiatives aim to maximize these benefits. Additionally, the Diaspora has supported the construction of the Abbay Dam, purchasing bonds and providing in-kind contributions

totaling 1.5 billion Birr since the project's inception.

The Ethiopian Diaspora Association Deputy President Demeke Negasa emphasized the significant role the Diaspora plays in investment, social, and political spheres. "They are leaving a lasting legacy in infrastructure development and supporting healthcare facilities," he said. Demeke urged the Diaspora to set aside political differences and focus on national interests, such as agriculture and medicine, to further aid their homeland.

The association is actively working with government agencies to create a conducive environment for Diaspora engagement, aiming to improve service delivery to returning members. Diaspora Association Board Advisor Ermias Mekonnen highlighted that the Diaspora can significantly benefit their country through knowledge transfer and investment, regardless of their political views. "They should focus on developing our nation and provide support through knowledge or financial means," he stated.

Flagship dam to upsurge ...

efficiency across East Africa, according to an expert.

Speaking to *The Ethiopian Herald*, African Economic Research Consortium PhD Fellow Habtamu Girma highlighted that the dam's full operation would greatly enhance power accessibility and resolve electricity issues faced by investors.

Habtamu, an Economics Assistant Professor formerly with Jijiga University, noted that many investment sectors and manufacturing industries currently operate at just 30% to 40% of their total capacity due to unreliable power access. The dam's completion, he emphasized, would provide a substantial boost to industrial and investment sectors, directly supporting employment, production, productivity, and foreign exchange generation not only for Ethiopia but

also for neighboring countries.

Citing World Bank data and global studies, the expert pointed out that in sub-Saharan Africa, the high cost of electricity-averaging 0.13 USD per kWh-can be attributed to power shortages. The completion of Ethiopia's dam project, therefore, will alleviate these costs, benefiting investment and other integrated sectors.

He further stressed that, beyond its economic benefits, the dam will have a significant global impact by improving water utilization for both upstream and downstream countries through better water flow management and reduced water loss and evaporation.

By preventing sedimentation in the dams of lower riparian countries, the project could also enhance their energy

efficiency by 1% annually. Additionally, according to the Ethiopian Economic Association, Sudan is projected to see a 1.4% improvement in its economy by 2035 as a result.

The expert also mentioned that Ethiopia's flagship project is expected to contribute to a 1.5% growth in GDP, while supporting sustainable development principles across agriculture, health, and environmental sectors. The development of lodges and artificial lakes around the dam is anticipated to boost the tourism sector and fish production, creating numerous jobs.

Highlighting the scenario in sub-Saharan Africa, Habtamu asserted that improved power access would enhance investment efficiency, benefiting not only Ethiopia but also the entire East African region.

Opinion

Egypt's unrelenting efforts to meddle into internal affairs of Ethiopia intolerable

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

Since the laying of the cornerstone for the construction of the Abbay Dam, Egypt more than ever before has been getting itself involved in evil deeds with the purpose of halting the colossal project under the guise of a wide spectrum of cooked up stories that do not reflect the prevailing circumstances on the ground.

Dejectedly, from the dawn of history, Egypt has been bending over backwards to drag through the mud Ethiopia's reputation under the pretense of a broad spectrum of lame reasons and shallow grounds. However, in the aftermath of the concerted efforts of Ethiopians, accomplishing its mission turned out to be an attainable goal and insurmountable challenge.

Subsequent to passing through many ups and downs as well as twists and turns, the Abbay Dam is nearing completion. At this particular juncture, the whole thing is moving forward in the right direction. In actual fact, there have been layers of conspiracies at various points in time orchestrated by Ethiopia's adversaries on the subject of the dam.

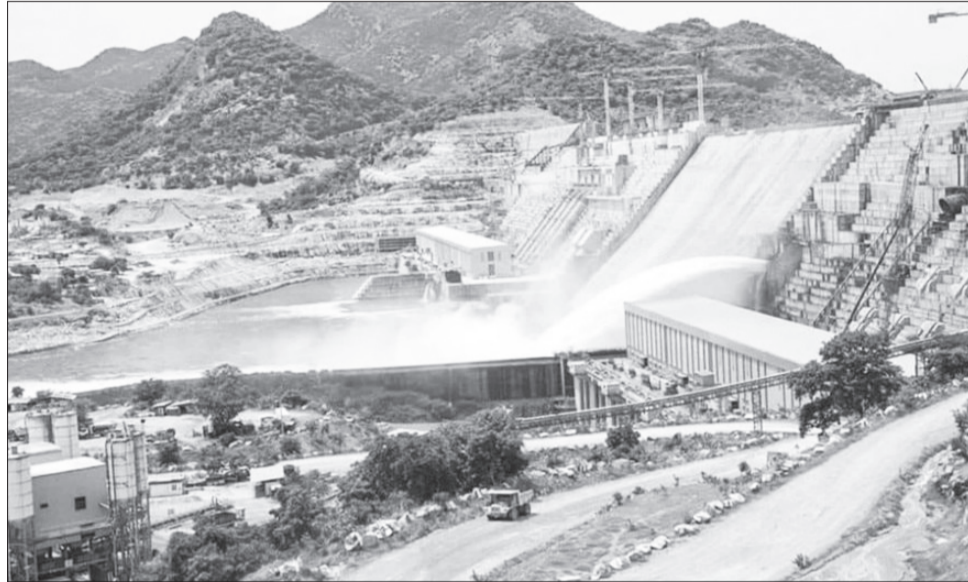
In point of fact, the entire voyage of the construction of the flagship project has been time and time again strewn with a diverse range of obstacles. Ethiopia has been susceptible to quite a lot of unwanted diplomatic pressures from lower riparian nations and their accomplices. But despite the fact that making the most of its effective diplomacy approaches, the dam has reached where it is in light of the current situation.

Notwithstanding the fact that the intended destination of constructing the dam is completely obvious and abundantly clear, Egypt has been moving heaven and earth to hoodwink the wider international community with bogus news stories and fabricated news.

To everyone dismay, the colonial-era treaties on purpose take no notice of the participation of the upper riparian states for the most part Ethiopia and gives the advantage to others. The fundamental goal of the treaty was to guarantee and expedite an upsurge in the volume of water reaching Egypt. It is obvious that over the past several decades, the upper riparian nations have failed to act to extract value from water resources for their own on the grounds of diverse causes.

It is common knowledge that Ethiopia has held more than a few meetings with the lower riparian nations. But bringing about the desired goal turned out to be an impossible mission on view of the fact that Egypt has been getting off the track giving the cold shoulder to the unvarnished truth. To this point, it has yet continued to smudge the country under the guise of whys and wherefores.

On the subject of Egypt, a number of scholars from all walks of life have been expressing their disenchantments many a



time and oft.

In a previous interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Tilahun Erduno (Dr. Ir.) said Egypt has never attempted to solve its problem related to Nile peacefully with Ethiopia or any other upper basin countries. Rather it strived to fulfill its interest destabilizing Ethiopia. Since ancient times the issues of Nile and Ethiopia have been means of solutions to the problems of internal politics in Egypt. The same way, today's government of Egypt is politicizing Nile issue and attempting to cover the face of its people by instigating "water war" against Ethiopia. As usual, today Egypt is trying to use Ethiopia and its river as first aid for its internal political disease.

He went on saying Egypt strived to invade Ethiopia for considerable number of times. It also fought so many unjust wars directly and indirectly, destabilized its peace, organized and supported anti-Ethiopian guerrilla fighters and radical religious extremist groups. It also worked hard to destroy the unique classic harmony between Muslims and Christians in Ethiopia.

Without being confined to Abbay issue, Egypt has recently stretched its hands to Somalia pretending as a genuine friend while not authentically standing by the later but solely to disarray the MoU signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland. Its main objective is to obstruct Ethiopia's quest for sea outlet. Clearly, this move is meddling into Ethiopia's internal affairs and should be told boldly to cease as accessing port for Ethiopia means a matter of existence.

The fact behind all its immoral actions is because it believes that peaceful and prosperous Ethiopia as its external threat which is completely untrue. Therefore, the position of Egyptian government and its allies in relation to GERD is illegal, immoral, so biased and inhumane. As a matter of fact, abuse of power and mismanagements of Nile issue by Egyptian government officials, politicians, writers, and some other individuals is common for many centuries.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) launched the beginning of power generation of the 3rd and 4th turbines of the Grand

Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) last Sunday, according to information obtained from local media. He posted on his official Facebook page that the remaining units will precede according to the plan.

More good news has emerged from Guba for the lower Abbay basin countries, the PM underscored stating that along with the uninterrupted flow of the river, the dam's spillways have been opened, releasing an additional 2,800 cubic meters of water per second.

GERD plays a crucial role in managing water flow, mitigating flood risks, and ensuring that the downstream nations receive a steady supply of water, particularly during droughts, Abiy noted.

This carefully regulated release will significantly enhance agricultural productivity, boost power generation, and improve resource utilization throughout the region, Prime Minister Abiy stressed.

Notwithstanding the fact that Egypt goes to the ends of the earth to materialize its hidden agenda going behind closed curtains accomplishing the desired goal is turning out to be an impossible mission on account of the concerted efforts of Ethiopians residing at home and abroad.

Since its inception, Ethiopians have been supporting the construction of the dam with great pleasure. On the heels of the commitment and hard work of the people of Ethiopia, the colossal dam is going to see the light of day in the present circumstances. Nobody can twist Ethiopia's arm.

Abbay Dam Coordination Office recently announced that it has mobilized more than 1.3 billion Birr to the construction of the mega project in the last 11 months.

The Office of the National Council for Coordination of Public Participation on the Construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) announced that more than 1.3 billion Birr has been raised to the construction of the mega dam which is being built on the Abbay River.

Of the stated amount of finance, some 1.1 billion Birr was gained from domestic bond sales while 119.8 and 72.8 million Birr was collected through SMS fundraising, and

from local grants respectively, the Office said.

In a report sent to *The Ethiopian Herald*, the Office expressed that the additional 15.6 million and 362,150 Birr respectively was gained from the diaspora support and PIN sales. The Office also mentioned that it has mobilized over 106.9 million Birr in the month of May alone.

The significant portion of this amount, 94.6 million Birr, was collected from domestic contributors mainly through bond sales, it said, adding that the diaspora community has also contributed some 676,000 Birr through buying bonds.

Furthermore, the Office collected 11,108,374 and 10,000 Birr respectively from SMS fundraising and PIN sales. Moreover, local grants that have been given through the Ethiopian Electric Utility Offices contributed 537,862 Birr, the Office stated.

Since the beginning of the construction of the dam, cumulative contributions have reached more than 19.5 billion Birr of which, domestic bond sales have brought in 17.1 billion Birr which includes a diaspora contribution of 1.4 billion Birr and the finance raised from special fundraising events is also close to one billion Birr, the report indicated.

Since the laying of the cornerstone for the construction of the dam, Ethiopians from all walks of life have been working in unison and making history. This being the case, the people of Ethiopia have been feeling over the moon.

It has commonly been assumed that when the dam turns out to be operational, the lives of the inhabitants would be transformed at the earliest possible time. More to the point, the dam plays a huge role in setting the scene for regional integration in view of the fact that flagship project not only benefits Ethiopia but also the lower riparian nations.

Though the 86% of the Nile River flows from Ethiopia, some groups have continued bamboozling the wider international community crafting a falsehood and fashioning a story. No matter what doomsayers say Ethiopia has continued moving in the right direction and going down the right road. Disconcertingly, by any means whatsoever, Egypt does not want Ethiopians to utilize the Abbay River for various development undertakings.

Apart from Ethiopia's friendly move of gaining fair and mutual benefit from the water resource, Egypt is exerting its maximum effort to push the former aside of the benefit. Thus, it should be told in black and white to pull back its hands from meddling into Ethiopia's internal affairs including in the issue of its quest for sea outlet.

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

Editorial

Let's all heed to the call for peaceful dialogue

The national dialogue commission has called on all political parties that are waging war and conflict to stop the violent means and gather round a table to pursue their noble causes through peaceful dialogue.

Our world has seen more than enough instances for the futility of conflict and violence. And we cannot say that the peaceful means are yet exhausted. The government and other stakeholders have shown all the readiness to involve all political entities in the country in the ongoing political activities and developments in the country.

For instance the National Dialogue commission has also pledged the conflicting parties to quit violent means and resort to the peaceful means for which it provides all the necessary support including guarantee.

This is a great opportunity and occasion for all those who are engaged in arms to pursue their goals. They have to take the chance to display the value and virtue of their causes and go forward towards realizing their goal through the most profitable and effective way.

Conflict and violence are not new phenomenon in Ethiopia, East Africa and many parts of the continent as well as the world. It is clearly known that conflict has caused a lot of destruction on the life property, and facilities of the country. Even after decades of ups and downs, conflict is still pursued as a means to run ones goal.

Our country is an example for this. It has been a victim of protracted civil war and unrest since, at least, the reign of the Emperor Haileselassie I regime. The conflicts raged throughout the successive regimes despite the increase and decrease in the number and power of the actors. Alongside the changes in regime, ideology ... etc what the country obtained from the decades of lack of peace is damage to its economy and image.

Despite being aware of the consequences it is still pursued as a means of solution to problems. However, clear and observable changes have been observed since 2010 E.C during which the new government had taken bold and unprecedented levels of measures to allow armed groups both at home and abroad to stop conflict, return home and engage in peaceful means of political struggle towards the benefit and best interest of the people.

Accordingly, it is to be recalled that many political groups, including those who have military wings have heeded to the call by the government and started operating at home peacefully. It is undeniable that these political parties and their movements and interactions during the last couples of years have left a strong impression in the political arena of the country.

The government, which controls the political power in the country, has also shown its commitment to allow the free and peaceful activities of the political parties over the years. Coupled on this the National Dialogue Commission which has been facilitating all the necessary steps to carry out peaceful dialogue between political parties and groups has also made a call to all armed groups to quit the violent means and take advantage of the ongoing process of peaceful dialogue to attain their goals.

Hence, all political parties at home and abroad, especially those that have raised arms must display their commitment to the interest of the people and heed to the call for peace as a justification of their honesty towards peace.



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Opinion

Democracy needs responsible application to benefit the people

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

The author of this article is somehow inspired to forward his views on the importance of democracy and its relevance to the Ethiopian pathway to sustainable peace and development. Democracy is what we all need but it does not rain from the sky or is it issued by government. It is recognized and legally enacted.

Democracy is a concept that has been used and abused in the world and Ethiopia at least for half a century. The word has been on the media, government documents, political party archives for decades. Ever since the word was coined by ancient Athenian philosophers like Aristotle and Plato, democracy has always been a subject matter of political science and jurisprudence. However, in real life, democracy is far more than it is defined today.

Athenian democracy was a direct form of democracy where citizens participated directly in decision-making rather than electing representatives to make decisions on their behalf. All eligible citizens had the right to attend the assembly, where they could speak and vote on laws and policies.

Not everyone in Athens was considered a citizen. Citizenship was limited to free adult males who were born to Athenian parents. Women, slaves, and foreigners were excluded from participating in the democratic process.

The central institution of Athenian democracy was the Assembly, where citizens gathered to discuss and vote on important issues, such as war, legislation, and foreign policy. Decisions were made by majority vote.

A body called Council of 500 was responsible for preparing the agenda for the Assembly and overseeing the execution of its decisions. Members of the Council were chosen by lot and served for one year, ensuring that power was not concentrated in the hands of a few.

Citizens also played a key role in the judicial system. Large juries made up of citizens were chosen by lot to decide legal cases. This system was intended to prevent corruption and ensure that justice was administered by the people.

Ostracism was a process by which the Assembly could vote to exile a citizen for ten years if they were perceived as a threat to the state. This practice was a way to protect democracy from potential tyrants.

While Athenian democracy was groundbreaking, it had significant limitations. The exclusion of women, slaves, and non-citizens meant that only a minority of the population had political power. Additionally, some critics, like the philosopher Plato, argued that direct democracy could lead to mob rule and that decisions made by the masses were not always wise or just.

Overall, Greek democracy, particularly in Athens, was an early and influential experiment in collective governance, laying the groundwork for many of the democratic principles that are valued today.

Democracy in a modern sense is a system of government in which power is vested in the people. This power can be exercised directly by the people or through elected representatives. The key features of democracy include:

Popular sovereignty in which the authority of the government is created and sustained by the consent of its people, through their elected representatives is ascertained.

In a democracy, laws apply equally to all citizens, and government officials are subject to the same laws as everyone else. Democracy allows individuals to express their opinions, form political parties, and participate in the electoral process without fear of repression.

Regular, transparent elections are a cornerstone of democracy, ensuring that government leaders are chosen by the people in a competitive process. Democracies protect basic human rights, including freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and the right to a fair trial. While the majority's decision is respected, democracies also protect the rights of minorities to ensure they are not oppressed by the majority. Moreover, power is divided among different branches of government (executive, legislative, judicial) to prevent any one branch from becoming too powerful.

Democracy can take various forms, such as direct democracy, where citizens directly participate in decision-making or representative democracy, where they elect officials to represent their interests. Overall, democracy is not just about holding elections; it's about ensuring a system of governance that respects individual freedoms, ensures fairness, and promotes accountability and transparency.

The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia accords more than 30 percent of the articles for the provisions on the democratic rights of citizens. However, the author of this article does not believe that all democratic rights provided in the constitution as well preserved and met accordingly. The development of democracy in less developed countries like Ethiopia is a process which is full of challenges. The vast majority of the citizens are either unaware of their democratic rights or misunderstand the basic concepts of democracy and interpret it outside the concept of the rule of law, transparency and inclusivity.

The author thinks that citizens cannot practice their democratic rights in the absence of peace and sustainable economic development. Democracy cannot be achieved through the barrel of a gun or by demolishing and looting schools, health centers and hospitals and banks and telecommunication lines but rather lead to tyranny and oligarchic rule which will destroy democracy.

It is difficult to assume that people under abject poverty can practice their democratic rights because their basic needs are not met. Therefore democracy flourishes under well developed, equitably share national resources and balanced development programs across Ethiopia.

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

Business & Economy

'Buy Ethiopian Products' exhibition: A step for fueling regional, continental trade drive

BY MENGESHA AMARE

The Ethiopian Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration of late organized the national trade exhibition under the theme, "Buy Ethiopian Products," aiming at raising awareness on trade and regional issues thereby fostering connections between consumers and wholesalers.

The exhibition has brought participants from a wide range of stakeholders, including importers, exporters, local producers, cooperatives, and other business sector actors. Besides, the Ministry has been hosting the National Trade Exhibition and it announced a Permanent Export Trade Exhibition Center is inaugurated inside its premises.

Taking about the center, Trade and Regional Integration Minister, Kassahun Gofe, stated that the ministry has inaugurated the center along with the launch of the annual trade fair week. The Minister added that the permanent export trade exhibition center, rest on 730 square meters, designed to display all types of export products of the country.

He said, "Trade and regional integration tendency has led to major developments in continental and international relations between/among many countries specifically via booming international trade and investment and in the formation of regional trading alliance. Regional integration can be promoted through common physical and institutional infrastructure."

He said that, a key highlight of the exhibition has been the availability of various products at affordable prices, offering attendees the opportunity to access quality goods. In addition, panel discussions on domestic and export trade, and even about product quality, has been held with a view to providing valuable insights for both participants and visitors. Responsible institutions will use the platform to promote their products and services."

Kassahun further elucidated that, the Ministry anticipates a strong turnout, with many citizens expected to visit the exhibition. The event is part of a broader effort to enhance trade relations and stimulate economic activity across the country.

As to him, the objective of the center is to promote Ethiopia's export products to the international market. The one week long trade fair has aimed at encouraging exports and substitute import goods with domestic products.

He said, "The trade fair will create a favorable environment to showcase the potential of Ethiopia in export and domestic products. The suppliers will exhibit quality product at the trade fair and buyers can buy products with affordable market price. In parallel with the trade fair, panel discussions among stakeholders as well as recognition and award ceremony to members of the business community with outstanding performance took place."

It is well recognized that there are four main types of regional economic integration. In the first place, free trade area. This is the most basic form of economic cooperation. Member countries remove all barriers to trade between/among themselves but are free to independently determine trade policies with nonmember nations.

Secondly, customs union should be taken into account. This type provides for economic cooperation as in a free-trade zone. Barriers to trade are removed between member countries. The primary difference from the free trade area is that members agree to treat trade with nonmember countries in a similar manner.

Thirdly, the notion of common market is quite important. This type allows for the creation of economically integrated markets between member countries. Trade barriers are removed, as are any restrictions on the movement of labor and capital between member countries. Like customs unions, there is a common trade policy for trade with nonmember nations. Last but not least, the case of economic union. This type is created when countries enter into an economic agreement to remove barriers to trade and adopt common economic policies.

The Ethiopian economy has undergone dramatic changes and the nation has become integrated into the regional, continental and even global marketplaces. Once highly reserved itself from being intertwined into wider market scopes, Ethiopia is now open for foreign trade and business via entertaining regional trade integration. The government of Ethiopia needs to institute far-reaching economic reforms, which have had a major impact on the way business is conducted and the scale of business has changed as well. True, competitiveness and efficiency have become higher priorities, although many investors, companies, organizations and the like are with limited capacities to foster trade so. This trend in turn needs to be well transformed to help them build capacity to run wider trade.

Ethiopia has always been working to have a strong trade relation and business culture, and the long-term relationships are still the foundation on which trust is established and business is well built.

"A trade bloc is basically a free-trade zone, or near-free-trade zone, formed by one or more tax, tariff, and trade agreements between two or more countries. Some trading blocs have resulted in agreements that have been more substantive than others in creating economic cooperation. Of course, there are pros and cons for creating regional agreements," Kassahun stated.

The merits of creating regional integration in trade on which the ministry has been focusing include trade creation, such a positive move generates more opportunities for the nations to trade with one another by removing the barriers to trade and investment; employment opportunities, consensus and cooperation, and regional



understanding and similarities may also facilitate closer political cooperation.

Specifically, regional integration requires cooperation between countries like trade, investment and domestic regulation, transport, ICT and energy infrastructure, macroeconomic and financial policy as well as the provision of other common public goods like shared natural resources, security, education.

Here lies the importance of strengthening the multilateral trade system to allow the region to capitalize on its production and trade potential. In so doing, countries including Ethiopia must make better use of opportunities afforded by the signing of trade accords and by integration processes such as trade policy, administration of agreements and trade promotion, to spur economic recovery and increased food security.

"In the current climate, there is a clear need to link the issues of trade and the environment. The region can capitalize on its wealth of natural resources and the efficiency of its production systems to increase its presence in international markets and to deepen integration processes to contribute to the supply of healthy, nutritious and safe food, produced in an environmentally responsible manner," he added.

The trade and regional integration initiative continues to provide support to member countries to improve their access to international markets, deepen their regional integration and increase their contribution to real socio-economic transformation. To this end, trade and regional integration needs to focus on two strategic lines of action: improving market access and implementing trade policies to promote openness, transparency and the free flow of international trade, and identifying and capitalizing on opportunities afforded by trade agreements and integration processes.

Kassahun further said that, taking changes in trade flows and intraregional into account, the aim of the center is to develop differentiated strategies, specific to markets, chains or products, and to strengthen the export capacities of companies and producer

organizations. The center will also create forums to facilitate trade, through the use of new technologies, such as virtual business roundtables, e-commerce platforms, trade fairs and face-to-face trade missions. Plus to that it would promote linkages at the regional and global levels, as a means of improving access to export markets and contributing to food security and economic and social recovery, in response to markets shocks.

Sluggish pace of trade and regional integration is of course the result of weak infrastructure, productivity and trade facilitation, acute export supply constraint that characterizes the African export trade. This calls for an innovative approach to enhance intra-Africa trade and furthering regional integration.

Natural resources management, particularly coupled with the ever-growing industry, can make a meaningful contribution to a country's economic growth, and hence, it leads to linkages to the broader economy.

In a continent facing massive infrastructure needs, African countries can thus miss out on opportunities to promote the shared use of infrastructure and to strengthen the linkages between extractive resources and the broader economy.

In a nutshell, regional integration is often seen as less relevant for resource-rich countries, since demand for commodities typically comes from the global market rather than from regional demand. Regional integration in Africa, however, can play a vital role in diversifying economies away from dependence on the export of just a few mineral products; in delivering food and energy security; in generating jobs for the increasing number of young people; and in alleviating poverty and delivering shared prosperity.

True, deepening regional integration among African economies would be of paramount importance in providing all nations with both opportunities and challenges to the sound management of extractive resources and translating wealth from these resources in to diversified economies and equitable growth.

Art & Culture

Detonating patriarchy in Zimbabwean novel 'Nervous Conditions' (Part Six)

BY MEKDES TAYE (PhD)

Detonating patriarchy is another concept taken from Nego Feminism that requires appropriate time, place, and manner for doing so. This research examines women characters' attempts to confront the given situation. In the process of defying the given condition, the attempts of women characters to face the situation are studied. That means those attempts that are successful or not are detected in *Nervous Conditions*. Thus, both efforts are analyzed and interpreted in the following paragraphs.

In the novel, *Nervous Condition*, aspects of detonation were mainly exhibited in Tambu's behavior and to some extent in her aunt Lucia. According to Nnaemeka, systematically detonating patriarchy demands males or females to be critical and cautious in predicting and balancing the prospective consequences of an action or reaction. If it happens strategically, both parties could end up in peace; therefore, the environment becomes harmonious for both. This is what Nnaemeka suggests in her theory of Nego Feminism.

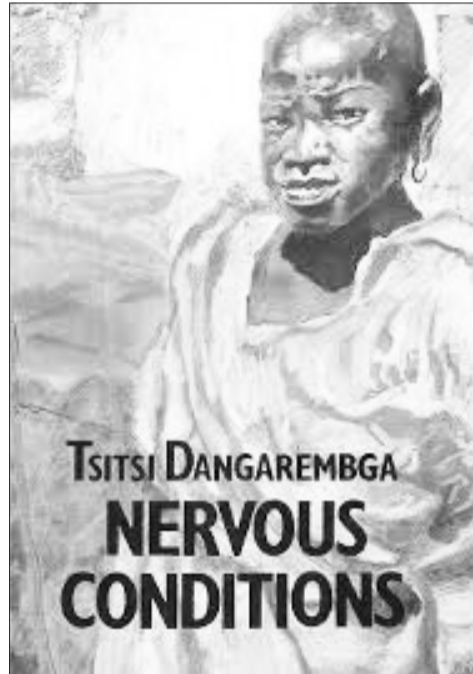
Nyasha was always in confrontation and conflict with the system. She was not strategic in approaching the patriarchal system in society and her family, especially with her father Babamukuru. Babamukuru was viewed as a colonial-minded indigenous patriarch in the novel. He started imbibing Westernization in an early age. Since he was a good agent for the colonizers to influence the indigenous Zimbabwean culture and identity, they offered him a scholarship of MA degree at their home country England. Thus, he came back to his country as both a colonizer and a patriarchal member of his family and Tambu's family. Here is the evidence:

"To decline would have been a form of suicide. The missionaries would have been annoyed by his ingratitude. He would have fallen from grace with them and they would have taken under their wings another promising young African in his place" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 14).

Consequently, he suppressed women around him and that was expected from a person who has a patriarchal mindset. He also considered white people superior to blacks. He did not even show any sympathy for his daughter Nyasha. Because of this, Nyasha did not get along with her father.

In one incident Tambu and Nyasha were going out for a party with friends. But Nyasha arrived late. Then Babamukuru got nervous and reproached her for coming late. Here are his words:

"We cannot have two men in this house. Not even Chido, you hear that Nyasha? Not even your brother there dares to challenge my authority. Do you hear what I am saying, do you hear? Your salvation lies in going away from my house. Forever otherwise" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 115).



In this incident, Nyasha was not strategic in mitigating the situation and preserving peace and harmony in the family. She reacted by walking out instead of shrinking and crying and begging him for an excuse, which was what a decent girl should have done in that cultural setting. Tambu narrated the situation as follows: "Nyasha rose from the floor and walked out of the room. 'She walked! She just walked away. She is proud. That is her problem. She is proud. Pthu! She is not my daughter' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 115).

As the extract showed Babamukuru was shocked by her reaction, which was again very unacceptable in the patriarchal social system where Babamukuru was brought up. The incident became more intense and systematic detonation was not practiced. Consequently, the girl ended up being a loser. Since Babamukuru was very stubborn compared with the indigenous patriarchs in the society, his wife Miaguru was not even seen trying to intervene to bring about compromise. Hence the episode ended up with the triumph of the patriarch Babamukuru. He became more exploitative than before. Unlike Nyasha, Tambu was successful in detonating patriarchy. It was seen in the reactions that she did when she was forced to stay at home while her brother Nhamo sent to school. Even if her father was trying to persuade her just to focus on feminine tasks like taking care of the family and growing vegetables as those women did in that setting, she was strong to pursue her education regardless of the established patriarchal social system. She said: "I shall go to school again, 'I announced to my parents'" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 16).

In this incident, her father Jeremeh was not as hot-tempered as Babamukuru. Since the situation seemed calm, Jeremeh might be a bit sympathetic comparatively. His wife, Ma Shingayi intervened and negotiated with him, and Tambu got the seeds of maize that could help her get money and to cover her school fees. In this family, the two parties, Tambu and Jeremeh solved the case, and the family lived peacefully.

Here, the researcher understood that the strong stance and high degree of Tambu shown in her words influenced the situation and it recalls the intervention of her mother as a mediator in between. Thus, Tambu detonates the accepted cultural practices of women "strategically". It is said strategically because the detonation happened in the presence of her mother with her and her father. If her mother was not around, Tambu could face troubles with her father. Thus, she succeeded by identifying the appropriate context.

The other incident that reveals Nyasha's confrontation and Tambu's detonation was during Nyasha, Chido and Tambu were dating for a party with friends. They were dancing and chatting till midnight. Chido and Tambu decided to go back home, but Nyasha told them that she could arrive sometime after since her boyfriend Andy promised her to teach her a new dance. Even if Chido was willing to wait for her till she finished, Tambu forced him to go home with her. When they got in, Babamukuru faced them about how bad children they were and asked them about Nyasha. Chido told him that she was on her way home. But Tambu kept quite bending her head as a shy girl. Nyasha arrived sometime after and quarrel ensued due to her dressing style. Nyasha was wearing a very short miniskirt at that time which meant for Babamukuru the sign of non-decent girl. After some dialogue, Babamukuru persuaded her to assure him that she was with Andy. He tried to be diplomatic. According to Tambu, Nyasha was not strategic and did not try to solve the problem. Here are Tambu's comments: "Nyasha did not cave in completely, which was unwise of her." (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 113). Tambu commented this following the words of Nyasha. Nyasha said: "I was only talking. And dancing, he was teaching me a new dance" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 116).

As stated in the extract, Nyasha's direct reply to Babamukuru worsened the situation and Babamukuru lost his temper. No one was able to intervene again. He shouted at her as follows: "Today I am going to teach you a lesson, 'he told her. 'How can you go about disgracing me? Me! Like that! No, you cannot do it! I am respected at this mission. I cannot have a daughter who behaves like a whore'" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 116).

From this excerpt, it is seen that the only matter and worry of Babamukuru was his dignity and respect. The punctuation, that is the exclamatory mark, implies how he uplifts his state, he is the top person anyone around. Thus, Nyasha's reaction was against his status; hence, he approaches her to the extent of using a hurting word, which was 'whore'. This means, he was capable of doing anything to the people even his daughter if his authority is attempted

What makes Nyasha feel hopeless is her father's verbal abuse. She says: "Should I worry about what people say when my

father calls me a whore" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 116)?

This affected the family, and the house was in turmoil. As stated in the novel, Babamukuru didn't come home at the usual times for a few days. Nyasha also stopped eating, and she hid herself in books. She became hopeless and failed to have a stable identity. Tambu narrates her talks with Chido as follows: "What about me?" Nyasha asked plaintively. "Does anyone care what I need" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 117)?

As a result, she had proposed two options that were violating the norms of patriarchy and the colonial values of Babamukuru or die. This would be frustrating for other girls in the surrounding who faced the same conflict as Nyasha.

From this incident, it can be seen that Tambu was safe since she decided to come back home sometime before Nyasha. Another reason why Tambu was safe could be she was in the company of Chido. It was Chido who confronted Babamukuru when he asked them. The third reason for Babamukuru's aggressiveness was the dressing style of his daughter, Nyasha. The writer didn't tell us anything about Babamukuru's reaction when he saw Tambu. This means that Tambu was dressing according to the norms of the society. Unlike Nyasha, she adopted the appropriate behavior and acted according to the expectations of society, she stood bending her head in front of Babamukuru. Thus, Tambu was going around patriarchy peacefully. She was not at the mercy of Babamukuru.

The other instance of detonation of patriarchy in the novel was seen when Tambu was dealing with Babamukuru regarding the wedding of her parents. Even if she was not successful in achieving her goal, she approached the system strategically. Babamukuru was proposing that Tambu's family should get married in church, which was the culture of the colonizers. The family was not happy since it was unusual to get married at their age; but Tambu's parents agreed to do it since Babamukuru was their only benefactor. Tambu was very ashamed of his decision and was very confused. She did not want to avail herself in the wedding. She had been meditating on words that she could use to persuade Babamukuru not to take her to that wedding. But she thought of another way of convincing him to allow her not to come to church. She told Nyasha that she had got a serious headache. Nyasha then suggested her go to sleep. Everybody in the house came around her and tried treating her accordingly except Babamukuru. He said this was nonsense and commanded his wife to tell Tambu to prepare for their wedding ride. At that moment Tambu decided to utter words. "I'm sorry, Babamukuru, ... but I do not want to go to the wedding" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 167).

The analysis will be presented by next week.

Indepth

Disease and climate stress resistant wheat varieties for Global South

Groundbreaking research indicates that the wild relatives of wheat could be turned into an all-time food security crop capable of cushioning vulnerable populations from starvation and hunger, thanks to its ability to withstand both climatic stress and diseases. Wheat is a staple for over 1.5 billion people in the Global South.

The review looked at two different studies and found that using the ancient genetic diversity of wild relatives of wheat, which provides 20% of the world's calories and protein could lead to weather- and disease-resistant varieties of the crop. This could ensure food security around the world.

The study led by the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre reveals that “long overlooked” wild wheat relatives have the potential to revolutionize wheat breeding, with new varieties capable of withstanding climate change and associated threats, including heat waves, droughts, flooding, and emerging and current pests and diseases.

Wild wheat relatives, which have endured environmental stresses for millions of years, possess genetic traits that modern varieties lack—traits that, when integrated into conventional varieties, could make wheat farming more possible in ever more hostile climates, the study published today (August 26, 2024) explains.

By farming the more resilient wheat, productivity could increase by an estimated USD 11 billion worth of extra grain every year, says the authors in the review paper titled ‘*Wheat genetic resources have avoided disease pandemics, improved food security, and reduced environmental footprints: A review of historical impacts and future opportunities*’ published by the journal Wiley Global Change Biology.

The review suggests that the use of plant genetic resources (PGR) helps against various diseases like wheat rust and defends against diseases that jump species barriers, like wheat blast. It gives nutrient-dense varieties and polygenic traits that create climate resilience.

The study points to a vast, largely untapped reservoir of nearly 800,000 wheat seed samples stored in 155 gene banks worldwide that include wild varieties and ancient farmer-developed ones that have withstood diverse environmental stresses over millennia. This is despite the fact that only a fraction of this genetic diversity has been utilized in modern crop breeding.

The findings, according to co-author Mathew Reynolds, will have major implications for food security, particularly in the Sub-Saharan Africa region, where the world's most food-insecure populations live.

“The discoveries are very promising, as Africa has a lot of new environments in terms of potential wheat cultivation,” he told IPS.

Based on the research findings, significant environmental benefits have been realized



thanks to various scientific efforts that have successfully integrated wild genes into modern species.

The study acknowledges that the use of PGR in wheat breeding has improved the nutrition and livelihoods of resource-constrained farmers and consumers in the Global South, where wheat is often the cereal of choice in parts of Asia and Africa.

“We’re at a critical juncture,” says Reynolds. “Our current breeding strategies have served us well, but they must now address more complex challenges posed by climate change.”

He observes that breeding that helps in maintaining genetic resistance to a range of diseases improves “yield stability” and avoids epidemics of devastating crop diseases that ultimately threaten food security for millions.

“Furthermore, post-Green Revolution genetic yield gains are generally achieved with less (in the Global North) and often no fungicide in the Global South, and without necessarily increasing inputs of fertilizer or irrigation water, with the exception in some high-production environments,” the study contends.

As a result, there has been an increase in grain yield and millions of hectares of “natural ecosystems” have been saved from cultivation for grain production. These include millions of hectares of forests and other natural ecosystems, Reynolds and colleagues found.

Equally promising is the discovery in some experimental wheat lines incorporating wild traits that show up to 20% more growth under heat and drought conditions when compared to current varieties, and the development of the first crop ever bred to interact with soil microbes that have shown potential in reducing production

of nitrous oxide, a potent greenhouse gas. This enables the plants to use nitrogen more efficiently.

“The use of PGR wild relatives, landraces, and isolated breeding gene pools has had substantial impacts on wheat breeding for resistance to biotic and abiotic stresses while increasing nutritional value, end-use quality, and grain yield,” the review further finds.

Without the use of PGR-derived disease resistance, fungicide use to fight fungal diseases, the main threat to the crop, would have easily doubled, massively increasing selection pressure that would come with the need to avoid fungicide resistance, the review finds.

Remarkably, it is estimated that in wheat, a billion liters of fungicide application have been avoided, saving farmers billions that would go into the purchase and application of the chemicals, it adds.

The authors note that as weather becomes more extreme, crop breeding gene pools will need to be further enriched with new adaptive traits coming from PGR to survive the vagaries of climate change.

These ‘definitely’ include *stubborn* diseases that have plagued wheat farming in the tropics, such as the Ug99, a devastating stem rust fungal disease that, at its worst, wipes out entire crops in Africa and parts of the Middle East, Reynolds said.

Modern crop breeding, it says, has largely focused on a relatively narrow pool of *star athletes*—elite crop varieties that are already high performers and that have known predictable genetics.

The genetic diversity of wild wheat relatives, on the other hand, offers complex climate-resilient traits that have been harder to use because they take longer, cost more, and are riskier than the traditional breeding

methods used for elite varieties.

“We have the tools to quickly explore genetic diversity that was previously inaccessible to breeders,” explains Benjamin Kilian, co-author of the review and coordinator of the Crop Trust’s Biodiversity for Opportunities, Livelihoods and Development (BOLD) project that supports conservation and use of crop diversity globally.

Among the tools are next-generation gene sequencing, big-data analytics, and remote sensing technologies, including satellite imagery. The latter allows researchers to routinely monitor traits like plant growth rate or disease resistance at unlimited numbers of sites globally.

While the collection and storage of PGR since early in the 20th century have played a key role, especially in breeding of disease-resistant plant varieties, the study concludes that a massive potential remains unexploited.

With wild relative varieties having survived millions of years of climate variance compared with our relatively recent crop species, more systematic screening is recommended to identify new and better sources of needed traits not just for wheat but for other crops as well, the study advises.

It calls for more investments in studying resilient wild varieties of common crops, taking advantage of widely available, proven and non-controversial technologies that present multiple impacts and a substantial return on investment.

“With new technologies emerging all the time to facilitate their use in plant breeding, PGR should be considered the best bet for achieving climate resilience, including its biotic and abiotic components,” the authors said.

(SOURCE: INTER PRESS SERVICE)

Law & Politics



Countering cross border terrorism

BY EYUEL KIFLU

In a significant move to enhance regional security, Ethiopia and Kenya have formalized an agreement aimed at combating cross-border crime and addressing security threats along their shared border. This collaboration comes in response to the presence of various terrorist groups in the border region, prompting both countries to take decisive action to safeguard their citizens.

The initiative was solidified during a diplomatic meeting held in Nairobi in March 2023, where a delegation of Ethiopian government officials, led by the State Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, Birtukan Ayano, engaged in discussions with high-ranking Kenyan officials. The talks focused on strategies for enhancing cooperation in the security sector.

During that time Ethiopian Ambassador to Kenya, Bacha Debele, took to social media to highlight the importance of these discussions. He noted that, the two nations explored various avenues for collaboration, emphasizing the need for a united front in tackling the challenges posed by cross-border criminal activities.

The agreement marks a crucial step in fostering a safer environment for communities living in the border areas. By pooling resources and sharing intelligence, Ethiopia and Kenya aim to not only deter criminal activities but also to enhance their overall security frameworks.

In recent years, the border region has experienced an increase in incidents related to terrorism and organized crime, leading to growing concerns among local populations. The agreement is expected to facilitate joint operations and improve coordination between security forces

from both countries, allowing them to respond more effectively to threats.

At the time, officials from both governments expressed optimism about the collaboration, highlighting that a secure border is vital for trade, economic development, and the well-being of the people living in these regions. This partnership is also seen as a model for other nations facing similar challenges, illustrating the importance of regional cooperation in addressing security issues.

As Ethiopia and Kenya move forward with this agreement, the focus will remain on developing practical strategies to implement their plans effectively. Community engagement will also play a crucial role in the success of these initiatives, ensuring that local voices are heard and that the measures taken are in line with the needs of the affected populations.

A year after signing a pivotal agreement, a Kenyan delegation led by intelligence chief Gen. Nureidin Mohammed Haji arrived in Addis Ababa on August 21 for discussions with Redwan Hussien, the head of Ethiopia's National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS).

The primary objective of Gen. Haji's visit was to review the agreement and chart future directions for collaboration, according to local media reports. The two countries' intelligence agencies are now poised to conduct joint operations targeting leaders and militants of terrorist groups operating along their shared border and within Kenya.

A press release from NISS confirmed that the institutions had previously established a memorandum of understanding to facilitate information exchange and address security concerns.

Regular meetings between officials and experts from both countries have

been taking place to assess ongoing progress, as highlighted in the press release. During their discussions, both sides recognized shared security challenges and development priorities, particularly concerning the *Shene* terrorist group, which has been responsible for kidnappings, looting, and property destruction across both nations. This group poses a significant threat, disrupting the movement of people and creating instability in border regions.

In response, the intelligence agencies agreed to bolster information exchange and coordination efforts to combat the *Shene* group's activities. They also outlined plans to take immediate action against illegal mining, smuggling, contraband trade, and arms trafficking linked to the group.

The *Shene* terrorist group has recently been implicated in the kidnapping of two foreigners, who were subsequently handed over to Al-Shabaab, indicating a direct connection between the two terrorist groups. In light of this, both agencies committed to collaborative efforts aimed at mitigating terrorism threats in the region.

In addition to addressing terrorism, the two institutions pledged to work together to promote peace and stability in the region, including efforts to resolve the ongoing conflict in Sudan and for lasting peace in South Sudan. They emphasized the importance of collaboration in cyber security, recognizing it as a growing threat, and agreed to jointly prevent potential cyber-attacks.

Overall, the discussions reflect a strong commitment from both nations to ensure lasting peace and security in the region, reinforcing their strategic partnership in the face of shared challenges.

The geopolitical landscape of Eastern Africa, particularly the Horn of Africa,

is marked by significant challenges, including the presence of various terrorist organizations. In this context, the two countries agreement to collaborate on tackling illegal activities and enhancing security is a critical development that could provide much-needed relief to the region.

Ethiopia and Kenya share a border with Somalia, a country that has long been considered a hub for the militant group Al-Shabaab, which has established connections with the global terrorist group Al-Qaeda. The presence of these groups poses a persistent threat not only to the immediate countries involved but also to the broader stability of the region.

The agreement between Addis Ababa and Nairobi signifies a commitment to joint efforts in combating terrorism and illegal activities that undermine security. By working together, both nations can coordinate their responses to the threats posed by Al-Shabaab and other extremist factions, which have been known to launch sudden attacks across borders.

This partnership is particularly vital given the complex dynamics of the Horn of Africa, where various armed groups exploit political instability and economic challenges. By sharing intelligence and resources, Ethiopia and Kenya can better anticipate and respond to potential threats, ultimately enhancing the safety and security of their citizens.

The implications of this agreement extend beyond mere security measures. A united front against terrorism can foster greater regional cooperation, promote peace, and encourage stability in an area that has long been plagued by conflict. As Ethiopia and Kenya take these important steps, there is hope that other nations in the region will follow suit, creating a comprehensive approach to counter-terrorism.

Women in Focus

The role of women's engagement in achieving peaceful outcomes

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

The United Nations had recognized the role and responsibilities of women at the center of the international security agenda in 2000. Considering the fact that society particularly women are majorly affected by conflict, UN depicted that women must be seen as actors who can provide important resources and powerful voices of peace for the prevention and resolution of these conflicts.

Though the participation of women in mediation processes and the gender sensitivity of peace agreements have increased to some degree following the recognition of the UN, it was stated that the result was unsatisfactory.

As to the UN, the involvement of women represents a benefit not only for women themselves, but for the society as a whole. The Resolution urges therefore all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations peace and security efforts.

Ethiopia has embarked on the first-ever national dialogue which aspires to resolve longstanding issues as well as reshape its political landscape two years ago. Apart from undertaking several activities, the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) has so far identified participants in ten states and two city administrations.

Recently, ENDC has begun gathering agenda from states and city administrations. Women, youth, farmers, teachers, associations, elderlies, are among the major segments of the society that are taking part at agenda gathering consultation phase.

With the understanding of the role of women in bringing peaceful outcomes, ENDC has given due emphasis for both women representation as well as participation. Besides being one of the major segments of the society, the representation of women in the other participants (segments).

As part of this endeavor the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission has undertaken agenda gathering consultation phase both in Harari State and Dire Dawa City Administration.

Participants that are taking part at the consultation phase put forth the issues that are raised by those who represented them and discuss with other representatives of political parties, government bodies, CSOs to gather their agenda.

Representing women at the agenda gathering consultation in Harari State, Fredos Abubker, Member of Harari Council of Federation, mentioned that Ethiopia, as the seat for people with different ethnic background, possesses different peaceful resolution methods that have served the nation for the past years.



Fredos Abubker



Melki Ali



They are naturally gifted in shaping their children and significant other. In this regard, they carry double responsibility. Women need to be beacon of peace. They need to seize the national dialogue as an opportunity to move towards to peace

Children, women and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) are the major victims of instability and conflicts while women, on the other hand, have a unique character when it comes to peaceful reconciliation. History has it that they have been the major part of reconciliation and resolution that has been passed through generation.

Besides, they are naturally gifted in shaping their children and significant other. In this regard, they carry double responsibility. Women need to be beacon of peace. They need to seize the national dialogue as an opportunity to move towards to peace, she stressed.

Moreover, the nation needs to apply this indigenous knowledge in order to reach

to national consensus; hence, the people need to capitalize on crucial issues that would meaningfully address the quest of the community, she added.

Hamilya Mohammed, Member of Women League in Harari State, on her part mentioned that the national dialogue would be instrumental to downsize the burden of women, children as well as PWDs as the most vulnerable segment of the society during conflicts.

Women have remained the major victims of instability while they could play a major role in resolving differences through dialogue, as to her.

Apart from raising children, they have the power to shape and advise their spouses

for the better. Thus, women have to exert their responsibility for the success of the national dialogue.

Not only involving in the dialogue but they are also expected to advocate and lobby about peaceful resolution in their households, social gathering and events.

She further emphasized that there will not be any disagreement that wouldn't be resolved through discussion. To this end, everyone particularly women need to take the lion share to realize peaceful discussion that would help nation move past its longstanding challenges.

For Melki Ali, women are capable of bringing peace to a nation. Cognizant to the fact that conflicts affects women the most, they need to play active role for the successful realization of national dialogue.

Dialogue is the best tool to settle ideological differences and it should also be the only option to resolve disagreements, she said. "That is why we need to seize the national dialogue as golden opportunity. We hold better stand in our family to shape our children and discuss with our spouses."

It should also be noted that every Ethiopian need to exert responsibility to realize a successful national dialogue, she stressed.

"If a core aspect of mediation, negotiations and peace processes is to promote human rights, one of the best ways to accomplish it is to showcase in practice how it can be done, challenging any stereotype and ensuring that women are strategically placed," according to UN.

Society

Global alliance to control Mpox outbreak

BY TEWODROS KASSA

Monkeypox was first discovered in 1958 when two outbreaks of a pox-like disease occurred in colonies of monkeys kept for research, hence the name ‘monkeypox.’ The first human case of monkeypox was recorded in 1970 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), which has subsequently spread to other central and western African countries. There are two known clades of the virus: clade I and clade II. The clade I, which is most frequently reported from countries in central Africa, tends to be more severe than clade II. Cameroon is the only country known to harbour both clades.

Accordingly, Monkeypox is a rare viral zoonotic disease caused by a double stranded DNA virus that belongs to the Orthopoxvirus genus of the Poxviridae family. The disease presents with symptoms similar to smallpox but with a lesser severity.

Recently, on Aug 13, 2024, the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) declared mpox a public health emergency of continental security (PHECS) in Africa, acting under its mandate to address significant public health threats. This mandate was established in July, 2022, by the Executive Council of the Africa Union (AU) Assembly through its decision EX.CL/Dec.1169(XLI), empowering Africa CDC to coordinate responses to epidemics by mobilizing African leaders, governments, and relevant agencies.

The decision was driven by the worsening mpox situation on the continent since 2022, 40,874 cases and 1,512 deaths have been reported across 15 AU member states. In 2024 alone, 17,541 cases and 517 deaths have been reported from 13 AU member states. These figures represent a 160% and 19% increase in the number of cases and deaths, respectively, in 2024 compared with the same period in 2023. A 79% increase in the number of cases was observed in 2023 compared with 2022. The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) accounts for 96% of all cases and 97% of all deaths reported in 2024.

Investigations in the DRC suggest that heterosexual transmission, especially among female sex workers (9%), is driving the outbreak, contrasting with the spread mainly among men who have sex with men in Europe in 2022. The high prevalence among women raises concerns about vertical transmission risks and adverse pregnancy outcomes.

The high risk of severe infection among people living with HIV, considerations for asymptomatic infections, poor vaccination strategies, limited access to medical countermeasures, and low detection rates were other concerns. The outbreak is further complicated by a high case fatality rate of over 3.9%, particularly among children younger than 15 years, who account for 60% of cases. Cross-border

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Responding to this complex outbreak requires a comprehensive and coordinated international response

movements, low public awareness, high vulnerability due to factors such as HIV and malnutrition, limited understanding of mpox transmission, and insufficient response capacities, including vaccine shortages, pose significant challenges to containment. The risk of mpox spreading to neighboring countries and globally is high.

The day before the PHECS announcement, 15 of the 20-member Emergency Consultative Group (ECG) met to advise the Africa CDC Director General on whether the mpox outbreak constituted a PHECS. The group redefined PHECS as a significant event posing a risk to other countries, requiring immediate continental-level action to prevent and mitigate disease spread—expanding the original definition in the Africa CDC statute.

They also developed specific criteria to assess the situation objectively. These criteria, organized into nine areas, included: disease severity, transmission dynamics, impact on health systems, vaccine and treatment availability, public health risk, economic and social impact, public concern, global health security, and political considerations. The framework was developed to guide a transparent and consistent decision-making process for declaring a PHECS in Africa.

Currently, the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) is working jointly with pertinent stakeholders in facilitating vaccinations supply to the current Mpox outbreak in some parts of Africa.

The current mpox outbreak “can be controlled and can be stopped”, the head of the World Health Organization (WHO) emphasized, announcing an action plan that calls for 135 million USD over the next six months.

“Responding to this complex outbreak requires a comprehensive and coordinated international response,” WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom told Member States, as cases spread beyond Africa to Europe and Asia.



WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom

The briefing was held just over a week after he declared that mpox was a public health emergency of international concern.

Tedros said the global outbreak first emerged in 2022, with more than 100,000 confirmed cases reported since then. While the virus continues to circulate at low levels, Africa has seen an unprecedented increase and expansion.

Transmission is mainly centered in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where there have been more than 16,000 suspected cases, including 575 deaths, this year alone.

The surge is being driven by two separate outbreaks of two strains of the mpox virus, or clades, and in different parts of the country.

The rapid spread of a new offshoot, clade 1b, was the main reason behind his decision to declare mpox a global public health emergency on 14 August.

“In the past month, cases of clade 1b have been reported in four countries neighboring DRC, which had not reported mpox before: Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. This week, cases have also been reported in Thailand and Sweden,” he said. In response, WHO and partners have developed a plan to stop outbreaks of human-to-human transmission of mpox through coordinated efforts at the global, regional, and national levels.

“Doing so requires concerted action between international agencies and national and local partners, civil society, researchers and manufacturers, and you, our Member States.”

He stressed that response must be anchored in equity, global solidarity, community empowerment, human rights, and coordination across sectors.

The Global Mpox Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SRSP) focuses on implementing comprehensive surveillance and response strategies, as well as advancing research and equitable access to medical

countermeasures.

“Our initial estimates are that the SPRP requires approximately 135 million USD over the next six months for the acute phase of the outbreak. That amount will likely increase as we update the plan in light of growing needs,” Tedros said.

He added that, a dedicated WHO funding appeal will be released early next week.

Tedros noted that, WHO has so far released roughly 1.5 million USD from a contingency fund for emergencies, with more allocations expected in the coming days, “until funding from donors for the response comes in.”

The SPRP also calls for minimizing zoonotic transmission and empowering communities to actively participate in outbreak prevention and control.

At the global-level, emphasis is on strategic leadership, timely evidence-based guidance, and access to medical countermeasures for the most at-risk groups in affected countries.

In this regard, WHO is working with a range of international, regional, national and local partners and networks to enhance coordination across the key areas of preparedness, readiness and response.

WHO regional offices have also established Incident Management Support Teams (IMSTs) to lead preparedness and response activities, while staffing is being scaled up in affected countries.

Additionally, the Regional Office for Africa, in collaboration with the African Centers for Disease Control (CDC), will jointly spearhead the coordination of mpox response efforts, given that needs on the continents are greatest.

Meanwhile, health authorities at the national and sub-national level will adapt strategies to current epidemiological trends.

He said the agency “will coordinate the global response, working closely with each of the affected countries, to prevent transmission, treat those infected, and save lives.”