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## Ethiopia, U.S. negotiating on AGOA reinstatement

BY EYUEL KIFLU

**ADDIS ABABA**—Ethiopia and the U.S. are holding dialogue on the potential re-eligibility of the latter for the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), whose extension is to be decided later this year, according to U.S. officials.

*See Ethiopia, U.S.... Page 3*



## Ethiopian foresees expanding overseas investment

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

**ADDISABABA**—The Ethiopian Airlines Group has agreed to join hands with various airlines across the continent to boost its overseas investments, Group CEO, Mesfin Tasew said.

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## Why Ethiopia's policy wins hearts of Int'l lenders

BY YESUF ENDRIS

After years of negotiation, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Board has resumed

loan issuance to Ethiopia, approving 3.4 billion USD in the wake of country's macroeconomic policy reform. According to the IMF report, the loan will address

macroeconomic imbalances, restore external debt sustainability, and lay the foundations for higher, inclusive, and private sector-led growth.

*See Why Ethiopia's... Page 3*

## ETRE to launch digital revenue collection system

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

**ADDIS ABABA** – The Ethiopian Toll Roads Enterprise (ETRE) is set to launch a digital revenue collection system this fiscal year.

ETRE Executive Manager Mustafa Abasimel told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the initiative is part of the broader effort to digitalize Ethiopia. The enterprise plans

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Macro-economic policy reform for comprehensive advancement

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The reflection of women's sympathy in the Zimbabwean novel 'Nervous Conditions' (Part II)

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## Ethiopia receiving funds from WB, IMF since macroeconomic reform

BY STAFF REPORTER

**ADDIS ABABA** –World Bank and IMF have endowed Ethiopia with billions of dollars soon after the country announced a macroeconomic shift.

The World Bank said on Tuesday its board has approved 1.5 billion USD finance for Ethiopia as the country is striving to debt restructuring.

The World Bank said in a statement that it will provide a grant of 1 billion USD and additional 500 million USD in a low interest credit line to Ethiopia.

Ethiopia also secured a 3.4 billion USD support from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) last Monday, which would enable the country to restructure its debt.

According to officials, these funds are part of the 10.7 billion USD financing package by the IMF, World Bank and other creditors Ethiopia has planned to collect while declaring the macroeconomic reform.

Ethiopia's development partners have welcomed the country's move to a market-based foreign exchange rate, but some analysts have warned that the move could drive up inflation and the cost of living.

However, the National Bank of Ethiopia announced that the government has planned to resolve such challenges through increasing its tax revenues and the salary of employees.

It was last Sunday that the Ethiopian government declared the liberalization of the economy of the east African nation in order to boosting productivity and export,overcoming debt burden and ensuring better foreign exchange supply among others.

## Chinese company empowers Ethiopian students with advanced automation training

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA**- Chinese Company Luban has committed to train Ethiopian students in automation technology, sharing knowledge and experiences to make them proficient in this high-tech field.

Jing Jing, China Side Director of the Luban Workshop told The Ethiopian Herald that since 2021, the company has trained over 3,000 Ethiopian students in advanced technologies including industrial robots, micro tonics systems, industry control, and sensors.

Luban operates 33 companies globally, with 17 active in Africa, including collaborations with Ethiopia's Federal Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

The main goal of the Luban Workshop is to empower Ethiopian students with the skills to install, control, and maintain automation systems by sharing technology, experience and knowledge. Jing noted, "Previously, Ethiopia's TVET lacked robot systems and qualified technicians. Luban, in collaboration with local teachers and management, has established a robot education system to bridge this gap."

He also mentioned plans to further expand



these activities to provide Ethiopian students with world-class competitive skills in automation technology.

Ren Yan (PhD), Senior Editor at People's Daily, highlighted the growing relationship between Ethiopia and China. Many Chinese companies are involved in flagship projects in Ethiopia, significantly enhancing bilateral development. Yan indicated that China is Ethiopia's largest trading partner, with rapidly increasing trade value. The cultural and language exchange between the two nations is also promising.

During his first visit to Addis Ababa, Yan praised Ethiopia's green development and cleanliness. He emphasized that by strengthening their holistic relations, Ethiopia and China can share experiences, technologies, knowledge, and cultures to create a better future.

The editor also added that as members of the BRICS group, future cooperation between the two countries will be crucial for gaining sustainable competitive advantage in global politics and economics.

## Institute suggests strategies for Ethiopia's e-commerce blossoming

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

**ADDIS ABABA** – Developing national platforms and aligning e-commerce database systems spur the country's e-commerce ecosystem, Policy Studies Institute (PSI) unveiled.

PSI convened a policy dialogue on Ethiopian e-commerce service at the workshop organized by TechnoServe and SNV aiming at addressing policy issues on facilitating e-commerce for existing and emerging local and global market chains.

Speaking at the workshop yesterday, Solomon Tilahun from PSI said that cognizant of the potential contribution of the e-commerce sector to the overall economy, the government has been undertaking various reforms aimed at promoting the sector.

He further recommended a national e-commerce strategy and enacting legal frameworks that create a favorable environment for the sector. Also, liberalization of domestic markets in the banking communication, logistics, industry and infrastructure investment for import connectivity are also critical in this regard.

"The institute has been conducting studies with a view of identifying the challenges and opportunities and development of a well-functioning e-commerce sector in the country," he said.

The digital space also has the potential to promote job creation, market expansion, and medium and small enterprises outreach, however, the online market in the country is



not well developed due to various constraints, Solomon remarked.

Evidence shows that the country has an enormous advantage to exploit the untapped potential opportunities of the sector in various aspects of the economy, he added.

Although the sector is at an infant stage, he mentioned that ecommerce is showing a drastic growth triggered by Covid-19, an evolving economy, enabling reforms among many other reasons.

Moreover, he stated that the e-commerce companies operating in the country are facing various bottlenecks such as informality, low awareness in the sector, regulatory challenges, cultural barriers, cost of logistics and infrastructure and payment system.

Citing best practices of China and Kenya, he underscored that E-procurement, IT parks, emerging data center and tech-related institutions, logistics infrastructure, are expected to create enabling ground for the

e-commerce operators in the country.

Expanding access and usage of the global digital payment system, providing support to e-commerce operators, developing comprehensive e-commerce policy, programing a national platform aligning with e-commerce databases, promoting and implementing made in Ethiopia product policy and adapting the national addressing system are the study recommendations.

For her part, SNV Ethiopia Country Director Julie Graham remarked that e-commerce is a viable strategy for the country to go forward since there are enormous opportunities to open the market and export.

Her institution has been creating an enabling environment to stimulate and de-risk the sector's growth thereby creating jobs in the capital.

She called on key stakeholders and government bodies' collaborative efforts to effectuate the e-commerce strategies.

## Ethiopian foresees...

The Airlines has been engaged in different overseas investments through purchasing stocks of various flag carriers including the 49, 46 and 26 percent share of Malawi, Zambia and Togo Airlines respectively, Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO, Mesfin Tasew said.

It has also signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), in which the DRC will own 51% of the new airline, with Ethiopian Airlines holding 49%, he stated, adding that an agreement planned to be made with Nigerian Airlines is suspended.

Mentioning that the Ethiopian Airlines is on course to its 2035 vision, Mesfin said that utmost effort has been putting towards increasing number of fleet, thereby the Airlines has signed a deal to purchase about 125 aircrafts until 2030.

As to him, the plan includes the

20 aircrafts that were ordered previously, however, he mentioned that it has unlikely received five aircrafts only this year.

With regard to infrastructure activities, the airlines undertook various steps in commencing ecommerce facility, building its own electric power substation, constructing houses to its employees as well as expanding Addis Ababa Bole Airport domestic terminal, he said.

It has finalized the construction of domestic passenger terminals in Gode and, Jinka while it is seeing the inauguration of Robe passenger terminal soon. The runway expansion of Dembi Dolo, Nekemete, Semera airports and renovation of Axum airport has been finalized, according to the CEO.

Moreover, he indicated that the airlines will soon inaugurate 2 Airport maintenance, spare part

maintenance and warehouse building while it plans to build lounge to improve its customer service at Bole Airport.

According to Mesfin, the expansion of terminal 2 of international passengers will be partially operational soon.

The airline has transported over 3.7 million domestic passengers and is undertaking several network expansion activities, he mentioned. As per to its plan, the construction of Yabelo, Mizan Aman, Gore Metu, Negele Borena and Debre Markos airports will be finalized from six to 12 months.

According to the CEO, the construction of Yabelo Airport that reached 54% completion will be finalized in six months while the construction of Debre Markos Airport was interrupted due to instability in the area, however, it is expected to be operational within six months.

## Ethiopia, U.S. ...

Ethiopia was removed from the trade privilege in January 2022 in relation to the Northern Ethiopia conflict.

President Biden recently urges Congress to quickly reauthorize and modernize this landmark Act, which is set to expire in 2025.

Briefing journalists on the outcomes of the 2024 AGOA Forum held in Washington via webinar on Tuesday, Joy Basu, the Department of State's Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, stated, "We've had years of conversation with the Ethiopian Government as to what the government needs to do to ensure that the country is re-eligible - or is eligible again for AGOA benefits."

Constance Hamilton, the Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Africa, said, "We have been very specific in our conversations with the Ethiopian Government of what we need to see in order to reinstate them in the program.

The review right now is underway, and we are looking at all of the information that's coming in from various sources, which we will evaluate very carefully. Before the end of the year, the President will announce his decision on whether or not Ethiopia will be returned to AGOA."

Basu added that the process of maintaining AGOA eligibility is not a "guessing game," and the legislation provides clear guidelines on the requirements. The U.S. government aims to see countries remain eligible and companies benefit from the program.

The negotiations between the U.S. and Ethiopia regarding AGOA reinstatement are ongoing, and a final decision is expected by the end of 2024.

## Why Ethiopia's...

In the interim, Ethiopia's First Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Development Policy Operation has received a total of 1.5 billion USD from the World Bank, aimed at bolstering the ongoing economic reform initiatives of the Ethiopian government, as announced by the Ministry of Finance.

Despite these recent loan approvals, Ethiopia, like many other developing countries, has been requesting IMF, the World Bank, and other lenders to reform their funding policies. During the first preparatory session for the fourth International Financing for Development Conference, Ethiopian Foreign Minister Taye Atsekeselassie criticized the IMF and World Bank for their policies, stating that developing countries like Ethiopia are victims of financial flows in these institutions, despite their efforts to implement policy reforms.

In its latest announcement about Ethiopia, the IMF praised Ethiopia's policy reform stating that "the approval of the Extended Credit Facility is a testament to Ethiopia's strong commitment to transformative reforms." Yet, the IMF has remained silent about its own policy reforms that many developing countries are arguing for.

Contrary to the frequent policy reforms by developing countries, international financial institutions continue to operate with policies adopted in the 1940s or 1950s. "These policies do

not meet the growing developmental demands of developing countries, which is why Ethiopia is questioning the fairness of loan decisions and financial distributions," said Leulseged Tadesse, International Organizations Director General at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

International lenders should take responsibility beyond merely providing credit to developing countries. Many countries, including Ethiopia, face challenges with credit restructuring and credit payment policies. International trade is also impacted by the foreign currency policies of these international creditors, according to Leulseged.

The international financial system needs to be reformed to support inclusive and sustainable development, he said.

The unfairness of international creditors is likely to continue until developing countries receive fair representation, believed Samuel Isa, Ethiopian Deputy Ambassador to the United Nations. "The government cannot agree with all the preconditions set by creditors. Hence, some credits are being postponed while others are approved. In the meantime, the government focuses on gaining economically important support aligned with national interests," he indicated.

Samuel recently told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the government is heavily investing in agriculture and

industry using its own budget. This, in turn, could enhance its negotiating power.

Emphasizing the need for international creditors' reform, he expects international financial institutions to undertake the necessary reforms. The volume of credits and the number of creditors would grow as Ethiopia's economy becomes more resilient, he said.

In a post on X, senior economist and Chairman of Firefax Africa, Zemedeneh Nigatu, known for his arguments about the necessity of international finance institutions' policy reform, stated that Ethiopia's economic reform is a work in progress.

According to him, sustained long-term strategy and policy execution by all key stakeholders (public and private sector) is essential to achieve the goals set under the economic reform program.

Despite Ethiopia's dissatisfaction with creditors' policies, the portfolio of creditors is growing. For example, the World Bank's portfolio in Ethiopia is now around 15.5 billion USD, with 7 billion ready for disbursement, according to the MoF's latest report. Additionally, the investment portfolios of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) are expected to grow in the coming years, the Ministry of Finance projected.

## ETRE to launch...

to implement cashless revenue collection at selected gates, while also working on digitalizing road data to enhance administrative efforts.

Mustafa explained that due to challenges such as lack of customer awareness and technology limitations, the digitalization of all gates couldn't be achieved at once. To address these issues, ETRE plans to strengthen road traffic control mechanisms to reduce accidents and improve service efficiency, while maintaining existing payment alternatives.

ETRE has signed an agreement with a company to install payment technologies, and bid-winning companies are currently supplying materials for installation. The specific payment systems, which may include telebirr or bank switching, will be decided after the technology installation is complete.

The corporation is committed to ensuring that roads meet international standards to provide efficient services. Efforts are underway for road maintenance, modernization, and standardization.

Mustafa further emphasized that providing efficient and standard road services requires extensive collaboration with stakeholders, including the Ethiopian Road Administration, which is working to expand toll roads.

The enterprise manages toll roads through three branches and has expert teams providing 24-hour awareness creation, emergency response, and road clearing services.

# Opinion

## Macro-economic reforms: Ethiopia's willpower to reach new economic heights

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

It is important to highlight that on the heels of the announcement of the implementation of a market based foreign exchange rate regime, people from all walks of life have been tossing around their ideas, feelings and thoughts in positive and negative ways. It is believed that when they all realize the benefits they secure out of the macro-economic reform policy, they will for sure embark on feeling on top of the world.

In a similar vein, as putting the new system into effect plays a great role in taking the country's economy to the next level of achievement and tackling time-honored economic structural predicaments that have been shackling the hands and feet of the general public, some people from the very beginning have set in motion feeling over the moon.

It should be noted that as the policy change in the sector breathes new life into the system without a doubt by setting an up-to-the-minute macro-economic outline, enhance the investment and trade atmosphere, upgrade productive capacity, and other things of a similar kind, the general public has jump-started cross-pollinating their positive views.

In point of fact, the full implementation of the macro-economic reform policy has set in motion on account of the determination and hard work of the federal government with the objective of taking the country to the next level of success and breathing new life into the country's economy just around the corner.

It is commonly knowledge that the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) has announced the implementation of a market-based foreign exchange rate regime aiming to tackle longstanding economic structural problems.

NBE Governor, Mamo Mihretu, in a press briefing recently stated that this shift introduces a competitive, market-driven determination of the exchange rate, addressing a persistent distortion within the Ethiopian economy. The implementation will be guided by a new foreign exchange directive.

The governor further noted that this policy change is expected to establish a modern macro-economic framework, transform the investment and trade environment, boost productive capacity and productivity growth, and enhance public sector capabilities.

Since 2018, Ethiopia has been undergoing extensive economic reforms to address inherited challenges such as debt burden, inflation, unemployment, slow structural change, low sector productivity and competitiveness, poor development project performance, and resource mismanagement.

The reform measures aim to correct foreign exchange distortions, strengthen the financial sector, control inflation, increase tax revenue, improve government investment efficiency, ensure government debt sustainability, enhance banking sector competitiveness, and improve the business and investment environment.



As a matter of fact, the newly introduced policy plays a paramount role in tackling a tenacious misrepresentation within the Ethiopian economy; transform the investment and trade environment, and boost productive growth and whatnot.

It is worth mentioning that for years Ethiopia has been undergoing a wide spectrum of economic reforms with a focus on addressing possible challenges with regard to debt burden, inflation, unemployment and other related aspects.

As there are some groups that have been working around the close to pour cold water on the positive moves unfolding in the country, each and every one should turn a deaf ear to their cock and bull stories that do not reflect the existing reality on the ground and developments in the area.

The good thing is as the future is rosy for Ethiopia, every Tom, Dick, and Harry should give the cold shoulder to naysayers who have been pulling out all the stops to back the country into a corner and move into uncharted territory. As the result of the new policy cannot be achieved overnight, everyone should wait patiently until the intended target is accomplished.

To everyone's dismay, albeit the country is moving in the right trajectory in the face of challenges, some worrywarts have got the show on the road by making an effort to drag the positive developments unfolding in the length and breadth of the country through the mire making use of their usual fairy tale.

Despite the fact that the full implementation of the macro-economic reform policy is pointing in the right direction and flexing its wings to change the lives of everybody, various bodies have embarked on witnessing the existing developments on the ground.

A case in point, the Ministry of Finance disclosed that Ethiopia has signed 1.5 billion US dollars support lately with the World Bank. In its press release, the Ministry said, "We are pleased to announce a significant reinforcement of its long-standing partnership with the World Bank."

A new financial package, through the First Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Development Policy Operation, has been

agreed upon, consisting of a 1 billion USD grant and a 500 million USD loan, 1.5 billion USD in total aimed at bolstering the ongoing economic reform initiatives of the Ethiopian government.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed on the topic of the issue stated that the country has become one of the fastest-growing economies in the world by achieving robust economic growth over the past six years. From 2019 to 2023 fiscal year, Ethiopia's economy registered an average GDP growth rate of 7.1%. Consequently, Ethiopia has become a significant player in the African economic landscape and has demonstrated its commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The country has built the largest economy in East Africa and the third-largest economy in sub-Saharan Africa.

He went on to say, "Over the past years, there have been significant development cooperation and financing efforts and negotiations for the implementation of our Home-Grown Economic Reform program. These negotiations have been conducted with adequate knowledge and wisdom for outcomes that protect Ethiopia's national interests and improve the lives and livelihoods of our citizens. As a result, it was possible to reach agreements aligned with the main macro-economic objectives and order of policy reforms set by the government."

Some entities made an all-out effort to knock off the balance of the nation and up the ante by coming up with a wide spectrum of conspiracies. As opposed to bringing the international community into the light with the gospel truth blossoming, some worrywarts and pessimists have been sparing no effort to drag the efforts of the government through the mud.

In addition to doctoring facts and bewildering all and sundry with spurious stories, they have been going to the ends of the earth to place the country between the hammer and the anvil. In the general run of things, they have been coming up with quite a lot of unfounded accusations in relation to the major developments on the ground.

It is recalled that notwithstanding the fact that Ethiopia's opponents at home and abroad have been purposely making their best efforts

in quite a lot of circumstances badmouthing the positive developments by masterminding quite a lot of intrigues, all their efforts have gone for nothing.

Taking the whole thing going behind closed doors with regard to the new policy change, everyone should work hand in glove for its realization and achieve the sought after goal. In the new system it is stated that banks can purchase as well as put on sale foreign currency-denominated at freely agreed upon rate.

In spite of the fact that adopting a new market-based foreign exchange system is challenging and needs patient, it is an essential step for tackling the country's issues on the grounds that change cannot happen overnight.

The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved lately the Ethiopia First Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Development Policy Operation to support home-grown economic reforms that will ultimately help the country's transition to a more inclusive economy, allowing the private sector to contribute more strongly to growth, according to information obtained from local media.

In a press release it issued, the WB said: "While strengthening the financial sector, expanding trade options, and improving fiscal transparency, this engagement will also boost protections for poor and vulnerable households during periods of economic change. It consists of a 1 billion USD grant and 500 million USD concessional credit from the International Development Association (IDA)."

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) executive board approved a four-year 3.4 billion USD extended credit facility arrangement for Ethiopia on Monday, according to information obtained from Ethiopian news Agency.

In the same way, the four-year financing package will support the Homegrown Economic Reform (HGER) Agenda to address macro-economic imbalances, restore external debt sustainability, and lay the foundations for higher, inclusive, and private sector-led growth.

The Executive Board's decision will enable an immediate disbursement of SDR 766.75 million (equivalent to about 1 billion USD), which will help Ethiopia meet its balance of payments needs and provide support to the budget.

The homegrown economic program, supported by the four-year ECF arrangement, envisages a comprehensive policy package to stimulate private sector activity and increase economic openness to promote higher and more inclusive growth.

According to IMF press release, strengthening social safety nets to mitigate the impact of reforms on vulnerable households is a critical component of the authorities' reform program.

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

# Editorial

## Hopes on rewarding outcomes of foreign currency reform

The recent measures of the government in transforming the country's economy have raised many discussions among citizens, scholars the media and international organizations. Just as some of them express their fears many also forward their optimistic views and expectations from the reform.

Ethiopia offers many investment opportunities due to its population, skilled workforce, and abundant resources. However, the strict foreign exchange management system has hindered these opportunities. By establishing a better system, Ethiopia aims to remove barriers to foreign investment, promote economic formalization, and accelerate growth and prosperity.

Following the government's announcement of launching a macroeconomic reform, the National Bank of Ethiopia has revealed an improved foreign exchange management directive. The market-based foreign exchange system, known as the floating system is likely to address long-standing macroeconomic instabilities and distortions. This change is part of a broader economic reform program that will be implemented in the future.

Indeed all policies and strategies could have their advantages and disadvantages. Yet it must be clear that the actions that the government took now are mostly the same as the comments and suggestions by scholars, opposition as well as others to liberalize the economy. For instance, the launching of the Bureau de Change, where the private sector participates in the currency exchange market locally has been suggested by the private sector and diaspora community, among others for years. Now it's time to apply the rules and regulations to enable the private sector to participate in the currency exchange service under the appropriate monitoring and regulatory role of the National Bank.

The reform also liberalizes the foreign exchange market for imports of goods and services, increasing the share of foreign exchange earnings retained by exporters from 40% to 50%. This is an important step that can keep exporters to depend largely on their foreign exchange revenue rather than scrambling from the local foreign currency market.

A revised regulation will soon be issued to remove restrictions on goods imported in foreign currency. Laws regarding the management of foreign currency accounts opened by foreign institutions, foreign investors, and Ethiopians have been repealed.

It is to be recalled that the Ethiopian Capital Market Authority has been launched and after that, the Ethiopian Security Exchange (ESX) has started operation. These institutions have a big role in attracting more foreign companies to actively participate in the capital market of the country as the new reform also allows them to join the country's capital market.

Companies in special economic zones have special foreign currency usage rights, including full retention of foreign currency earnings. Strict regulations on the amount of foreign currency cash carried by travellers entering or leaving Ethiopia have been abolished.

These foreign exchange management reforms will strengthen Ethiopia's development and its global connections. They align with the government's policy directions outlined in key documents such as the Ten-Year Master Plan and the Indigenous Economic Reform Program. While the reform has faced delays, the start of a new fiscal year and successful discussions with foreign development partners have created an opportunity for progress.

The reform will benefit millions of Ethiopians involved in foreign exchange earning sectors, including farmers, pastoralists, traders, factory workers, businesspeople, and recipients of remittances. Especially the tourism sector is hoped to gain a huge benefit for itself as well as the nation.

According to the macroeconomic analysis conducted by the World Financial Organization, reform measures in Ethiopia are expected to have a significant impact on various aspects of the economy. These measures are projected to accelerate growth, reduce inflation, increase fiscal capacity, expand exports and foreign investment, and boost the country's international foreign exchange reserves.

# Opinion

## Alternatives to the harmful consequences of subsidizing fossil fuels

Throughout the decades, subsidies for fossil fuels have helped bring down energy prices, contributing to increasing economic output and growth. Governments also use these subsidies to bring down inflation by reducing the prices of energy, transportation and a whole range of other products affected by the supply of fossil fuels. Just recently, governments increased subsidies to bring down energy prices that spiked due to the war in Ukraine and post-pandemic recovery.

As the past has shown us, these policies can have a real impact on the cost of living. By one estimate, a \$0.25 decrease in per liter subsidy results in a 6% decrease in income for all groups in society. So, fossil fuel subsidies are generally perceived as a tool used to help reduce the cost of living that specifically helps the poor. A rise in fossil fuel prices often sparks social unrest, such as the yellow vest protests in the oil town of Zhanaozen, Kazakhstan, in 2022.

But the notion that fossil fuel subsidies help the poor could not be further from the truth. According to an International Monetary Fund (IMF) study these subsidies overwhelmingly favor the rich and are an extremely ineffective and expensive way to support the lower income sections of society. They estimate that the richest 20% of society perceives 43% of the benefit, while the poorest 20% gets only 7%. Transferring \$1 to the poorest 20% via gasoline subsidies costs \$33, which means that for every 100 dollars of gasoline subsidy, 97 "leak" to the top four quintiles.

What's more, these estimations do not even take into account the health problems caused by air pollution or the consequences of climate change, which are disproportionately suffered by the poor. And even though fossil fuel subsidies might reduce the cost of living in the short term, these subsidies constitute an astronomical burden for the public budget. This means that in order to pay for the subsidies, governments are forced to acquire debt, increase taxes, and reduce expenditure in public services, all of which further harm the pocket and standard of living of low-income households.

Besides the inherent inequality of these subsidies, their deficiencies extend far beyond. Only 18% of the fossil fuel subsidies in 2022 were explicit subsidies, such as tax cuts, 82% were implicit subsidies, which are basically an undercharging for the negative effects of fossil fuels. For example, with products like tobacco, sugar, or plastic, different strategies such as taxes or fees are often applied to increase their price

so that it covers the real cost to the public health and environment. Ideally, this should also be the case with fossil fuels, and yet, all the damages the industry is linked to are systematically underrepresented in fossil fuel prices around the world.

Fossil fuels accounted for 82% of the global energy mix in 2023 and are the main contributors to global warming. Climate change is expected to displace 140 million people by 2050 and cost \$69 trillion by the end of the century, creating un-measurable amounts of human suffering. The health risks related to the air pollution created by the burning of fossil fuels include several types of cancer, cardiovascular diseases. And even the reduction of cognitive ability. Air pollution is also absorbed by the oceans, altering their acidity and thus compromising entire ecosystems, killing animals and plants alike. Hundreds of thousands of species are expected to disappear, exacerbating hunger crises.

What Is the Alternative?

Organizations such as the IMF and the World Bank are emphatic that fossil fuel subsidies must be scrapped. Reforming fossil fuel pricing would raise an estimated \$4.4 trillion in tax revenues, which is more than the investment needed to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals. These reforms would reduce fossil fuel emissions by 34% below 2019 levels, placing humanity on track to limit global warming to 1.5-2C over pre-industrial levels, a goal established in the Paris Agreement. It is also estimated that removing subsidies would prevent more than 1.5 million deaths a year caused by fossil fuel-driven air pollution.

Fossil fuel subsidies substantially incentivize investment in this type of energy by making investments more profitable and less risky. A reform that increases the prices of fossil fuels would in turn make renewable energies more competitive, increasing the investments in this field and accelerating the transition to green energy.

But reforming the system is not a straightforward task. Back in 2009, G20 nations committed to phasing out fossil fuel subsidies but despite modest progress in some countries, this has not happened. Governments are wary of the social unrest this could cause and the potential effects on inflation, though, as mentioned before, these subsidies are an extremely inefficient way to support the most vulnerable, and there are several ways to address these possible shortcomings.

Source: earth.org

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



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# Business & Economy

## Macro-economic policy reform for comprehensive advancement

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Most nations of the world have embarked on, or are in the process of formulating, medium-term economic reform policies with important common objectives such as sustaining a high level of economic growth, providing sustainable employment opportunities, and devising mechanisms to defeat poverty. Such a bold move is of significantly useful in recording progress via further improving as well as attracting basic socio-economic benefits from the important changes taking place in the regional and international realm.

Yes, in the era of interminably dynamic world and ever-changing socio-economic trajectory, putting a range of social, economic and even political measure/reforms in place is decidedly anticipated. Hence, sound as well as timely steps taken when compounded with transparency in all practices ushers in the path of sustainable development. The newly declared macro-economic reform program in Ethiopia is strongly believed to be instrumental in helping the national economic growth accelerate in a sustainable manner, promoting entrepreneurship and encouraging innovation; thereby creating jobs the bulging the youth.

Ethiopia has become one of the fastest-growing economies in the world by achieving robust economic growth over the past six years. True, Ethiopia has become a significant player in the African economic landscape and has demonstrated its commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Since Ethiopia would like to have a competitive, market-based determination of the exchange rate and address a long-standing distortion within its economy, it has recently inserted a comprehensive macro-economic reform.

Besides, country's foreign exchange reform is also just one part of a wider package of economic reforms that are going to be implemented and accelerated in the months to come.

To be sustainable, economic reforms—defined to incorporate structural reforms and supportive macro-economic stabilization—require broad public support and national as well as international allies. This is more likely to be forthcoming when the economy is growing, employment is being generated, and social welfare is improving. Economic reforms are of course difficult to sustain in the context of high cost of living, rising unemployment, strained social delivery systems, and unequal distributions of income and wealth.

According to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD), following the political change in 2018, the government has been implementing numerous economic reforms. Over the past six years, this reform has aimed at addressing longstanding economic structural problems.

Unequivocally, economic reforms are often critical for sustaining high economic growth and employment, as well as for improving social sector indicators. Reform and growth do not have to be mutually exclusive. Since



*World Bank Group reaffirms commitment to continue partnership with Ethiopia*

the uncertainty created by an unstable macro-economic environment would deter private sector investment, the country has to firmly focus on properly implementing the reform program and policy.

Through the implementation of this macro-economic reform program, Ethiopia would receive billions of dollars both directly and indirectly. The reform is also of paramount importance in fostering the homegrown economy, bolstering production and productivity as well as building government's capacity. The macro-economic reform program targets at sustaining the economic growth, encouraging innovation and creating suitable trade at a competitive scale as well as helping homegrown economic activity keep its increasing momentum. Interestingly, apart from the loan secured from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other loan providers, the World Bank approved to release 1.5 Billion Dollars. Of this, one billion is a grant and the rest is concessional credit from the International Development Association (IDA). This is really an outcome of the viable reform the country has entertained.

Basically, the implementation of the macro-economic reform policy is believed to make high and stable economic growth a success and maintaining single-digit inflation. The macroeconomic reform, which is supported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, is set to build a modern and internationally competitive economic system and deliver substantial benefits to the country's economy.

The market-based foreign exchange rate regime is also critical to relieve the country's foreign exchange shortages, align the prices of import and export goods and services with market realities and address the balance of payment deficit.

It is also critical to relieving foreign exchange shortages, removing constraints to private sector investment and growth, aligning the prices of imported and exported goods and services with market realities. This approach also addresses imbalances in the balance of payments and offers numerous additional benefits.

The macro-economic reform program has indeed targeted at establishing a modern and sound macro-economic policy framework that supports and ensures stability, resilience, and

sustainability, transforming investment and trade environment to boost competitiveness through a favorable environment and opportunity that promotes and enhances innovation and entrepreneurship, expanding productive capacity and productivity growth by increasing investment and unlocking economic growth potentials, and improving public sector capability that enhances the government's capacity to ensure quality and efficient service delivery.

Ethiopia's economic reform agenda will lay the foundation for strong, private sector led, inclusive economic growth and job creation. High and stable economic growth and maintaining single-digit inflation are among the major goals to be achieved during the implementation period of the program. The reform measures aim to correct foreign exchange distortions, strengthen the financial sector, control inflation, increase tax revenue, improve the efficiency of government investment, ensure the sustainability of government debt, enhance the competitiveness and soundness of the banking sector, and improve the business and investment environment.

All relevant ministries and governmental institutions will provide the necessary monitoring and support. The government is committed to strong leadership in policy reform to maintain consistency in implementation across all relevant institutions.

On the other hand, the government is enhancing Institutional capacity by providing support to key macro-economic institutions such as the National Bank of Ethiopia, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Planning and Development. These institutions are crucial for formulating and implementing macro-economic policies, as well as for monitoring and evaluating their impact.

It has also been argued that macro-economic stabilization may benefit the poor, who are the most exposed to the adverse implications of inappropriate policies given their limited ability to protect themselves through asset and income diversification. In addition, unanticipated inflation is costly to those locked in nominal contracts, reducing in most cases real wages and favoring the owners of capital.

Indeed, Ethiopia with efficient spending on the social sectors, particularly health and education, have obtained high returns in terms of enhancing their human resource base, reducing poverty and infant mortality, and increasing life expectancy.

As countries following export-promoting strategies, which have thus been able to benefit from a shift in trade and production toward labor-intensive goods, have generally registered increases in real wages and more equitable income distribution, Ethiopia has shown keen interest to draw important lessons from these nations. Such strategies have been shown to enhance equality in the long run.

As learnt from a number of economic experts and senior officials despite reservations, the comprehensive macro-economic policy the country has commenced to pursue would be a viable means to garner supports from development partners, push the national economic growth steps forward and help create too many job opportunities at national level.

Here, expenditure composition can and should be improved to help the poor by promoting basic education, primary public health, and rural infrastructure and by reducing unproductive outlays. Monetary policy can play an important role in reducing the inflation tax, which has a greater impact on the poor. It can also improve the financial intermediation process.

As learnt from the statement from the Office of the Prime Minister, the government of Ethiopia has begun implementation of its comprehensive macro-economic reform policy with revision of the country's foreign exchange system. Besides, this reform has attracted a range of national economic bounties.

The reform policy aims at correcting foreign exchange distortions and solving the structural balance of payment deficit, reduce inflation by modernizing the monetary policy frameworks. According to the office, the reform seeks to achieve national development aspirations by solving debt vulnerability and increasing domestic income, building a strong, inclusive, and sustainable economic system by improving government service delivery and business and investment environment.

# Women in Focus

## The impact of stereotypes on African women in politics

BY MEKDES TAYE (PHD)

Various sources showed that sustainable economic development and a higher reduction in poverty rate are directly related to the equal inclusion of women in every sphere of a given nation. African women, who are still characterized by sociocultural patriarchy and systematic ignorance, are not given due consideration and equally treated in different sectors. Especially, the political landscape seems to stay monopolized by males though some improvements are progressively noticed in some African countries. Women toying up the ladder to politics have been facing certain challenges; which most of them emanating from the patriarchal perspective of the society.

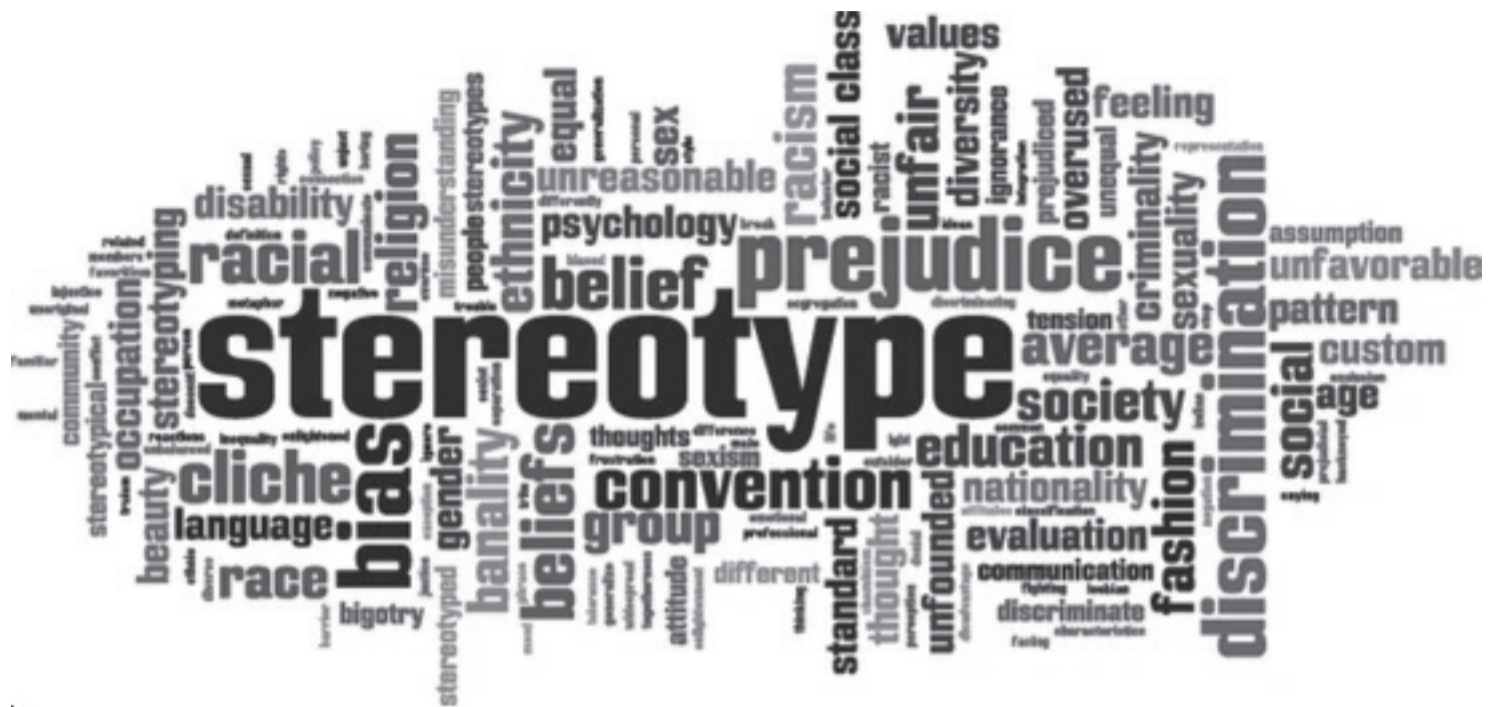
The socialization regarding females is still guided by male supremacy. Thus, the efficacy of an individual woman is highly threatened by the cultural practices of the people. Among the basic problems that impacted women in their path of politics is stereotypes. The word can be understood to mean a generalized belief about a given person or group. It is a belief established by usually the masses towards an individual or a group. Though it is not a fact, the massive similar view yield undesired effect on the targeted person or group.

Once, ‘Talk Africa’ China’s Global Television Network (CGTN) program was interviewing the former Executive Director of UN Women, Phmuzile Mlambo Nguka, regarding African women empowerment. The Director was interrupted by the journalist while she explained points as follows. “We have the greatest number of women graduates in the world that the world has ever seen. But this number was not translated into practice Women were not entering senior management positions like commanding heights of the economy.” The journalist stuck her as “why”. The Director was so fast in responding. “Stereotypes, violence against women and push back and in some cases almost hidden biases towards women within private sectors.”

Few women candidates in the 2022 Kenyan general election were asked about the challenges they have been facing during their campaign. Anita Sonia from MP KAJIADO NORTH mentioned her basic challenge: “I have faced a lot of intimidation. I have stood my grounds. There was a time my car was vandalized on a broader daylight.” I understand this had happened because she is a woman; if she were a man, no one would dare to cause such humiliation. They did it in the open; which means attacking women politicians that way is a socially approved measure at least at that time.

She said, “It is tough. It is risky. People throw guns on my way. There are so many stereotypes. I am young; I am an African woman so they throw bad words at me. They didn’t give me a platform even to listen to what I was saying. They didn’t give me an opportunity to even present myself. So I decided to be independent.”

She mentioned that politics is tough because she was exposed to hear stereotypes and warnings. When such measures keep on challenging her, she finally gave up and



left the space for others. Others are, I think, those incapable women for the sake of the allotted quota. Thus, they are there just for number not for effect.

The other woman with this line is Zipporah Kamau from MCA KABETE. Here is her experience. “People don’t believe that I can do it on my own as an African woman. People think that I am a prostitute or I have nothing to say.” This attitude is very frustrating for a woman who grew up in an African culture. She was not judged by her content of character rather she was encountering these challenges just by being a woman. This is, I believe, a violation of human rights. But human violation is raised if it was meant for a man. Thus, these skilled and passionate women did left the stage for men.

In Ethiopia, there are very irritating proverbs and maxims that humiliated women in various competitive areas. Though these sayings are sourced from a relatively higher patriarchal section of society, they are dominantly referred to when a strong woman is in a way to top up to some steps. Men drag these proverbs in a context that could perfectly throw away the woman from hope, work, education, and political fight. Here under, I have mentioned some common gender stereotyping proverbs that deliberately label women and hinder their path to success.

### ሴት ሰብት፣ ወፍጫ ሰዳቂት

Women are made for household chores; gristmill for flour

This proverb implies that a woman is only appropriate to perform household chores and she should remain at home carrying out domestic works. The reason is she is only effective in keeping her inside the house. She can’t do anything outside of the house. The truthfulness of this say is equated with the nature of gristmill. Its only function is to produce flour nothing else. Women’s potential is also restricted within the house. Thus, when a woman is detected outside the home, she is going to receive this stereotyped expression.

### ሴት ማገዶ ቢቸገራት ምሰሶ ትጎቅሳለች

If a woman needs firewood, she will take off a pole

This saying is understood as a type of stereotype since the meaning aims at humiliating the woman. It infers the meaning that says the woman is unskillful and unable; so she can’t predict the future logically. She has a short memory so she only worries and thinks for the current situation and comfort. A pole is a basic pillar that should not be used for consumption purposes. If it is out there, everything that rests on it will collapse. A woman is that much “foolish” as the intended meaning shows. This is a very terrifying attitude of the society towards women. It is so discouraging that affects women to move forward in politics.

### ሴት በማደት ወንድ በቸሎት

A woman’s place is in the kitchen; a man’s place is in the courtroom.

This expression is best inferred when the woman is in the path of politics. Such expressions are mostly thrown while the woman is out to explain her political program to followers. Since seeing a woman before the mass in a very open area is a weird thing in the socio-cultural norms of the society, such actions are going to be violated using this countenance. Thus, she is warned to go back home and take care of household chores; which is an effective section for her. Those critical areas like court decision-making spaces are only done by the male counterpart, not females.

### ሴት ብታውቀው በወንድ ያልቀ

Though the woman knows; it is the man who decides the destiny

This stereotype has the gist of males’ superiority over the knowledge of the woman. Even though, the woman has a great deal of knowledge and is capable enough of doing something that is not enough in the eyes of the society. There should be a man to accomplish the task. Males with or without knowledge are not judged by their content. Their sex is the only thing for consideration. They are always on the front line in winning at everything which was initiated by any woman. That means the woman can’t scale up something and reach at its destiny without the supervision of males. This is one of the pessimistic gender-biased sayings that emphasize the importance of males; but lets

a woman feel hopeless and worthless from the start; and even affects her from planning something.

### ሴት ከወንድ አህል ከሆድ

The woman’s fate is man as the grain’s fate is stomach

This idea is generated to remind the woman that she is always under her man. She is not capable of standing on her own. She can’t be counted as a valuable person by herself. She should attach herself to a man to be fully recognized. The resemblance to the food shows that the destiny of the food is to be eaten and stored in the stomach. The women’s destiny is also to be under the control of the man. Thus, she can’t move on by her own. Whatever she tried to do, she is finally in the hands of the man to succeed in a given competition. This has a greater effect on the psychological makeup of the woman in various ways. It could affect her to run things with confidence and passion till its end. The mien is so disappointing that discourages women from inspiring for future careers.

### ሴት ያመነ ገም የዘገነ

The one who trusted a woman is equivalent to the one who took out some from the cloud.

This is a warning to not trust any woman. It is obvious that the cloud is not a physically touched thing. In parallel to the say; a woman is not the one to put trust in her. Thus, with the society that forwarded this proverb, it is too tough to speak out on the stage and get the trust of the followers in a political campaign.

These mentioned stereotypes are very powerful in affecting the psychological and moral aspirations of the woman. They could even left the woman with lasting trauma. This is a very serious issue which should recall responsible bodies to act upon it from grassroots level. Let me raise the idea of the former Executive Director of UN Women who mentioned some points as a solution for stereotypes of African women. She said that such abusive attempts should be enacted by law. The legislative body of each African country should formulate a new law and implement it seriously. Thus, gradually it could become the socially normed practice.

# Indepth

## Building tomorrow today

Around the world, young people are driving change to ensure our youngest learners get the best start in life.

In rural Kenya, Aisha, a young female entrepreneur trained through a UNICEF-supported programme, has started her own Early Childhood Education (ECE) center. This center provides quality early learning to over 50 children and creates jobs for other young women as teachers and support staff.

The impact of Aisha's work is profound: more children are ready for school, and more young women in her community are economically empowered.

More than 4,000 miles away, in a densely populated informal settlement in Dhaka, Rahim, a young entrepreneur, demonstrates that entrepreneurship and early childhood education are opportunities for all youth to participate in.

Using training and seed funding from UNICEF he has established an early childhood education center, offering flexible hours and affordable fees. His center has become an invaluable resource for working parents looking for quality early learning for their children while also employing young people from the local community.

Through the efforts of young people like Aisha and Rahim, a brighter future is being forged for the world's children, one young entrepreneur at a time.

Right now, more than half of the world's youngest learners — 175 million children — lack access to early childhood education.

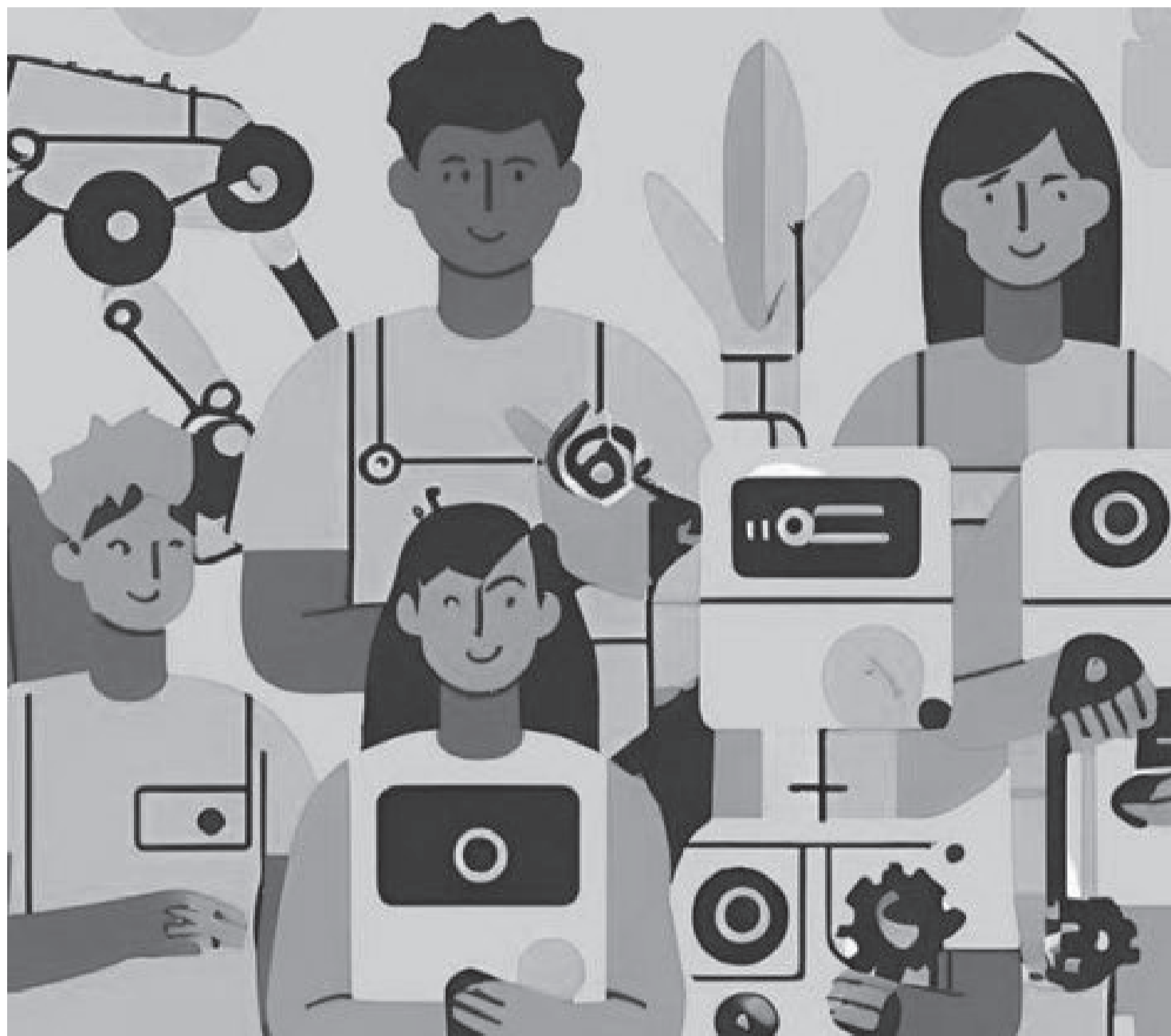
Addressing gaps in early childhood education can enhance school readiness and help combat the persistent cycle of low achievement and high dropout rates that affect children who fall behind in these formative years — a pattern of underachievement which follows children into adulthood.

Youth-led entrepreneurial initiatives offering early learning services can be a game changer in addressing these gaps.

Mobilizing the power of youth to expand early childhood care and education services not only addresses the critical gaps in education access but also showcases the tremendous impact of investing in initiatives that could transform the future of 267 million young people globally, who are not in employment, education, or training.

Skilling young men and women as providers of early childhood services generates livelihood options and decent jobs for educated youth. With expanded early childhood education, young parents can also pursue their own education and career goals.

Young entrepreneurs bring fresh perspectives, energy, and a deep understanding of the local context, making them well-positioned to drive improvements in early learning services. With the right training and support, they can create sustainable solutions to specific needs and become vital pillars and champions of early childhood education in their communities



— building a brighter tomorrow, with innovative solutions today!

### Skilling for Success

UNICEF and Generation Unlimited are dedicated to empowering young entrepreneurs with comprehensive skills and scaling the establishment of high-quality early learning centers. Initiatives such as the UNICEF's Venture Fund and Innovation Challenge, and Generation Unlimited imagen Ventures Youth Challenge have been effective in building young people's life skills as well as a blend of entrepreneurial, management and financial skills required to establish and run a successful enterprise.

When these skills are combined with further training on play-based learning and parental engagement strategies, young entrepreneurs can ensure their early childhood education services follow age-appropriate learning strategies and effectively engage parents in the learning process, thereby bolstering enrollment and caregiver involvement in school activities, events, and projects.

Numerous success stories exemplify the transformative impact of these programmes. In South Africa, UNICEF and Generation Unlimited have partnered with the University of Pretoria, and Price Waterhouse Coopers to establish the Mamelodi Business Hub, training young South Africans in micro-business management and financial literacy.

Young entrepreneurs from this initiative have founded the Ikhaya Labantwana Montessori project to expand access to early childhood education and care in rural areas. Applying a similar approach in a humanitarian context, UNICEF partnered with the Government of Jordan to train young people in Za'atari refugee camp to deliver early learning and psychosocial services in Makani centers.

On World Youth Skills Day, (which is commemorated annually on July 15), let us commit to supporting young people in creating innovative, sustainable solutions for early childhood education. To do this, we must fuel innovations that empower youth with the appropriate skills, support and resources to establish and run high quality services.

Education decision-makers, investors, and governments must adopt supportive strategies, including developing youth-friendly policy frameworks, providing accredited training and mentorship, offering financial support, and fostering networks and partnerships to create a robust support system for young entrepreneurs.

Together, we can build a brighter tomorrow for children, families, and communities worldwide by empowering educated young girls and boys to be the early childhood champions and changemakers of today.

Source: (INTER PRESS SERVICE)

***Initiatives such as the UNICEF's Venture Fund and Innovation Challenge, and Generation Unlimited imagen Ventures Youth Challenge have been effective in building young people's life skills as well as a blend of entrepreneurial, management and financial skills required to establish and run a successful enterprise***



# Law & Politics

## A decisive strike against injustice

BY SOLOMON WASSIHUN

We are currently in the height of the rainy season, *Kermit*. The Abbay, the king of Ethiopia's rivers, is flowing, gushing and roaring like there's no tomorrow. Over the past four years, tensions around the Abbay politics have increased at this time of year, drawing international attention to Ethiopia. The country's name has been frequently mentioned in the headlines and in international institutions, from the African Union in Addis Ababa to the UN Security Council in New York. Due to Egypt's malicious interference, what was originally a development project in Abbay, GERD, has escalated into an international political drama, thrusting Ethiopia into the global political spotlight in Washington, Brussels, Moscow, Beijing, and other centers of global politics.

Considering the fact that the Ethiopians declared last year that the filling of the GERD was completed, we did not expect this year's *Kermit* season to bring another exciting time for Abbay politics. Well, we were proven wrong. This year's *Kermit* has brought a breakthrough that has created another wave in Abbay politics to the delight of those who demand justice and fairness in the use of the great river.

In the previous four *Kermit* seasons, Ethiopians and those demanding equitable use of the Nile rejoiced at the groundbreaking news from Guba, the place where Africa's mightiest dam GERD is being built. But for this year, the news came from another place, but not that far from Guba. It came from Juba, just over the Ethiopian border. So the source of the exciting *Kermit*'s news on the Nile was moved from Guba to Juba.

It is strange that the big news did not get as much media coverage by the international media as it should. Even the active website of the intergovernmental organization that has an immediate link with the Nile issues, the Nile Basin Initiative Secretariat based in Uganda, did not make any posts related to the news, as seen on 31 July 2024, over three weeks after the announcement of the news by the South Sudanese government.

It was news that the upper riparian states had been waiting for over 14 years. Assuming Nile politics as a football match playing upper riparian states captained by Ethiopia, against low riparian states captained by Egypt. The unexpected South Sudan struck a decisive goal for the upper riparian team by ratifying the Nile Basin Cooperative Framework Agreement, CFA. Interestingly enough, it was Kenya, not South-Sudan that was expected to strike the decisive goal. Kenya was positioned as a forward, being the only signatory state that is absent from the list of those that ratified the treaty.

South Sudan's score will place the upper stream states team in the lead, but not yet a winner. They will be pronounced winners only after the establishment of the long-awaited Nile River Basin Commission, which would presumably be powerful enough to ensure equitable utilization of the Nile River among riparian states with clearly set principles and guidelines that are in line

**In every aspect of its relations with its neighbors Ethiopia has always advocated and followed the policy of equality and sharing resources for mutual prosperity. However, Egypt consistently stuck to the policy of maintaining the obsolete hegemonic colonial policy of securing the Nile River for its exclusive use with total disregard for upstream countries**

with the UN Watercourses Convention.

Apart from changing the power dynamics in the politics of the Nile, the ratification of CFA by South Sudan early last month signifies the growing influence of Ethiopia in the Horn. Even though the South Sudanese ratified the treaty unexpectedly, it did not happen spontaneously. It is the fruit of the effort of the Ethiopians' and their allies' intensive diplomatic engagement with the South Sudanese to persuade them not to fall for the temporary benefits offered by Egypt, and not to compromise their opportunity for sustainable development as a Nile riparian state.

Thus South Sudan's acceding to CFA is a huge blow to the Egypt's unjustified policy of greed on the Nile, but on the contrary, it is a resounding diplomatic victory for Ethiopians. They should pat themselves on the back on scoring such groundbreaking move to rectify the injustice on the Nile water use. This achievement undoubtedly adds another feather in the cap of the Ethiopian Foreign Ministry.

In addition to the effective diplomatic leverage of the Ethiopians and their allies, the deepening socio-economic ties between the two nations [Ethiopia -South Sudan] as a part of the effort of building an integrated economic zone in the Horn, far outweighs the Egyptian's offerings to lure South Sudan away from the CFA. The wise decision the South Sudanese leadership made on the treaty stands as a testimony to their wisdom which prioritizes long-term sustainable gains rather than short-term and temporary ones.

Nile politics can be characterized by the struggle among fairness and sharing versus injustice and selfishness. The riparian states seem to act in different roles. The Egyptians act as a bully. The Sudanese act as a cheer leader for the Egyptians, while the Kenyans, Ugandans, Tanzanians, Rwandans, Burundians are bullied. The South Sudanese were being pampered by the Egyptians. The Congolese and Eritreans are the indifferent bystanders while the Ethiopians stand up to the Egyptians to defend the rights of the upstream riparian states.

It is worth noting that the Ugandan president was invited by the Ethiopians to visit the construction site of the GERD project when he was on an official visit to Addis Ababa a few years ago. According to insiders, he declined the invitation for fear of upsetting the Egyptians and the Sudanese.

In every aspect of its relations with its neighbors Ethiopia has always advocated and followed the policy of equality and sharing resources for mutual prosperity. However, Egypt consistently stuck to the policy of maintaining the obsolete hegemonic colonial policy of securing the Nile River for its exclusive use with total disregard for upstream countries.

It is common for Egyptian politicians and scholars to shamelessly refer to the Ethiopian river Abbay, the most important tributary of the Nile, as 'our water'. Similarly, Egyptians emphasize that they would defend what they call their historical right by all means. The Egyptians would realize how absurd their claim to 55.5 BCM of Nile water is, if they

would only ask themselves the following question: If they believe that Egypt's and Sudan's rightful share is 55.5 and 18.5 BCM respectively, what about the rightful share of Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, Burundi and the other riparian states?

Surely they dare not answer this question as it would expose their shameless greed and selfishness. Given the fact that the average annual volume of water in the Nile is no more than 84 BCM, it is easy to do the math. So the veiled truth is that the Egyptians' claim to the 55.5 BCM of the Nile is tantamount to claiming that the other nine riparian states have no right to use the Nile.

The struggle between Fairness and greed over the use of the Nile water has been going on for a long time with increasing intensity as the years go by. With relentless diplomatic efforts made by upper riparian states mainly Ethiopia, The Nile Basin Initiative, NBI was established in Entebbe in 1999, to make the Nile resources for cooperation for the common good rather than a bone of contention. Then comes the formulation of a treaty, CFA, in 2010 intending to establish a framework to promote integrated management, sustainable development, and harmonious utilization of the Nile.

Just like football fans eagerly awaiting the referee's whistle to declare the end of the game and the victory of their team, we are counting down to the day, possibly in the coming October, the CFA would enter into force as a legally binding document, providing a permanent legal and institutional basis for Nile cooperation. It is highly unlikely that the Egyptians will find ways to delay or sabotage this important day. Nevertheless, that scenario cannot be ruled out.

As the renowned Sudanese expert on water law says, from now on it is in the best interest of Egypt and Sudan not to go against the flow, and thus they should be part of the CFA. "The entry into force of the CFA will also end the long academic and futile debate on the Nile colonial treaties. Thus, it is for Egypt and Sudan's own interests to join the CFA, and to work in the spirit of cooperation with the other Nile riparians to manage, share, develop, and protect the Nile River basin," he said.

Following the establishment of the commission, there will be a new round of diplomatic struggle among riparian states to clearly define and quantify such terms like equitable share, significant harm, and information sharing etc. Thus, the commission, with or without the presence of Egypt and Sudan would be a venue for extended negotiations among riparian states on the nitty-gritty of the application of CFA. The question here is can Egyptians and the Sudanese afford to continue staying outside CFA and the Commission that shape the future of the Nile?

Additionally, the commission would spur international financiers and donor agencies to support trans-boundary development projects that benefit the people of riparian states as well as promote the economic use and conservation of the Nile in general, and Abbay in particular which accounts for 86% of the Nile's water.

# Society



## Gorgora, must visit tourist attraction

### BY STAFF REPORTER

Lately, the Gorgora Eco Resort, which is in the cluster of the Dine for Nation project was officially inaugurated recently in the presence of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) and several government officials.

The project is one of the success stories mentioned at the frontline of tourism destination development activities. It also demonstrates the significant progress registered in recent years in the tourism and hospitality sector, especially in destination development. Not only that, but they portray the remarkable works carried out to promote new natural attractions such as Wonchi, Halala Kela, and the Chebera Churchura Elephant Paw Lodge located in Dawuro Zone.

Gorgora is also part of this effort. Though the area was known as a tourist attraction, there were limitations in attracting visitors. However, recognizing the destination's potential, renovating and refurbishing works have been carried out in a way that can attract more tourists under the Dine for Nation project. The lodge is now expected to increase tourist flow.

According to information from the Office of the Prime Minister, the Premier's Dine for Nation initiative has bear fruit in terms of developing the destinations and depicting the stunning and enticing natural beauty of the attractions and the surrounding areas.

The efforts to develop such areas aim to promote tourism, create jobs, and raise the standard of living of the surrounding communities with a focus on sustainability and environmental protection.

According to the Office, tourism drives economic growth and plays an important role in the world economy by generating a considerable amount of foreign exchange earnings and supporting millions of jobs. The economic value it yields is also incalculable due to its direct contribution to the Gross National Product (GDP).

In Ethiopia, the sector is also one of the five key priority areas that get due attention in the national economic reform program launched by the government. To this end, initiatives such as 'Dine for Nation' which have greater potential to develop and retrieve the tourism sector by attracting more visitors, stimulating economic growth, creating jobs, and developing tourist destinations, are ongoing.

The Gorgora Eco Resort is the result of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's commitment to develop the nation's tourist attractions; mainly developing four world-class destinations under the "Dine for Nation" cluster.

Scaling up the initiatives, currently, the development of an additional seven attraction sites are ongoing in different parts of the country under the 'Dine for Generation' project.

While talking regarding the success of the project during the inauguration ceremony of the Gorgora Eco Resort, Amhara State President Arega Kebede said that the projects that are part of the 'Dine for Nation' project and being built in the State are very beneficial to the community. They are blessings for the people that can significantly increase the flow of tourists, serve as the center of gravity for the development of the area, and create great job opportunities.

According to the President, Gorgora Eco Resort has inspired private investors to develop the area and carry out activities that have significant potential for tourism development.

This project has left greater lessons to developers engaged in construction and tourism development in terms of project management in general and quality management in particular.

Further than this, the successful implementation of the project has set a high level of work on what kind of development

activities should be carried out around the shore of Lake Tana; as well as the level of quality needed to execute the activities.

Above all, Gorgora Eco Resort is a clear indication of the government's commitment and aspiration to promote new ideas and innovation.

Bekele Uma is a tourism professional, and a lecturer at the Tourism Training Institute, Department of Tourism. He is also a consultant, researcher, and owner of a tour company.

He had also an opportunity to visit Gorgora and its surroundings while he was working as a tour guide. Thus, he is now happy to see this place developing as an eco-resort.

In an exclusive interview with EPA following the inauguration of the resort, Bekele said that in earlier times, while he was working as a tour guide, he had also an opportunity to visit Gorgora and its surroundings. And now watching it in this way as an eco-resort destination is pleasing.

All the projects that have been undertaken and are being carried out in different parts of the country under the 'Dining for Nation' project have shown encouraging results.

According to him, tourism destination development projects that are planned and developed by the government have multifaceted benefits. Infrastructures that demand a lot of foreign currency and huge capital, such as electricity, water, and the like cannot be done by the private sector. Thus, he highlighted the essentiality of constructing those substructures by the government saying that it will help to advance the tourism sector and bring about the desired outcome.

Mentioning that the Gorgora Eco Resort is one of the government-funded projects, he said that it is an additional, preferred attraction for tour operators to invite tourists to see this breathtaking attraction.

In the past, tourist service providers were

not at the desired level in terms of quality and standards. However, the establishment of Gorgora Eco-Tourism will ensure this with superior quality.

"The construction of the Gorgora project is mainly important for the State and the local people residing in the area. Mainly, the construction was being carried out in a manner giving due consideration to eco-tourism that centered the community, it will have many benefits."

As to him, it will come with various opportunities just to mention but a few to create jobs, and to have access to infrastructure, including electricity, water, and other benefits.

"When a given tourist destination is developed, it opens the door for the community to grow together. The basic concept of tourism is also benefitting the local community through infrastructure, as well as job creation for tourism professionals at all levels."

The Gorgora Eco Resort also meets this requirement. Particularly, when it becomes fully operational, it opens up ample opportunities for the residents as it allows them to supply food raw materials, cultural items, and traditional food prepared by the community, as well as renting equipment and transportation such as horses used for leisure time.

In this regard, works that make the communities living in the area where Gorgora Eco Resort is located the primary beneficiaries of the resort should be implemented. If so, they can see the destination as their asset and in turn, preserve and develop the area sustainably and provide effective services to the visitors.

Such approach - making local community the primary beneficiary of the development - should be an act implemented in other tourist destinations that are being developed across the country, he remarked.

# The reflection of women's sympathy in the Zimbabwean novel 'Nervous Conditions' (Part II)

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The semi-autobiographical novel did reveal the sympathetic nature of Zimbabweans. In the previous article, I analyzed the major character's (Tambu's) systematic sympathy for peaceful association with her brother and the rest family members.

In this part, I will examine the remaining characters' reflections on the raised issue. The analysis is mirrored through Nego Feminism.

The best example that represented no self/no ego-personality in the novel was the wife of Babamukuru, Miaguru. Babamukuru and his wife, Miaguru, had been studying for their Degree in South Africa and got an MA degree in England. But when they came back to the family of Babamukuru or Rhodesia, relatives and people around gave great respect and praise to Babamukuru. No one was greeting or even noticing Miaguru. Tambu narrated the situation as follows:

"Babamukuru stepped inside, followed by a retinue of grandfathers, uncles, and brothers. Various paternal aunts, who could be relatives of the lower strata. Maiguru entered last and alone, except for her two children, smiling quietly and inconspicuously" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 37).

Miaguru was a quiet person who did not like to show off. She dressed decently. She had the manners of a decent lady. This could also be seen in the way she walked. She was also devoted to her husband and children. She sacrificed everything for her family. Although she was an educated woman, family members did not give her the warm welcome they had given to her husband. Since she was behaving like those who were not educated in that setting, no one was giving any regard for her. This made her to be seen like other women in the family and the society. In other words, she lived an ordinary life there peacefully.

Miaguru exposed herself when she was talking with Tambu sometime later after the above-mentioned incident. She told Tambu that she had an MA degree like her uncle. That was very unexpected for Tambu. Here is the dialogue:

"Do you have a Masters Degree?"

Didn't you know?"

How could I have known? No one had ever mentioned it to me.

Did you ever ask?"

Yes, we both studied, your uncle and I, in South Africa for our Bachelor's Degree and in England for our Master's" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 101).

This dialogue showed that Miaguru did not reveal her educational level unless someone asked. Another incident which exhibited no ego/ no self was when Tambu asked Miaguru about the amount of money that she had been receiving when she was working in England. Tambu reminded their words as: "You must earn a lot of money, 'I breathed in awe. My aunt laughed and said she never received her salary. I was aghast" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 101).



This statement shows that Miaguru has been giving her money to her husband. She didn't use it for herself. What mattered to her was just serving her husband in any way she could. This could help to build a sense of complementarity and cooperation in her family by practically showing them her devotion and love. However, marriage should be based on mutual help. In this case, it was Babamukuru who got all the benefits of marriage. In this regard, Nnaemeka (2004) asserted that when one shows more care for another than self, the other party should react that way so that the two could build mutual satisfaction. Thus, the selflessness of Miaguru was not successful in influencing the sympathy of Babamukuru. He was simply exploiting her in all aspects. Here the researcher needed to say that Miaguru was undervaluing herself for no reward from her husband. Therefore, this woman was not strategic in influencing her husband to start thinking about her and the family. She was there to be exploited and subverted by his authoritative personality. //

The other example of no ego/no self that Miaguru revealed was seen when Miaguru asked Tambu about her feelings concerning her trip to South Africa and England with her husband. Tambu replied as follows:

"I thought you went to look after Babamukuru," I said. "That's all people ever say."

Maiguru snorted, "And what do you expect? Why should a woman go all that way and put up with all those problems if not to look after her husband?"

Can you tell me now that they aren't pleased that I did, even if they don't admit it? No! your uncle wouldn't be able to do half the

things he does if I didn't work as well.

If it was necessary to efface yourself to preserve his sense of identity and value, then, I was sure Maiguru had taken the correct decisions" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 101-102).

Here it is visible that the two women, Miaguru and Tambu, accepted that their femininity was all about serving their male counterparts around them: at homestead work and in bringing money too. Miaguru uncovered that the success of her husband was because of her strength in helping him work outside to bring money for the family, taking care of the children, and her husband too. She said: "Your uncle wouldn't be able to do half the things he does if I didn't work as well!" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 101).

Here helping her husband to get success in his education is good, and it is an accepted and expected task of the wife. But what matters is in the process of helping this man Miaguru should not leave her own life too. Her help and cooperation should also be shared by Babamukuru in helping her back. He did not show such a reaction. He preferred to continue using her as inferior to him. Thus, she was a subordinated woman by this educated man. Therefore, this selflessness is not a strategic approach that changed the mood of Babamukuru.

For Miaguru, the well-being of her family was the most important thing than her self-interest. She knew what things she would do with the degree she held if there were not Babamukuru and her children there with her. She gave everything that she had to the family for the sake of the interest and happiness of her husband and the children. We cannot imagine the challenges she might have faced.

She speaks of it as follows: "When I was in England I glimpsed for a little while the things I could have been, the things I could have done if-if-if things were-different-But there was Babawa Chido and the children and the family" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 101).

As it is read in the above extract, Miaguru called her husband Babawa Chido which means the father of Chido, her son. This implies that she is trying her best to be strategic in approaching him with sympathy. She goes this far, the researcher understood, because this man is very strong and rigid in settling cases and relationships in the family. Miaguru said she was having an opportunity to do more when she was in England. But she prefers to leave these things for the sake of her family. This means she had made lots of sacrifices for the family and Babamukuru. She said: "does anyone appreciate, what sacrifices were made?" "As for me, no one even thinks about the things I gave up" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 102).

This extract shows that Miaguru exhibited her love for the family by paying a price. The prior thing that she worries about is her husband and her family too. Priority is given to her family, not to herself. As she testifies, Babamukuru would not have gotten his present educational and social status if she had not served him as she did. The family of Babamukuru, including the family of Tambu, got economic benefits and the present social status because of the sacrifice Maiguru had made.

The sacrifices that Miaguru experienced impressed Tambu. Instead of complaining Miaguru quietly shouldered the burden of the family by striving for their welfare. This was evidenced in the novel as:

"If it was necessary to efface yourself, as Maiguru did so well that you couldn't be sure that she didn't enjoy it if it was necessary to efface yourself to preserve his sense of identity and value, then I was sure, Maiguru had taken the correct decisions" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 102).

This extract showed that Tambu had a feminine identity, and she believes in the preservation of one's identity and value at the cost of self-sacrifices. Tambu was not only impressed by Miaguru, but she also approved of what Miaguru did. According to Tambu, Miaguru is a woman who strives for the welfare and social change of the family. For Tambu Miaguru was right in serving her husband that way. This complementarity helps the two sexes to live peacefully as a family. However, the researcher feels differently. The life of Miaguru was full of commitment and scarification. This scarification helped Babamukuru to achieve his own goal. However, he did not realize that caring for his wife is also important for her to achieve her own goal. He never showed this attempt in the novel. Thus, Tambu was not the right girl to see this fact logically. Second Tambu seemed biased for her uncle. If she had not been such a girl, she would have understood the subordination of Miaguru even after those troubles. Therefore, Miaguru could not be a sample woman in the family and in the society that portrayed strategic sympathy in her life.