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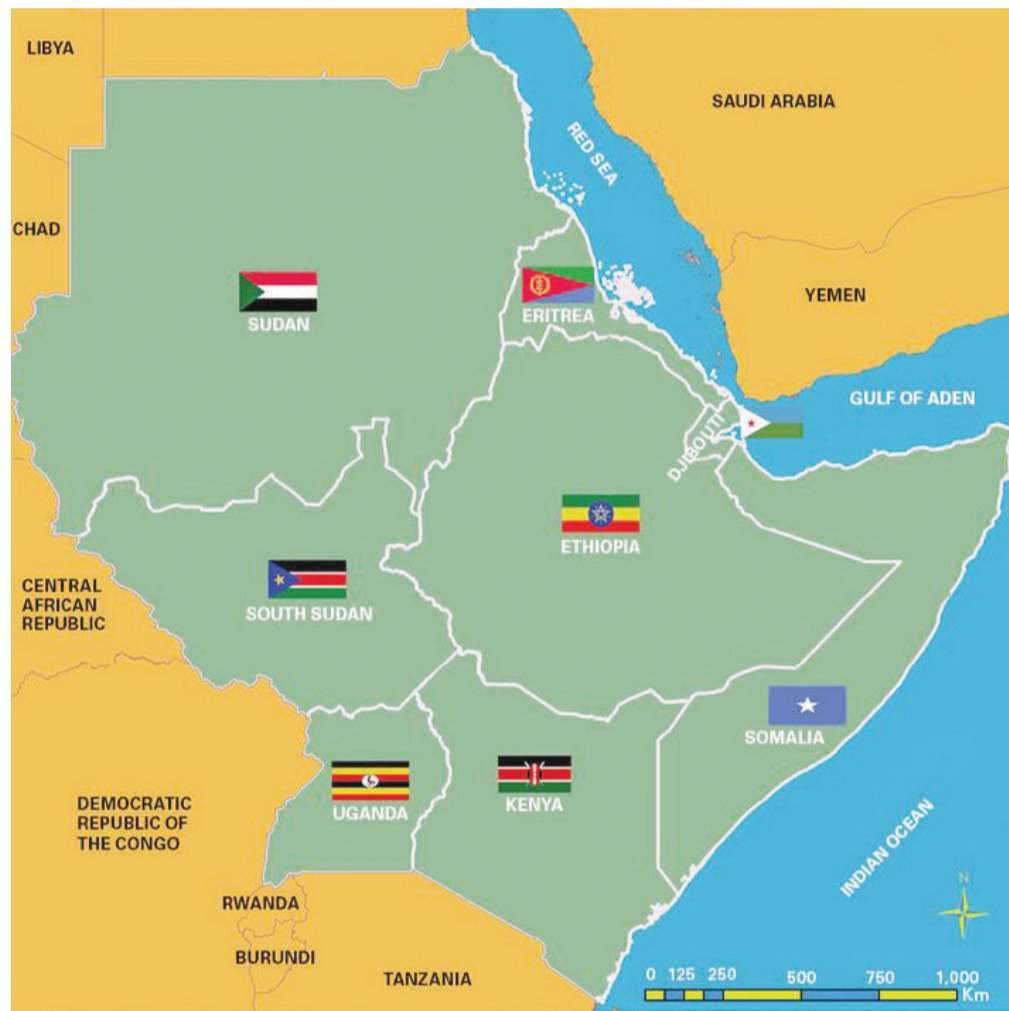
Ethiopia vis-à-vis HoA's evolving geopolitical landscape

BY YESUF ENDRIS

Since the commencement of the 79th United Nations General Assembly high-level meeting in New York on September 10, Ethiopian Foreign Minister Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie has held several diplomatic meetings with key officials from countries significantly involved in the geopolitical dynamics of the Horn of Africa (HoA). During these discussions, he highlighted Ethiopia's ongoing efforts to manage regional disputes and its willingness to engage in peaceful negotiations, despite external interference.

A central theme in these meetings was Ethiopia's desire to resume the stalled negotiations with Somalia, which were paused due to Somali reluctance. While meeting with Catherine Molly Phee, the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs at the U.S. State Department, Foreign Minister Taye emphasized Ethiopia's dedication to fighting terrorism, particularly in Somalia, where the terrorist group Al-Shabaab remains a significant threat. According to a statement from Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the minister stressed the

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Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda discuss CFA implementation

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA- Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, Ugandan and Rwanda exchanged views on common stance to hold a unified position on fair and equitable utilization of water resources on the Nile River and CFA implementation.

This was disclosed when Foreign Minister Taye Atske Selassie met separately with Ambassador Olivier Nduhungerehe, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Rwanda and Jeje Odongo, Foreign Minister of Uganda on the margins of the 79th UNGA in New York.

During the discussion with the Rwandan Minister, the two sides exchanged views on their common stance to hold a unified position on fair and equitable utilization of water resources on the Nile River.

Foreign Minister Taye mentioned

See Ethiopia, Uganda,... Page 3



Premier's IGAD Tourism Championship spurs tourism dev't: Expert

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - The Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's IGAD Tourism Champion selection would greatly contribute to spur the ongoing Ethiopia's tourism development activities, said Expert in the field.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) recently selected Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed as the new IGAD Tourism Champion for a period of 3 years.

Approached by the local media, Pleasure

See Premier's IGAD ... Page 3

FM Taye says Ethiopia enjoys strong ties with U.S.

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopia's Foreign Affairs Minister Taye Atske Selassie appreciated the strong relations that Ethiopia enjoys with the U.S. and noted the importance of having continued discussions on issues of shared interest.

Foreign Minister Taye and Catherine Molly Phee, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs of U.S. State Department, met in New York on the margins of the 79th session of the UNGA to discuss issues of common concern.

Minister Taye appreciated the strong relations that Ethiopia enjoys with the U.S. and noted the importance of having continued discussions on issues of shared interest.

The Minister briefed the Assistant Secretary on the situation in the Horn of Africa (HoA) with a particular emphasis on Ethiopia's position to work on sustainable peace and security in the region.

On Somalia, the Minister, highlighted Ethiopia's continued efforts in fighting



terrorism and stressed that there should be a careful and comprehensive consideration before any post ATMIS arrangement is decided.

On her part, Catherine Molly Phee reaffirmed

the United States' continued commitment to work with Ethiopia to fighting terrorism, and maintain peace and security in the region, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA).



Haftay Gebre-Egziabher

Bureau promotes cultural preservation amid Meskel, Irreechaa celebrations

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA –The Addis Ababa Art, Culture, and Tourism Bureau has called on all relevant stakeholders to safeguard Ethiopian culture and values during the upcoming Meskel and Irreechaa celebrations.

The Bureau kicked off the Meskel Symposium yesterday under the theme “Calling the world in its harmonious light; Meskel is the foundation of our unity.” During the event, Haftay Gebre-Egziabher, Head of the Tourism Department at the Bureau, emphasized the cultural significance of Meskel, one of Ethiopia’s 13 heritages registered under UNESCO as an intangible cultural asset.

According to Haftay, the traditional Demera (bonfire) and the celebration of Meskel, alongside the Oromo people’s Irreechaa festival, continue to uphold Ethiopian culture and values. These celebrations play a vital role in heritage protection and enhancing the public’s awareness of the importance of cultural preservation.

The head further explained that the celebration of Meskel not only promotes unity, love, and understanding among humanity but also serves as a platform for tourism development, enhancing Ethiopia’s global image and contributing to its economic growth. However, he stressed the urgency of preventing cultural invasion, as heritage is a key source of identity and uniqueness. Haftay urged all concerned bodies to ensure that the Meskel Festival is celebrated peacefully while safeguarding Ethiopia’s cultural integrity.

In addition to the speeches, Melakselam Aba Kaltsidik Mulugeta (PhD) from the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church and Teshome Tekelu from the tourism sector presented discussion papers on the historical origins of Meskel and its significance for tourism development.

The symposium was attended by a diverse group of participants, including representatives from the Islamic faith, Aba Gadaa (Oromo cultural leaders), and officials from sub-cities, underscoring the event’s inclusive and unifying spirit.

By promoting cultural preservation and celebrating festivities like Meskel and Irreechaa, Addis Ababa aims to strengthen its cultural identity and attract tourists, contributing to the city’s economic progress.

Ethiopia’s rice production soars to 1.6 mln hectares

• Marking major strides in food security

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA– Ethiopia’s rice production has expanded significantly, growing from 180,000 hectares to 1.6 million hectares over the past two years, according to the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA). This growth is part of ongoing efforts to enhance the country’s rice production and productivity.

MoACrop Development Lead Executive Officer Esayas Lemma told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that Ethiopia has implemented extensive initiatives to increase rice coverage, achieving a remarkable leap from the previous 180,000 hectares to 1.6 million hectares in a short span. He acknowledged the country’s minimal productivity in rice farming up to now, stressing the importance of boosting output to meet both local demand and supply chain requirements.

Currently, around 70% of Ethiopia’s rice production is concentrated in the Amhara State, although recent efforts have broadened the scope of rice cultivation across the country. Amhara and South West states lead the charge as the country’s primary rice producers, Esayas noted.

“The farming communities in these states have effectively utilized previously idle



lands through various initiatives, benefiting from increased yields,” he said. Furthermore, over 1.6 million hectares of land is currently covered with rice, which Esayas called a significant milestone for enhancing Ethiopia’s food security. To support this growth, preparations are underway to provide mechanized farming equipment to boost production efficiency.

In addition to the strides made in the northern states, rice production is also taking off in other parts of the country. In the Somali State, areas such as Gode, Shebele Zone,

and Shinile are currently cultivating rice on 500 hectares, with plans to expand to 3,000 hectares.

Esayas highlighted the extensive efforts underway in both the Somali and Afar states, pointing out that the significant achievements of the past two years demonstrate the country’s commitment to substituting rice imports with local production. “Ethiopia is deploying cutting-edge agricultural technologies and related facilities to further support the nation’s journey towards rice import substitution,” he added.



Ethio-telecom ditches copper for fiber in network revolution

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA- Ethio-telecom has unveiled a significant initiative to modernize its network infrastructure by transitioning from outdated copper lines to cutting-edge fiber optics.

This strategic move aims to deliver substantial improvements in broadband internet and voice services, offering customers a more reliable, efficient, and high-speed experience.

The company’s CEO, Frehiwot Tamiru, emphasized the transformative benefits of

this upgrade. By replacing copper lines, which have been in use for over a century, with fiber optics, Ethio-telecom seeks to address the limitations of the outdated technology and provide customers with faster speeds, reduced downtime, and enhanced service quality.

In the current fiscal year, the operator plans to upgrade the services of 10,000 customers, prioritizing areas undergoing corridor development in Addis Ababa and other states. The ultimate goal is to completely replace copper lines with fiber optics throughout the capital and expand this initiative to other cities across Ethiopia.

According to the CEO, the project is set to benefit a significant number of customers. In the first phase alone, 60,000 customers in Addis Ababa and 40,000 customers in state cities are expected to experience the advantages of the upgraded network.

Ethio-telecom’s copper switch-off initiative marks a significant step forward in modernizing Ethiopia’s telecommunications infrastructure. By investing in fiber optics, the company is positioning itself to provide world-class services to its customers and contribute to the country’s overall digital transformation, Frehiwot remarked.

INTO Commends botanical garden dev't in metropolis

ADDIS ABABA -The International National Trust Organization (INTO) Deputy Secretary General Vanessa Targett emphasized the importance of developing climate-change resilient botanic gardens to attract tourism commending the activities being underway in Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa in the development of the sector.

A workshop that brought together experts from INTO, Heritage Watch Ethiopia and other stakeholders was held at the Addis Ababa University (AAU) on Tuesday to discuss the Withstanding Climate Change Project that aims to create climate-resilient gardens preserving culture and heritage.

Approached by ENA, International National Trust Organization Deputy Secretary General, Vanessa Targett said developing climate resilient and heritage preserving botanic gardens in Ethiopia particularly, in Addis Ababa is crucial both for health and tourism.

Recall that Heritage Watch Ethiopia

Association has been implementing the Withstanding Climate Change Project supported by INTO, a global network of 100 heritage organizations.

INTO as an important global organ, it supports Heritage Watch Ethiopia Association, a local organization dedicated to preserving the country's cultural heritage.

"We've come here to really learn from Heritage Watch Ethiopia and see the amazing work they're doing. As one of our members, they're a partner of ours on the Withstanding Change Project, which is a British Council funded project that funds six members who are really working to look at climate adaptation and resilience," Targett said.

The Deputy Secretary General praised Heritage Watch Ethiopia for its wonderful work on the construction of the Heritage Gardens in Addis Ababa like Gullele Botanic Garden.

"It's really wonderful for Addis to be developing its Botanical Gardens. It's such a wonderful

asset for any country to have and there's so much rich biodiversity in Ethiopia that having a botanical garden where Ethiopians, but also tourists and visitors can visit."

And they can really also experience all the wonderful nature, natural heritage that Ethiopia has to offer. So it's really exciting," Targett reflected.

She also stressed the need for Ethiopia play its fair share through exchanging knowledge and best practices of preserving heritages in the sphere of nature and culture, which is a global movement.

"INTO believes that natural heritage is equally as important as some of the more traditional types of heritage that people think of, often people think about old buildings, churches, mosques and castles, things like that," she noted.

Heritage Watch Ethiopia Association Founder and Executive Director, Esther Sellassie Antohin highlighted the Association's

achievements in developing climate-resilient gardens at the AAU's Faculty of Business and Economics campus.

These gardens showcase drought and heavy rainfall resilience, ensuring the preservation of cultural and heritage values, she elaborated.

Through its initiatives, the association seeks to raise awareness about the importance of heritage conservation and promote sustainable practices, she explained.

In his presentation on the workshop, Prof, Sebsebe Demissew, Plant Systematics and Biodiversity Lecturer at the Addis Ababa University stressed the need for increased research and partnerships to strengthen the Gullele Botanic Garden.

Gullele Botanic Garden, a valuable resource for education, entertainment, and tourism, Sebsebe indicated that the Garden has agreed with Ethiopian Airlines to bring about transit passengers into the area.

Ethiopia, Uganda,...

South Sudan's ratification of the CFA as a historic decision that manifested the desire of the people of the Nile River Basin states to ensure equitable and reasonable utilization of the Nile River.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, both ministers agreed to stand together in the implementation of the CFA.

The discussion with the Ugandan Minister included the security situation in the Horn of Africa, particularly Somalia, where the two sides stressed the need for a careful and comprehensive consideration of important issues before any post ATMIS arrangement is decided.

Ethiopia and Uganda, along with other Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs),



share concerns that any hasty decision on post ATMIS arrangement could jeopardize significant gains achieved so far against the fight on terrorism. On the Nile, FM Taye noted that Ethiopia welcomes the



second Nile Summit that Uganda is hosting in mid-October 2024, to mark the historic milestone of the entry into force of the CFA and the establishment of the Nile River Basin Commission.

The entry into force of the CFA is a positive development to ensure equitable and reasonable utilization of the shared resource and enhance cooperation between the riparian states.

Ethiopia vis-à-vis...

importance of carefully considering future peacekeeping arrangements in the region after the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) ends.

Similar discussions were held with diplomats from China, South Sudan, Algeria, and the United Nations, where Ambassador Taye underscored Ethiopia's priorities: maintaining regional stability while pursuing diplomatic negotiations. Despite these efforts, the Somali government, reportedly influenced by external anti-Ethiopian forces, officially suspended talks and has since issued military threats, further destabilizing the region.

Roba Petros (PhD), a lawyer, pointed out that Ethiopia's foreign policy reflects the African proverb, "If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together." He argued that the disputes between Ethiopia and Somalia could be resolved through mutual consensus, but external actors are exacerbating tensions, potentially expanding terrorism in the region. He emphasized that Ethiopia has a strong track record in regional security and is not responsible for the current tensions, which he attributes to outside influences.

The expert also commented on the post-ATMIS peacekeeping arrangement, noting that Somalia was expected to support Ethiopia's presence in future delegations.

However, growing anti-Ethiopian sentiment in Somalia, fueled by external forces, threatens to undermine these efforts. He warned that while Somalia is receiving military aid from foreign powers, the ultimate beneficiary might be Al-Shabaab, as historical precedents suggest.

Eyasu Haile Michael, a scholar in political science and international relations, agreed with Petros' concerns. He noted that allies engaging in destructive missions are not true friends, highlighting the detrimental impact external forces have on regional stability.

The situation has raised alarm in Somaliland as well, which expressed concern over foreign powers deploying forces and supplying arms to Mogadishu. On September 23, Somaliland's foreign minister issued a statement condemning the recent supply of heavy weapons to Somalia, warning that it jeopardizes the security of the entire region, which is already grappling with complex security challenges.

Political experts agree that the post-ATMIS peacekeeping arrangement and the involvement of external actors will significantly influence the future dynamics of the relationship between Ethiopia and Somalia.

Premier's IGAD...

Ethiopia Tour and Travel Owner and Expert, Nahom Admasu said that the Premier's selection as the new IGAD Tourism Champion for a period of 3 years would serve to further expand the ongoing tourism development activities and others.

The championship selection is based on country's achievement of mega tourism projects and infrastructure.

The government has given a paramount emphasis to the tourism sector in its ten year development plan. It is also working to improve policies and legal frameworks to make the sector a key part of the local economic strategy, he said.

This would contribute to further expand the already ongoing tourism projects and attract more tourists to the country. Over the past six years, Ethiopia has registered remarkable achievements in tourism development activities and mainly in putting place tourist destinations to advance sustainable tourism across the country. It is aimed to driving economic growth, cultural preservation, and brings tangible economic benefits.

The country inaugurated mega tourism projects such as Halala Kela Resort, Chebera Churchura, Elephant Paw Lodge, Gorgora Resort and others in recent years as part of Prime Minister Abiy's 'Dine for Nation' initiative. Tourism sector activities are aimed to capitalize on the natural endowments of the area, expanding greenery attraction, economic development and others. These are believed to play a major role projects in boosting tourism.

The Dine for Sheger, Dine for Nation and Dine for Generation initiated by the premier yielded captivating tourist attractions, positioning the country as a destination with many splendors, he noted.

Tourism development activities, particularly tourism destination development achievements are believed as the clear manifestations of the country's commitment to fully exploiting its tourism potentials, leveraging the sector as one of the accelerators of Ethiopia's inclusive economic growth ambitions, it was learnt.

Opinion

Work together to pursue aspiration of modernization, build a community with a shared future

BY AMBASSADOR HU CHANGCHUN

(Head of Mission of the People's Republic of China to the African Union and Representative of the People's Republic of China to the UNECA)

The 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) was successfully held in Beijing from September 4 to 6. It is an important milestone in the history of China-Africa relations. Under the theme of "Joining Hands to Advance Modernization and Build a High-Level China-Africa Community with a Shared Future," Chinese President Xi Jinping, together with leaders from 53 African countries which have diplomatic relations with China and Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), took stock of the journey of China-Africa friendship, commended the progress made in implementing the outcomes of FOCAC, and reached a clear consensus on strengthening cooperation across the board. Nearly 6,000 Chinese and foreign guests, including the Secretary-General of the United Nations as a special guest and representatives from more than 30 international and African regional organizations, attended the great event.

As both developing countries and the Global South, China and African countries have been fighting shoulder to shoulder against imperialism, colonialism, and hegemonism, and advancing hand in hand along the path of development, revitalization, and modernization. Our deep brotherly friendship has been forged during this process. After Xi Jinping became the President of China, he set foot in Africa on his first foreign visit and put forward the principle of sincerity, real results, amity and good faith for China's Africa policy, which pressed the "acceleration button" for the development of China-Africa relations.

For the past 24 years, since the establishment of FOCAC, high-level interactions between China and Africa have become increasingly close, political mutual trust has continued to deepen, and practical cooperation has yielded fruitful results.

China-Africa exchanges in various fields have been unprecedentedly active; exchanges and mutual learning in tourism, culture, youth and media have flourished.

The 2024 Summit of FOCAC has achieved full success. Two important documents, Beijing Declaration on Jointly Building an All-Weather China-Africa Community with a Shared Future for the New Era and Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Beijing Action Plan (2025-2027) were adopted unanimously. I would like to introduce the main outcomes of the summit with three "new" phrases.

First, China-Africa relations are elevated to a new level. China has always regarded developing relations with African countries as the cornerstone of its foreign policy. At the summit, President Xi Jinping proposed that bilateral relations between China and



FOCAC 2024: Elevating African Interests beyond the Africa-China Summit – photo google

all African countries having diplomatic ties with China be elevated to the level of strategic relations. Chinese and African leaders unanimously agreed that the overall characterization of China-Africa relations be elevated to an all-weather China-Africa community with a shared future for the new era. China and Africa will stand shoulder to shoulder to play a greater role in promoting the well-being of the Chinese and African people and maintaining world peace and stability.

Second, new propositions on China-Africa joint efforts to advance modernization was articulated; As we are about to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, we are going all out to build a great modern country in all respects and pursue national rejuvenation through a Chinese path to modernization. Africa is also marching in solid strides toward the modernization goals set forth in the AU's Agenda 2063.

China will remain a reliable partner with Africa on the journey towards modernization. President Xi Jinping pointed out that China and Africa should advance modernization that is just and equitable, that is open and win-win, that puts the people first, that features diversity and inclusiveness, that is eco-friendly, and that is underpinned by peace and security. These propositions resonated with African leaders, thus becoming a political consensus between China and Africa. They will surely have a significant and far-reaching impact on spearheading faster modernization of the Global South and advancing global modernization.

Third, a new blueprint was drawn up for China-Africa cooperation going forward. President Xi Jinping announced ten partnership actions that China would take with Africa to advance modernization in the next three years. The actions include giving all least developed countries having diplomatic relations with China, including 33 countries in Africa, zero-tariff treatment for 100 percent tariff lines, providing Africa with RMB one billion Yuan in emergency food assistance, creating at least one million jobs for Africa, etc. The Chinese

China and Africa will stand shoulder to shoulder to play a greater role in promoting the well-being of the Chinese and African people and maintaining world peace and stability

government will provide RMB 360 billion Yuan of financial support through the next three years to promote the implementation of the ten partnership actions.

During the Summit, China and Africa also had strategic communication on the international situation and global governance. We agreed to firmly support

each other on issues involving our respective core interests, defend the common interests of developing countries, and promote international fairness and justice. We agreed to follow true multilateralism, implement the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative, and champion an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization. We agreed to reject "small yard, high fence," oppose discrimination and prejudice, redress historical injustices, and ensure that all people will benefit from the modernization process. The FOCAC "summit week" is a "Global South moment," a highlight of the joint pursuit of a community with a shared future for mankind.

President Xi Jinping met with Chairperson of AUC Moussa Faki Mahamat during the Summit, pointing out that AU is a banner for Africa to seek strength through unity and an important platform for conducting international cooperation. China supports AU in playing a greater role in the cause of China-Africa friendship, and is ready to take this FOCAC Summit as an opportunity to push for more outcomes of China-AU cooperation in various fields and promote the building of a China-Africa community with a shared future to a new level.

As the emblem of FOCAC, "Embracing Hands" is a vivid portrayal of China and Africa working together to promote modernization and build a community with a shared future. Faced with a world full of changes and turbulence, China and Africa need to strengthen unity and cooperation more than ever before. China is willing to work with AU and African countries to actively implement the outcomes of the summit, work together to promote modernization, build an all-weather China-Africa community with a shared future in the new era, so as to make greater contributions to building a community with a shared future for mankind.

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

Editorial

Ethiopia's regional role needs due support

Countries of the Horn of African region, friendly nations of the world as well as relevant international organizations should step up their support to Ethiopia's efforts of accelerating integration and cooperation in the region. Some entities that toil to complicate the regional security situation should also be halted.

The Horn of Africa region is unique in the world as it is inherently associated with difficult attributes like war, conflict, drought and migration. As if the existing problems are not enough, entities that are long suffering from identity crisis are sending their messy hands into the already volatile situation. These entities are attempting to gamble on the lives of millions of people. The people call the region home—not a mere strategic location.

The people also suffer from the lack of peace and development due to the instability that prevails. The other thing is they still suffer from post conflict trauma as well as negative outlook that the rest of the world would develop as a result of the harmful situation that characterized the region for quite long time.

Hence, transforming this adverse situation at any cost is something that cannot be thought twice about. Ethiopia which is considered an anchor state in the region is a frontline victim of any of the aforementioned harms against the region. Just as it suffers from the damages caused against the entire region, it is also beneficiary of the positive transformation of the region.

That is why Ethiopia also usually considers the wide impact of the development of the region whenever it considers its domestic development activities. Furthermore Ethiopia involves in pacifying the region by making the needed sacrifices. This has of course received due recognition from the UN and other partners. Ethiopia has continued to reverse the doom scenario by investing hugely in development projects.

For instance one of its flagship development projects, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is believed to be able to supply electricity not only to Ethiopia but also to neighboring countries that need affordable supply of clean energy. In addition to supplying energy, it is also able to regulate the water flow, ecosystem safety of the entire basin as it is accompanied by relevant basin development initiatives. This one is a vital initiative even to the downstream countries that are likely to suffer from the fluctuation of the water regime even under normal circumstances.

Ethiopia further makes unreserved efforts to connect itself with neighboring countries with road, railway and telecommunication infrastructure which is vital in fostering trade ties and economic integration.

The tremendous role of Ethiopia should be reciprocated by its neighbors as well. As the ramifications of absence of peace and security know no boundary, all peace-loving partners need to assist the efforts of Ethiopia. Ethiopia's objective is to inspire development and peace in the region. And it has practically done so in this regard. Of course, it is quite strange to see some anti-pan-African bodies within the African nations.

These bodies attempt to meddle and hamper such positive progress which is geared towards achieving their personal, vested interest rather than mutual benefit. All their plots and maneuverings to create havoc and pursue their wicked goals should be nipped in the bud so that the ever turbulent region, Horn of African can become peaceful and prosperous once and for all.



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Opinion

Ten areas of cooperation to transform Horn of Africa region

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

The Horn of Africa hosts one of the world's largest displacement crises. Displacement is traumatic and life changing. Latest estimates show that the East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes regions are expected to host 23.6 million forcibly displaced people by the end of this year, largely due to conflict and climate crises.

The Sudan crisis accounts for a third of this number with Ethiopia already hosting nearly a million refugees and asylum seekers: the third largest refugee caseload in Africa. Displacement has uprooted people from their homes, separated families, and disrupted communities' living conditions, health, security, livelihoods, and education leading to further repercussions on their ability to contribute to their local economies, earn an income, sustain livelihoods, and invest in their socioeconomic development. If drivers of displacement remain unabated, the entire region tips into a humanitarian catastrophe, the report adds.

Climate shocks (drought and flooding) have driven millions of people into destitution. Millions of people in the Horn of Africa are still struggling with the lingering effects of the severe and prolonged 2021-2023 drought (the worst in 40 years) as well as the impact of floods in the second half of 2023. Flooding caused additional livelihood loss in the drought-affected areas, including the death of some of the remaining emaciated livestock that survived the drought, and erosion of fertile lands, impacting agriculture. Recovery is expected to take between half to nearly a decade for those who lost between 80 to 100 percent of their livelihood.

When it comes to the Horn of Africa and the plight of its peoples, there is no better explanation than the above report.

The major part of the above mentioned needs still remain unaddressed but we have enough countries near and afar who can add more fire to the already burning prairie fire.

The situation on the ground both in the entire Horn of Africa and in Somalia is being manipulated by conspiracy theory at remote control politicking that will bear no result for any political grouping or country. As the world has enough of crisis and war there is no need to disrupt the ordinary and poor livelihood of the peoples of the Horn of Africa. Poking into the internal affairs of African countries by some irredentist forces has never paid off and benefited no country.

The entry of foreign powers in Somalia is only creating a breeding ground for global terrorism which would backfire on those who brew conspiracy.

By reacting to the current situation on the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia is introducing a new diplomatic culture that is based on collective development, mutual understanding and sharing resources. The GERD-which is nearing completion, sharing potable water with Somalia and providing training for the youth in the Horn countries is a direct manifestation of the diplomacy of peace.

No country in the Horn of Africa can

develop on its own. Every socio-economic and political problem the region faces can only be resolved through collective thinking and dialogue in good faith. All the conspiracy that is going on in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa is reminiscent of the legacy of colonialism in the Horn of Africa. How should the countries in the region pull their forces together to resolve the multiple crises in the region? The author suggests the following. Countries in the Horn of Africa can ensure peace and development through cooperation in several key areas. These include:

First, establishing regional security mechanisms to combat common threats like terrorism, piracy, and arms trafficking is critical. For example, AMISOM (African Union Mission in Somalia) has seen countries like Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda cooperates in stabilizing Somalia.

Increased intelligence sharing can prevent terrorist activities and insurgencies across borders, fostering a stable environment for development.

Second, regional cooperation in building transport corridors, roads, railways, and ports (e.g., LAPSET project) can boost inter-country trade and investments.

Third, countries can collaborate in managing shared resources like water, as with the Nile Basin Initiative. Cooperation over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), for instance, could transform shared water resources into mutual benefit.

Fourth, establishing platforms for dialogue, such as through IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development), helps mediate conflicts (e.g., South Sudan peace talks) and resolve border disputes, such as those between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Fifth, encouraging cultural and educational exchanges to promote understanding between different communities can reduce tensions, particularly in ethnically diverse regions.

Six, many countries in the Horn face issues related to displaced populations. Joint responses to refugees, drought, and famine can help alleviate humanitarian crises.

Seventh, shared initiatives to address the effects of climate change, such as tree planting, water resource management, and desertification prevention, could improve food security and livelihoods, reducing competition over scarce resources

Eighth, by supporting transparent institutions and governance practices, countries can reduce internal tensions and improve development outcomes.

Ninth, aligning policies on taxation, investment, and economic planning can promote regional growth.

Tenth, cooperation on science, technology, cyber security, AI and meteorology can empower the countries of the region preempting possible crisis whether economic or security wise.

These strategies require commitment from the governments of the Horn of Africa to promote regional integration, security, and prosperity.

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

Business & Economy

Ethiopia's commitment to cultivate rice as key component of national food security

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

On the heels of the high level of commitment demonstrated by the federal government on the topic of summer irrigated wheat cultivation, Ethiopia in the present circumstances has been getting international recognition for its gorgeous production and moving in the right direction.

In a similar fashion, significant emphasis has been given to summer irrigated wheat in Amhara, Oromia and Somali regions. On the basis thereof, the intended destination is being accomplished. This achievement is turning out to be a great demonstration to bring about the plan of replacing the imported rice crop with domestic production.

In this day and age, a diverse range of fruitful activities is being carried out with the purpose of producing rice in various regions of the country. It is important to highlight that apart from saving the foreign currency spent on buying rice, summer irrigated wheat production plays an important role in serving as an option to ensure food security all over the country.

It is also believed that through the National Rice Program, Ethiopia through the passage of time will completely stop rice imports. In light of the current situation, Ethiopia is leaving no stone unturned to repeat the strategy implemented in wheat cultivation.

Rice is among the crops that have been given special attention in agricultural development. By taking the best experience obtained in the cultivation of summer irrigated wheat in some regions of the country, Ethiopia has been exerting its maximum effort to repeat this success story in rice production.

It should be borne in mind that rice is being cultivated on thousands of hectares of land in various regions of the country and millions of quintals are expected to be produced from thousands of hectares of land covered with seeds this year.

The regions have a special plan for this year's production and are focusing on areas that have the capacity to produce rice. In more concert terms, at this moment in time, rice production is becoming one of the focuses of the region.

Ethiopia has tremendously embarked on activities to realize the transformation of rice and edible oil, driven by a success story in wheat productivity, Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency CEO, Mandefro Nigusie (PhD) said.

The East African nation has undertaken massive economic reform during the past six years; and agriculture is one of the nation's major priority sectors of the reform. Particularly, the government has chosen wheat as a strategic commodity for food security, import substitution that transits to export, and job creation along the value chain.



In this respect, Ethiopia's wheat production has recently reached a new milestone and enabled the country to stand as one of the largest producers of wheat in Africa, it was indicated.

Driving lessons from wheat cultivation success, the Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture recognized the importance of rice, considering it as the "millennium crop" that is expected to ensure food security in the country.

Since its introduction, rice production has shown rapid and widespread expansion to various parts of the country as the country has vast suitable ecologies for rice production.

Rice has now become an important strategic crop in Ethiopia and is highly anticipated to help the country achieve the development of the National Rice Strategy Plan (2020–2030).

Director General at the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Institute, Firew Tegegn told ENA that the government is committed to realize the transformation of rice and edible oil by repeating the success story of wheat production.

Reiterating that Ethiopia's success story in wheat self-sufficiency will be repeated in the growing, important and strategic rice crop in Ethiopia, he noted the country is working with the plan to ensure food self-sufficiency; expand export trade and realize import substitution on rice and edible oil as well.

The Director also stressed the need for reinforcing the collaboration, dedication and commitment of all stakeholders to realize Ethiopia's ambition to self-sufficiency and expanding export trade as well.

The rice cultivation that started in the Somali region is a legacy not only for the local community but also for the neighboring countries. If it is possible to continue the production of rice that is being irrigated in the region on a large scale, it should be encouraged as it will be used

not only for local consumption but also for export purpose.

The Somali region is in a stimulating process to achieve the rice initiative that was started in some regions of the country. It is learnt that many national initiatives such as summer irrigation wheat, green footprints and corridor development have been achieved.

In the present climate, agricultural productions are making headway well in most parts of the country. To attain the desired goal each and every one should stand by the side of the government. In doing so, making the dreams of the country a reality will be as easy as falling off a log.

The Amhara State Agriculture Bureau has announced that 149,000 hectares of land are being cultivated with rice this Meher production season.

The Bureau Deputy Head Kalkidan Shifraw recently told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the state has dedicated 149,000 hectares of land for rice production during this Meher season, which is a key period for crop production and productivity in Ethiopia.

According to Kalkidan, the rice cultivation spans five zones across Amhara State, and this year has seen an additional 67,000 hectares of land is dedicated for rice compared to the same period last year. "Rice production is showing progress alongside the cultivation of regular crops," he added.

The bureau plans to implement a targeted approach to areas with potential for rice production that have not yet been utilized.

He also stated that around 169 million quintals of various crops are expected to be harvested from five million hectares cultivated in the Amhara State during this Meher season. The state has achieved over 97% of its crop cultivation target so far.

The distribution of rain has been favorable for agriculture, enabling successful land preparation and timely seed planting. Crops are being cultivated on schedule, and

agricultural activities are progressing well across all areas of the state.

Beyond ensuring food security, the agricultural output is also intended for processing industries and the export market. The state is focusing on crops for export, such as Mung beans (Masho), sesame, and soybeans, with particular attention to grains. The bureau is actively working to combat pests and weeds to ensure a successful harvest.

As the country's climate and soil types are convenient for rice plantation, pertinent bodies should pull out all the stops to ensure food security in the length and breadth of the country.

It is worth mentioning that the intensification of rice production on agricultural development and food security plays a paramount role in taking the country to new heights at the earliest possible juncture.

In addition to ensuring nutritional security, producing rice in various regions of the country plays a huge role in saving foreign currency. No matter what the cost may be the country should go to the ends of the earth to bring about self-sufficiency.

Some 31 million quintals of rice product is expected to be harvested in Somali State this crop season, State's Agriculture Bureau announced.

Bureau Deputy Head Ahmednur Abdi told Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the region is expanding rice agriculture through time and about 31 million quintals of product is expected to be harvested this agricultural season.

The state has planned to harvest the product from 3000 hectares of farmland that would be cultivated this season, which has been forecasted to remain rainy until October, he said.

According to Ahmednur, researches to improve rice seed are also underway while several crops specious, including maize, sorghum and wheat are being familiarized to the region.

The Bureau has distributed improved seeds amounted in quintal 20 thousand maize and sorghum, and 10 thousand wheat to farmers. There would be no fertilizer demand as the soil is too fertile to rainy season cultivation. As to the Head, the number of farmers developing cultivation skills in both rainy and dry seasons as well as through irrigation mechanisms is growing.

The rice production in Somali State is part of the national initiative to achieve food sovereignty and to substitute crop import marking new shift for economic transformation in Ethiopia.

As the federal government of Ethiopia has been attaching significance to intensify the development of agricultural sector in every nook and cranny of the country, the longed for desire has embarked on seeing the light of day.

Art & Culture

Engurogobash, Achembila: the chattels of Meskel

BY MEKDES TAYE (PhD)

Various documents and biblical verses show that the celebration of Meskel, which is distinguished in various styles and practices across the regions of Ethiopia, could be traced back to the Holy Bible. The article written by Tsegaye Girma and Synodos Tesfay articulated the background and religious perspectives that led this celebration to be eagerly welcomed yearly in the following way.

Human beings were tempted by the words of the devil which targeted to discrete humans from their Creator. After the wrong deeds of humans that followed the direction of the devil's spirit, there was a wall that was built to estrange the races of human beings from God. Thus, humans were forbidden to enter the gate to God's Paradise. Then Jesus Christ, one of the three entities from the Holy Trinity, had come to human beings to expiate their sins and to do away with that wall. He arrived as a human being. Thus, he endured all the severe deeds to redeem us. He was crucified on the cross with the other two criminals who were accused of robbing and terrorism. Then on that cross, he mentioned human beings as 'my sons' which means he atoned for the sins of humans on that cross. The wall is ever broken. Life with Jesus Christ was confirmed. We got redeemed from our depravity through his death. Here is the evidence in the Bible, "But God forbids that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal 6:14).

Then according to the belief of Christians, he was resurrected. After his resurrection, the cross that he was crucified was making miracles among the believers. Then the Jews were not happy. Then they took it and buried it so that no one could find it. They made a point frequently throwing garbage on it. Through time it piled up to form a hilltop.

In 319 E.C Queen Elena was curious to look for the cross of Jesus. She then headed to Jerusalem. In the city, there were three hilltops. As the document found from the website of Mahbere Kidusan showed, she met with an old man called Kirakos. He directed her to three hilltops located in the city and told her to excavate them one by one because the true cross was buried in one of the three places.

The Queen summoned all the priests in that city for collective prayers. Then she set up a strategy. She ordered her maids to prepare wood and build a bonfire.

Deacon Girma Gelaye, who is a PhD candidate in the department of Philology at Addis Ababa University, told The Ethiopian Herald that it is believed that one of the priests lit the bonfire. The queen was simply ordering the steps and waiting with common women gatherings. In this fire, the priests added incense. Then the smoke dragged into the sky and bent down on the hill where the cross was buried. Following this smoke, she ordered the people to excavate the hill. Then the cross was found with other crosses. The real cross that Jesus was crucified was identified by its miraculous deeds.

According to sources, in the Middle age the patriarch of Alexandria in return for



the protection of the Coptic Christians in Ethiopia, he gave some part of the true cross to Emperor Dawit. This cross is currently found in Gishen Mariam church found in the northwest of the country.

Thus, in the memory of that bonfire, the Orthodox Christians prepare a bonfire that tops the cross on its tip. Then it is decorated by daisies yellow flowers. Though the basic cultural orchestrations are the same, very unique and interesting practices across different regions are variedly done in this day.

For this article let me raise a cultural deed which is exhibited at Meskel.

In the northern part of the country particularly in Gojjam, there are eye-catching cultural; and religious practices observed. Among these achembila and engurogebash are the well-known traditional practices in the area. The equivalent meaning for these terms could be a grass-made bracelet and the alert of the transition to the New Year consecutively.

The researcher and instructor at Debre Markos University, Mintamir Lingerh had been examining the practices in her study. In the interview with The Ethiopian Herald she said the following.

The material that is used to make the grass bracelet is collected from the types of taller especial grasses called Giramta

which are usually having their own motely colors. Then based on the preferences of the colors, the grass is modified in a way that could be made smooth for stylistically tiding the colors of the grass which is called Achembila. The size is made based on the thickness of the hand of the girls. That means it is girls who are supposed to wear this bracelet.

As Mintamir elaborated, this Achambila is made in the following steps. Three pieces of the modified grass lay on one hand. And another three pieces of another grass, which is separated from the former one by one thicker and stronger grass, is organized, thus, the cumulatively of the pieces mounted up seven. The implication according to the researcher is the three pieces symbolize the Holy Trinity and the strongest one symbolizes the Absolut oneness of the Trinity in appearance, spirit and role. The sum total that makes seven show the day devoted to Holy Trinity. Thus, in the name of one God the bracelet is made and put on since the seventh day of Meskerem till three days remain before the holyday. This bracelet is usually made by males. The implication is Jesus is the head of the church likewise males are the heads of the house. So, the belief is it invites the Holy Spirit and dispels the Satan spirit.

When the bonfire is mostly lit by the older men or any men, the bracelets or Achembila will be thrown into the fire. Then girls paint the ashes on their foreheads. The meaning

is this ash is believed to cure people from any sin and cure the spiritual and body defections. The ground for this trust is the bonfire symbolizes the light to the true cross. Thus the fire of this wood is assumed as the powerful fire that can avoid any form of pain and depravity. As Mintamir confirmed this logic, it is parallel to the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ which is believed could redeem human beings since His blood poured out on the cross. Thus the ash which is poured after the light of the cross can also cure human beings from many threats.

In the early morning of Meskel celebration day, tied-up twigs called Chibo is lit by male elders or any male sections of the family. As Mintamir said it in the absence of a man in the family a woman who carried a baby boy could lit it. Then they hold the twigs and slightly burn the floor of the gate. The act symbolizes, as she mentioned it, cursing the envious, jealousies and any wrong doers. Then after these people did run to the kitchen and approach every material in the kitchen saying 'Engurogobash', the nearer meaning is happy transition to the New Year. After touching all basic utensils like the clay pot, Mitad (oven) which is used for baking Injera, jars by the tip of the bundle of burning twigs, they leave out to the nearby houses to do the same thing.

They utter Engurogobash to every individual at every household by carrying the burning. Since they did it getting nearer to people, as Mintamir noted in her talk, the approached people could shout out fearing the fire. This is done with the belief that the bad spirit which is believed there is a person is going to be scared and leave up that person when he or she shouts suddenly and it is also part of the fun in the day.

Though practices like Achambila and Engurogobash are dominantly exhibited in the area of Gojjam, the basic religious orchestrations like the bonfire and the tided wood or Chibo are inclusively practiced by other regions including the capital city, Addis Ababa. Meskel Square with the singing and dancing of religious melodies by the massive religious followers who gather in the place attired with cultural clothing. The ceremony is so an impressing and a unique one that it is registered as an intangible heritage at UNSECO.

Happy Meskel!

Indepth

Summit of the Future: Youth driven action needed to tackle nuclear and climate crises



Dr. Tshilidzi Marwala, USG and Rector of the United Nations University, and Ms. Kaoru Nemoto, Director of the United Nations Information Centre during a discussion 'Building the Future: Synergetic Collaboration on Nuclear and Climate Crises.'

Driving the Summit of the Future's core messages of international solidarity and decisive action are young people who are determined to address the intersecting issues that the world contends with today.

During the Summit's Action Days (20-21 September), it was young people who led the conversations of increasing and defining meaningful engagement, both on- and off-site from the United Nations Headquarters.

Not only are they driving the conversation, but in the Pact for the Future adopted by world leaders at the United Nations on Sunday (September 22), youth and future generations are at the forefront of global leaders' concerns, and their role was clearly defined with the first ever Declaration on Future Generations, with concrete steps to take account of future generations in our decision-making, including a possible envoy for future generations.

This includes a commitment to more "meaningful opportunities for young people to participate in the decisions that shape their lives, especially at the global level."

Building the Future: Synergetic Collaboration on Nuclear and Climate Crises, a side event whose co-organizers included Soka Gakkai International (SGI) and the Future Action Festival Organizing Committee, with the support of the United Nations University (UNU) and the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC), brought together young activists to discuss the intersection between two different crises and what will define meaningful youth engagement.

Kaoru Nemoto, the Director General of UNIC in Tokyo, observed that it was "ground-breaking" to see the agenda of the Summit's Action Days largely led and organized by youth participants, as signified by the majority of seats in the General Assembly Hall being filled by young activists.

"There is an undercurrent, a common message, that the youth can make this world a better place to live," said Nemoto. "No matter what agenda you are working on, be it climate change, nuclear disarmament, fighting inequality... youth issues are cross-cutting, very strong cross-cutting issues across the board."

Nemoto further added that the United Nations needs to do much more to engage youth for meaningful participation. This would mean allowing youth to consult in decision-making and to be in positions of leadership. Youth presence cannot be reduced to tokenism.

The climate and nuclear crises are existential



threats that are deeply connected, said Dr. Tshilidzi Marwala, the rector of the United Nations University. Climate instability fuels the factors that lead to conflict and displacement. Conflict, such as what is happening in Sudan, Israel, Palestine, and Ukraine, increases the risk of nuclear escalation. As leaders in the present day tackle the issues, Marwala called on the youth to continue raising their voices and to hold those powers accountable.

Marwala noted that the United Nations University would be committed to "realizing meaningful participation" in all parties. For young people, while they are motivated and demonstrate a care for deeper social issues, they face challenges in having their voices heard or in feeling galvanized to take action. Marwala noted that it was important to reach out to those young people who are either not involved or feel discouraged from getting involved in political work and activism.

Chief among the Summit of the Future's agenda is increasing youth participation in decision-making processes. It has long been acknowledged that young activists and civil society actors drive greater societal change and are motivated to act towards complex issues. Yet they frequently face challenges in participating in policymaking that would shape their countries' positions.

Among these challenges are representations in political spaces. Within the context of Japan, young people are underrepresented in local and national politics. As Luna Serigano, an advocate from the Japan Youth Council, shared during the event, there is a wider belief among young voters in Japan that their voices will go unheard by authorities.

This is indicated in voter turnout, which shows that only 37 percent of voters are in their 20s, and only 54 percent of voters believe that their votes matter. By contrast,

71 percent of people in their 70s voted in elections. People in their 30s or younger account for just one percent of professionals serving in government councils and forums. The Japan Youth Council is currently advocating for active youth participation in the country's climate change policy by calling for young people to be directly involved as committee members to work on a new energy plan for the coming year.

Yuuki Tokuda, a co-founder of GeNuine, a Japan-based NGO that explores nuclear issues through a gender perspective, shared that young people are out of decision-making spaces. Although their voices may be heard, it is not enough. As she told IPS, the climate and nuclear crises are on the minds of young people in Japan. And while they have ideas on what could be done, they are not informed on how to act.

There is some hope for increasing participation. Tokuda shared within policymakers on nuclear issues, of which 30 percent include women, have begun to engage with young people in these discussions.

"It is time to reconstruct systems so that youth can meaningfully participate in these processes," said Tokuda. "We need more intergenerational participation in order to work towards the ban of nuclear weapons and the climate crisis."

During the event, what meaningful youth engagement should look like was discussed. It was acknowledged that efforts have gone towards giving a space to the perspectives of young people. Including young people in the discussions is a critical step. It was suggested that direction should shift towards ensuring that young people have the authority to take the action needed to resolve intersecting, complex issues. Otherwise, the inclusion is meaningless.

"The future-oriented youth is more needed than ever to tackle the challenges

in building and maintaining peace," said Mitsuo Nishikata of SGI.

"As a youth-driven initiative such as what the Future Action Festival demonstrates, youth solidarity can stand as a starting point for resolving and passing issues."

Next year (2025) will mark 80 years since the end of World War II and the Hiroshima-Nagasaki atomic bombings. Nishikata pointed out that this will be a time for crucial opportunities to advance the discussions on nuclear disarmament and climate action, ahead of the Third Meeting of State Parties on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the 30th UN Climate Conference (COP30).

"We will continue to unite in our desire for peace, sharing the responsibility for future generations and expanding grassroots actions in Japan and globally.

Other commitments for the Pact for the Future included the first multilateral recommitment to nuclear disarmament in more than a decade, with a clear commitment to the goal of totally eliminating nuclear weapons.

It also pledged reform of the United Nations Security Council since the 1960s, with plans to improve the effectiveness and representativeness of the Council, including by redressing the historical underrepresentation of Africa as a priority.

The pact has at its core a commitment to "turbo-charge" implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including the reform of the international financial architecture so that it better represents and serves developing countries.

"We cannot build a future that is suitable for our grandchildren with a system that our grandparents created," as the Secretary-General António Guterres stated.

(SOURCE: INTER PRESS SERVICE)

Law & Politics

Egypt's effort to destabilize the Horn

BY WONDWOSSEN ALEMAYEHU

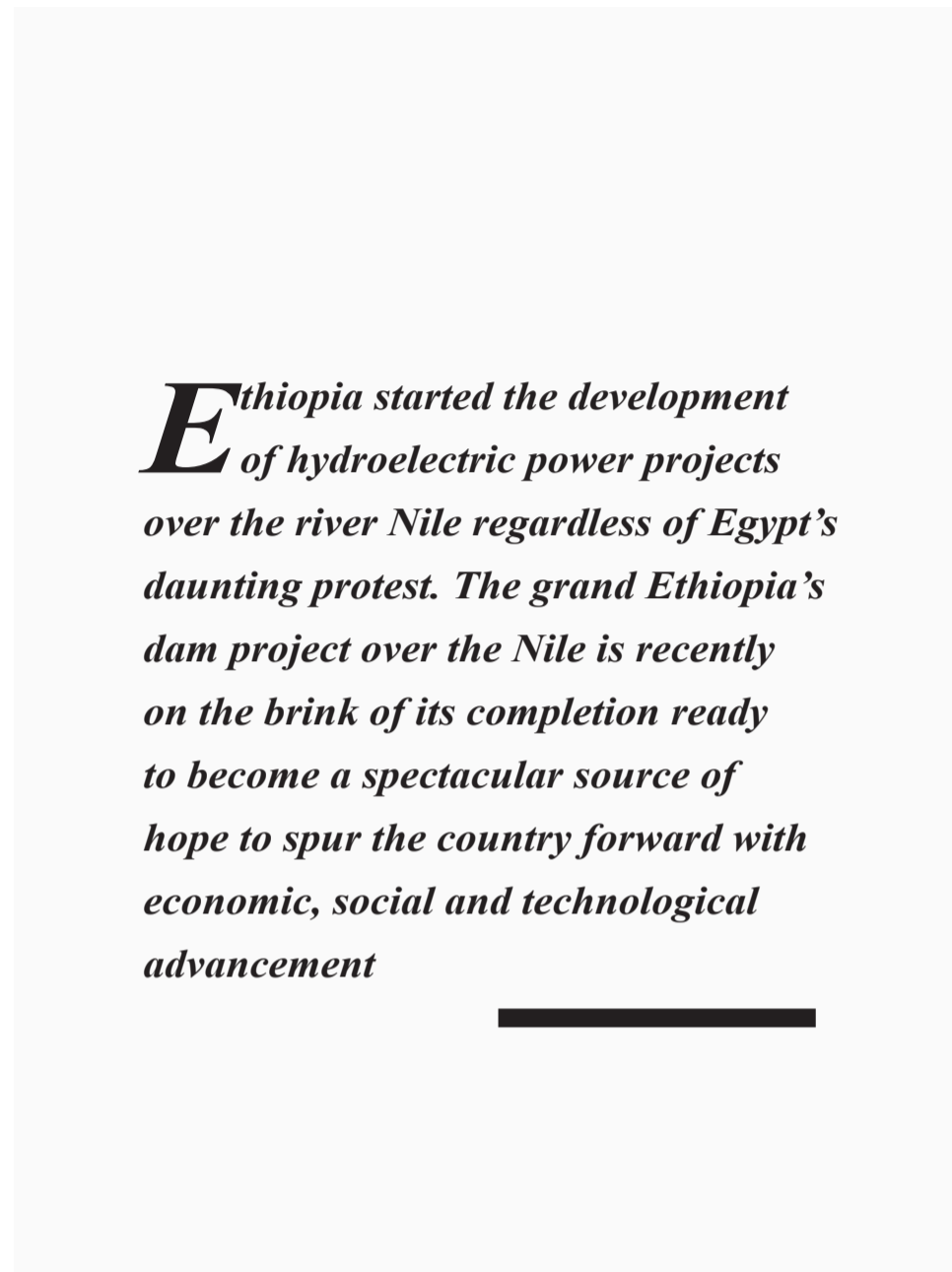
The historical Egypt, which plays a significant role in Africa and the Middle East, claims to have a stake since antiquity in connection with the Nile River. Ethiopia's biggest countrywide project, the Renaissance Dam, which is estimated to generate over 5500 MW after completion, is one of the eye-opening power development projects in Ethiopia, outlaying spectacular hope for countries in the Horn and beyond.

The Nile River, considered the significant source of life for Egypt, of which over 80% of the water comes from the land of Ethiopia, has been a point of controversy for a long time past. Consequently, both Ethiopia and Egypt claim to possess the greatest stake over such a historic river since thousands of years ago.

Ethiopia's embarking on a power development project over the Nile River (Abay River) gave Egypt lasting pain, thereby indirectly inflicting significant harm on our country in various ways. Recently, Egypt has been trying to destabilize the regional security of the Horn through deploying thousands of troops in Somalia, mainly for Ethiopia's economic dialogue with the broken-away region of Somalia: the de facto state of Somaliland. Egypt and Somalia are fostering friendship but harboring hostile relationships with Ethiopia.

Egypt makes use of various strategies to deter Ethiopia's Renaissance Dam development project since the launch of the project in 2012. The Ethiopian government constantly reiterated to the officials of the downstream countries, namely, Sudan and Egypt that the hydroelectric power project will have no significant impact on the flow of the water share. However, Egypt is still reluctant to accept such a vital fact. Consequently, Egypt makes every stone unturned to destabilize the internal security of the Horn by supporting various armed groups against the Ethiopian government. For instance, Egypt is incessantly working to destabilize the security of Ethiopia by inciting some kind of internal conflict in the country.

The other strategy Egypt strives to use against Ethiopia is using proxies to fight against Ethiopia. The failed State Somalia Republic which is vehemently against Ethiopia in connection with Somaliland is looking for ways to impede Ethiopia's move to develop and make use of the port of Berbera. Egypt, which is always in a conspiracy to stir conflict against Ethiopia, is supporting the defence force of Somalia with various artilleries and military equipment. What's more, it recently deployed over 10,000 of its soldiers on the Somalia border near Ethiopia. Ethiopia's government has overtly denounced Egypt's and Somalia's acts of inciting war



Ethiopia started the development of hydroelectric power projects over the river Nile regardless of Egypt's daunting protest. The grand Ethiopia's dam project over the Nile is recently on the brink of its completion ready to become a spectacular source of hope to spur the country forward with economic, social and technological advancement

and destabilizing the Horn.

The State of Somaliland has also outrightly denounced Egypt for the deployment of its troops in Somalia. Somaliland underscored that it would never put up with such an outrageous act of Egypt to flare up conflict in the region. Somaliland also reiterated that it will use every possible mechanism to defend itself.

Egypt's act of raging conflict in the Horn is not a recent phenomenon. It had used various secretive devices to prevent Ethiopia from making any development project over the river Nile. The British colonial rule in Egypt signed a treacherous contractual agreement with the Emperor of Ethiopia not to block the natural flow of the river. They have been deterring the government of Ethiopia not to conducting any kind of hydroelectric power development over the river Nile.

However, Ethiopia started the development of hydroelectric power projects over the river Nile regardless of Egypt's daunting protest. The grand Ethiopia's dam project over the Nile is recently on the brink of its completion ready to become a spectacular source of hope to spur the country forward with economic, social and technological advancement.

The Renaissance Dam over the Nile River

would facilitate the country's vision to ensure food security and progress the development which is a viable beacon of hope to its population who are living under stark economic challenges. Such a grand hydroelectric development project would also become fundamental in extending interconnectivity between regional countries of the Horn paving the way for economic integration in the Horn of Africa.

Ethiopia has a prime intent of expanding its development projects over the dam without causing any harm to the downstream countries. Since Ethiopia is the sole source of the Nile River, it has an inalienable right to use the river for its economic progress. As a matter of fact, the country is pursuing its development project with prudent observation of the conventions on international rivers.

However, Egypt has made numerous attempts to impede the development of the Renaissance dam in the past until the present time. It has made a number of futile attempts to abort the construction of the dam over the Nile. Its relentless effort to destabilize the security of Ethiopia through its proxies like the failed State Somalia is a case in point.

Ethiopia, in return, had never been and will never be the cause of instability for any of the countries in the world owing to its selfish desire. It has been assisting its neighbouring countries in various ways since historical times. The fight against the terrorist Alshabab in Somalia is a recent phenomenon. Ethiopia has made significant assistance to the Somalia Republic which had been torn apart as a result of the extremist armed groups for over three decades. Ethiopia has made various spectacular efforts to bolster the centralization of the government of Somalia which had been debilitated from the armed groups.

Ethiopia will never stop being a source of assistance to its neighbouring countries despite the hostile reactions it is receiving.

The besetting contention between the broken-away region Somaliland and Somalia should be resolved through persistent political dialogue. An amenable solution for sustainable peace and security between the two regions could only be outlayed substantially by the contending parties.

Therefore, Ethiopia has the inalienable and unstoppable right to utilize its resources for the economic advancement of its people without inflicting any significant harm on the parties which are rather beneficiaries of the development in one way or another.

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Women in Focus



Adabna: Kestane community's unique cultural fiesta

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

As Meskerem (September) is the month that various religious and cultural festivals are celebrated, it is the most awaited season by various ethnic groups in Ethiopia.

And when Meskerem is just around the corner, Ethiopians start preparations to mark the festivals colorfully and warmly.

Meskel is one of the festivals marked by Ethiopians, mostly followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox and Catholic churches.

In addition to its religious aspect, this festival has a cultural aspect and is celebrated with uniquely in a manner reflecting both aspects.

Especially, among the people of Gurage, the Meskel festival has unique features. It is a time when those who moved from their homeland seeking a better life and residing in urban areas get back to their birthplace to celebrate the festival with their parents, friends, relatives, neighbors, and villagers. When they return to their birthplaces, they would not show up simply with empty hands, but with gifts and some duties to fulfill. Showing up with no gifts is like breaching the cultural values of their forefathers and parents. To fulfill these duties and expectations, thus they save money throughout the year, targeting Meskel.

And when the festival is approaching, they buy clothes for their parents, siblings, and the needy in the area as well as items that are needed to celebrate the festival.

Buying oxen or goats to their parents for Meskel is the other duty that the homecomers are expected to fulfill.

Women in Meskel have a greater role. They stock butter and enset (false banana) for Meskel. They prepare Kitfo (chopped meat), butter, kochoo (flat bread-like food made from enset and served with kitfo, as well as cabbage (Gomen). They also prepare coffee with butter.

There is also a day designated to only women- 'Ye-setoch Meskel'. On this special day, women prepare 'Ye-gomen kitfo', 'kitfo', and cheese, (Ayib).

The other important festival celebrated coinciding with the Meskel Festival by young boys and girls, is Adabna. According to documents, the word Adabna, derived from the Gurage language, is rooted in the rich history and cultural practices of the Gurage community, principally the Sodo



Kestane community.

This cultural day is not only a celebration of the harvest season but also an opportunity to honor the community's ancestors and the values they instilled. It is a time when families come together to reflect on their identity and heritage, reinforcing the bonds that unite them. Adabna is celebrated especially in the eastern part of Beth Gurage, (Soddo kistance, Dobbi).

According to Issayas Samuel, President of the Adabna Kestane Youth Association, the Adabna Festival is a special occasion marked colorfully each year, particularly among girls and young boys starting from Demera Day which is on the 26th of September to October 15. The program will be celebrated at marketplaces and churches warmly and colorfully.

"On this special event, it is common to see the boys and girls singing traditional guragegna music and dancing; adorned with traditional costumes singing songs," he explained. This celebration holds significant value for young people and girls, as it serves as a favorable platform for them to choose their future spouses.

According to Issayas, in Gurage culture, during this festival, plans are made and commitments for a better future are renewed, family members plan together about future goals.

On this cultural festive, the sounds of traditional Gurage music fill the air, accompanied by lively dance performances that reflect the community's joy and unity. These performances, often featuring colorful attire, showcase the unique rhythms and movements that are characteristic of Gurage culture.

Young girls and boys feel free from the control of their families to enjoy the festival. Hence, they can sing and dance freely, choose their mates for marriage, and share gifts with their partners and couples.

Food plays a central role in the Adabna celebrations and women are at the heart of culinary preparations. Dishes, such as gomen (cooked and chopped cabbage) and brundo (a type of stew), using locally sourced ingredients prepared. Sharing meals together symbolizes unity and strengthens familial ties, creating a festive atmosphere that resonates throughout the community.

During the festival dishes like raw meat, kitfo, gomen, kocho, ayib, and areki local alcohol drink, among others are part and parcel of the program. Various stews are prepared with care and love, highlighting the significance of food in uniting families and friends. The act of sharing meals during the festival symbolizes unity and community spirit. Women often lead the efforts to serve food, ensuring everyone feels welcomed and included.

As preparations begin for the Adabna Festival on Meskerem 18, young girls start their engagement rituals at home starting from Meskerem 12. This period is filled with excitement as the community anticipates the festivities. On the day of the festival, girls sing and dance to various traditional and unique Gurage songs, adding vibrant energy to the event. Young men participate in traditional sports, including jumping with sticks, showcasing their strength and agility.

According to him, Adabna is not only a celebration of culture but also a significant occasion for young couples. It is a day when girls get the opportunity to choose

their future husbands, while young boys get engagement with their potential wives. This unique aspect of the festival fosters a sense of community and social cohesion, as families come together to witness these important life milestones.

Gurage women take the lead in preparing traditional dishes that are central to the Meskel celebration. Popular foods include injera, doro wat, and various stews that highlight the community's agricultural bounty.

The act of sharing meals is a cornerstone of the Meskel Festival. Women organize communal feasts, inviting neighbors and friends to join in the celebrations. This practice fosters unity and strengthens community ties.

During Meskel, Gurage women play a pivotal role in cultural expression through music and dance. They perform traditional songs that narrate the history of their people, showcasing the richness of Gurage culture.

Women play a vital role in passing down cultural knowledge and practices to younger generations. In this regard, special events like Adabna and others play significant roles in reflecting cultural values. Through storytelling, music, and dance, they teach children about the values and history of the people, ensuring that their traditions are preserved.

Aside from house chores, many women engage in traditional crafts, creating beautiful textiles and handicrafts that are showcased during the festival. This not only highlights their artistic skills but also reinforces the importance of cultural identity.

Gurage women also have a significant role in organizing festival activities, from coordinating dance performances to managing logistics for communal gatherings. Their leadership ensures that the festival runs smoothly and successfully.

Spiritual leadership is the other role of women in the Kestane Sodo community. As some sources indicated, women are often engaged in spiritual observances during the Adabna Festival, leading prayers and rituals that honor ancestors and invoke blessings for the coming year. Their spiritual roles reinforce the values of respect and gratitude within the community. By embodying the spiritual and cultural values of the Sodo Kestane people, women serve as role models for younger generations, instilling a sense of pride in their heritage.

Society



Meskel: Festival of togetherness, solidarity among Gurage people

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

Meskel (Finding of the True Cross), is one of Ethiopia's major religious and cultural festivals and it is a time when the Gurage people reflect their age-old cultural values and further strengthen their social interactions. The festival serves as a moment of unity, togetherness plus considerateness, bringing together families and communities from different parts of the country to honor their heritage.

What makes the *Meskel* festival special is that it brings together a family that has been separated for a long time. During *Meskel*, it is common for the people of Gurage, who moved to different parts of the country in search of a better life, to get back home to mark together with parents, family members, friends, relatives, neighbors, and villagers.

This festival is currently celebrated warmly in different parts of the country, mainly in East Gurage Zone, the Central Ethiopia State.

In the East Gurage Zone, particularly in the Sodo Districts Gente Mariam Kebele, the celebration of *Meskel* is being marked vibrantly in a manner showing the rich cultural tapestry of the Gurage people, emphasizing the importance of preserving their traditions in every aspect of the celebration.

Culture Department Deputy Head and Head of Culture Sector at the Central Ethiopia Culture and Tourism Bureau, Degneh Bogale, said that *Meskel* festival is a big festival and cultural celebration where the cultural and social cohesion of the people is observed. Due to this, the festival has special value among the people of Gurage and plays a crucial role in promoting the longstanding unity and solidarity among the people.

He said that Gurages are hardworking people, who strive to preserve and pass on their norms and cultural values to the next generation; apart from their welcoming nature and ability to live together peacefully with a spirit of solidarity.

The East Gurage Zone is a unique tourist destination in Ethiopia with its outstanding historical and cultural attractions which can yield substantial economic returns to the zone, the state, as well as the country; he

said exemplifying the Tiya megalithic, one of the archeological sites in Ethiopia.

The rich cultural practices of the Gurage people, including their traditional judicial systems, named *Gordena Shengo*, (*Gordena* Council) *Feragazene*, and *Sinano*, as well as the *Birindo* (red meat), *Gomen's kitfo* (chopped cabbage) *Adabna* (women's and young people festival) plus *Arefa* festivals exemplify the hospitality and the peace-loving nature of the community.

Thus, the *Meskel* festival should be promoted and enriched as it is the platform where the Gurage people show their traditions and perform their social interaction, he remarked.

Culture and Tourism Department Head Biruktayet Tsagaye, also said that the *Meskel* festival holds both religious and historical significance, serving as a manifestation of the values that bind the community together.

She noted that promoting *Meskel* can further enhance the cultural richness of the Zone and attract more visitors. In addition to its cultural heritage, East Gurage Zone is known for its natural beauty and historical sites such as Aymallal, and Gogot. With its stunning landscapes and rich traditions, East Gurage offers a unique experience for both residents and visitors, making it a vital part of Ethiopia's diverse cultural landscape.

As the community continues to celebrate *Meskel*, the hope to enhance awareness and appreciation for the values and traditions that define the Gurage people is greater, she added. In her call, Biruktayet urged the community should promote and develop the natural and cultural tourist destinations of the Zone alongside the festival.

Chief Administrator of the East Gurage Zone Mustafa Hassan expressed that *Meskel* transcends beyond religious and cultural significance. It embodies values of love, togetherness, unity, sympathy, and mutual support. The festival is also a time for new beginnings, as many couples choose to wed during this auspicious occasion. This blending of cultural practices and personal aspirations adds depth to the celebrations, making *Meskel* an enjoyable event for the Gurage people.

Sodo District Chief Administrator, Birhanu Bete, also said that in addition to the *Meskel* festival, there are several tangible

An age-old culture of celebrating *Meskel* by Gurage and other people supports this claim. Ethiopia's cultural heritage is a treasure trove of customs, traditions, and historical landmarks that can captivate the minds of both domestic and international tourists. The *Meskel* festival, with its deep-rooted significance, showcases the rich traditions of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, as well as the communal spirit of the people.

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As one can understand from the experience of Gurage people in central Ethiopia, by promoting such festivals, Ethiopia can present its cultural narrative to the world, fostering a sense of pride and identity among its citizens. But this needs the active involvement of all stakeholders.

Developing cultural values is essential for maintaining the authenticity of these celebrations. The *Meskel* festival, in this regard, serves as a perfect example of how cultural practices can be leveraged to attract tourists, providing them with an immersive experience that goes beyond mere sightseeing. On top of this, communities that actively engage in preserving their traditions not only safeguard their identity but also create an inviting atmosphere for visitors.

As witnessed from recent experiences in Ethiopia, investing in tourist attraction sites can lead to significant economic growth for local communities and the country. By developing infrastructure, such as hotels, restaurants, and cultural centers, Ethiopia can create jobs and provide income opportunities for its citizens. Furthermore, promoting local artisans and crafts during festivals like *Meskel* can empower communities and support the preservation of traditional skills.

The *Meskel* festival is not just a local celebration; but as an intangible heritage registered by UNESCO, it has the potential to attract hundreds of thousands of global audiences. By inviting tourists to participate in the festivities, Ethiopia can foster cultural exchange and mutual understanding. Visitors can learn about the Ethiopian way of life, participate in traditional dances, and savor local culinary delights. This exchange enriches both the visitors and the host communities, creating lasting memories and friendships.

and intangible heritages in the district and these heritages should be properly promoted and developed. He said, it is a place where various developmental and business activities are carried out on a large scale and, where young people receive blessings from their fathers, which reflects solidarity.

Ethiopia, steeped in rich cultural heritage and diverse traditions, is home to a myriad of festivals that reflect the collective identity of its people. Among these, *Meskel*, the commemoration of the Finding of the True Cross stands out as one of the most significant religious and cultural celebrations. This vibrant festival celebrated with colorful processions and traditional rituals, offers a unique opportunity to highlight the importance of developing cultural and religious festivals and tourist attraction sites across the country.



Published Weekly in Collaboration with Haramaya University

HU graduates “Bright Generation” summer class students

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

High school students who participated in the summer Virtual Education Program at Haramaya University (HU) graduated.

The University and Brighter Generation graduated talented students from nearby high schools who have been studying at Haramaya University both virtually and face-to-face for the past ten weeks.

HU organized a “Bright Generation” summer education program in conjunction with Brighter Generation that was initiated by Berhanu Bulcha (PhD), a prominent Ethiopian NASA scientist. The program was offered for the past three years in twenty universities in Ethiopia.

Haramaya University’s “Bright Generation” program coordinator Ahmed Dedo said that the program has successfully provided its students with critical life skills and encouraged an innovative attitude. Students have also demonstrated excellent communication, leadership, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

Furthermore, the program enables students to identify a variety of problems



in the community surrounding the HU and present them to their lecturers to propose and work on a particular project concept.

As a result, students at the HU Center designed and constructed innovative manual machinery for efficient onion harvesting



straight from the field. This unique approach shows the practical application of their learned knowledge and skills.

Dr. Birhanu Bulcha, a well-known NASA scientist and President of Brighter Generation, praised the collaboration between colleges and the organization. He underlined the necessity of strengthening these collaborations to empower young people and promote positive change.

Brighter Generation has officially graduated all participants and awarded them certificates in celebration of their achievements.



Published Weekly in Cooperation with Dambi Dollo University

DaDU donates educational materials

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Donating educational resources to children in need is a critical endeavor that can have a significant impact on their learning and growth. It also improves learning possibilities since access to high-quality educational materials, such as books, notebooks, and learning tools, can greatly improve a child's capacity to study and succeed in school.

In addition, donating educational materials encourages equity. Many students, particularly those living in underprivileged communities, do not have access to basic educational materials. Donations help to close the gap and promote educational equity. As a result, it not only fosters a love of learning, but also promotes academic accomplishment, decreases financial stress, and more.

In light of these facts, Dambi Dollo University (DaDU) has donated educational materials to children involved



in the university's football project.

DaDU President Office Director Debala Tola said that today's children are the country's hope; thus, they should be able to attend school with no shortage of educational materials. So, the university has offered educational materials to children involved in the university football project.

He also mentioned that the university selects talented students and organizes football projects for them. It is critical for the university to establish a legacy in all subjects,

including football. He added that education and sports are linked to one another. Thus the university has paid equal emphasis to both.

DaDU Social Service Director Faris Basha (PhD) said that the university has been working hard on social service and community services. Hence, the support of educational materials that were given to children is one of the community services that the university engages in.

According to Faris Basha (PhD), Director of DaDU Social Services, the university has

been putting a lot of effort into community and social services. Therefore, providing children with educational resources is one of the university's community service initiatives. This initiative is important to promote educational equity and academic accomplishment.

According to him, donating educational materials is an effective approach to assist children's education, and cultivate a culture of learning and community engagement. It benefits not only individual children but also the community as a whole.



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