





# Corridor dev't beyond beautifying cities

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

The corridor development project is ongoing in various parts of the country's various cities with the goal of transforming them into internationally competitive and welcoming urban areas.

Expanding of roads and pedestrian walkways, fulfilling infrastructure as well as upgrading buildings to align with the city's esthetic standards, were part of the development activities. But, regardless of the tremendous impact of the project, there is a question of essentiality beyond beautifying cities.

Addis Ababa City Environment Protection Authority, Deputy Manager, Walegn Desalegn told The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that cities are more likely to be impacted environmentally. The fact that people reside and accomplish their socioeconomic aspect with limited space would make it more vulnerable to environmental risks.

The transportation sector contributes over 60% to climate change in cities. Using fuel consuming vehicles significantly add up to climate change related problems. Nonetheless, the corridor development project comes at pivotal time when cities are going to rapid urbanization.

Walegn said that the project recognized that facilitating transportation would contribute to minimizing climate change issues related with carbon emission following the crowd transportation system.

The priority given to bicycle and electric

vehicles users would hugely play vital role to reduce climate related challenges in the country, as to him.

The corridor development project has also given due emphasis for greening and beautifying cities. The greening initiative has left room for cities to have areas that are available for various purposes. "Having such green areas in middle of cities significantly reduce the risk of flooding, climate change as well as hot weather."

Previously, only 20% of the infrastructure was aligned with the drainage systems and utility infrastructure. That forced waste released from households and factories to be leaked into rivers. However, the well-designed drainage systems constructed through the project would contribute to the growth of the cities thereby reduces threats of the ecosystem, he stressed.

Similarly, the corridor development has been undertaking in a way that go in line with nation's development goals. Moreover, it gives the nation the chance to manage the gap between urbanization and nature.

Following the article published on the Economist that forecasted Addis Ababa to achieve a 10.6% GDP growth rate, the fastest rate of any city in their ranking, Zemedeneh Negatu, Global Chairman, Fairfax Africa Fund (U.S.) share in his social media account that Addis Ababa's ongoing urban transformation and modernization will significantly contribute to this rapid GDP growth.



He said it is also a reflection of the importance of modern infrastructure and rejuvenating Addis Ababa to attract and retain world-class talent, large volumes of investments including FDI and becoming an African regional hub for multinational corporations, big international financial institutions and multilateral organizations.

"The fact that one of the world's 30 largest carriers and Africa's largest - Ethiopian Airlines - is based in Addis Ababa is a huge contributing factor for positioning the city as a corporate hub for Africa and as a major MICE tourism destination," he underscored.

He further indicated that the modernization projects will create a vibrant, livable

cosmopolitan city which creates significant wealth, not just for the city but also for the country. Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa with 120+ million people and urbanizing rapidly.

"Over the next 20 years, I expect multiple large modern cities across the vast expanses of Ethiopia, especially in the regional capitals. The country is forecast to be more than 40% urban in two decades, from ~20% today," he added.

Africa's top 100 cities with a population greater than one million in 2035 as well as smaller capitals will generate more than 60% of Africa's GDP by 2035, as to The Economist.

## EMI calls for cautious agricultural actions in Bega season

BY YOHANES JEMANEH

ADAMA - Ethiopia has to harvest the limited amount of rain waters in which it would receive in the coming dry (Bega) season to mitigate possible impact on agricultural production, Ethiopian Metrology Institute (EMI) urged.

The institute made the announcement during the National Climate Outlook Forum of Bega2024/25 that held on August 30 and 31 in Adama city with a theme: "Climate Service for Early Warning and Early Action".

Briefing the media on the forecast, EMI Director General Fetene Teshome said that some parts of the country, in which Bega is secondary rainy season, such as East and South Somali, South Oromia, Sidama and South Ethiopia states would get normal and below normal rainfall as of September 29, 2024.

Accordingly, the consolidation of national activities to collecting rain waters in these areas through constructing irrigation dams to reduce impacts.

On the other hand, Fetene expressed that normal rainfall performance is anticipated to dominate across Borena, Guji, Sidama and Southern portions of Ethiopia.

Meanwhile, early onset and early session of Bega2024/25 rainfall will be also expected in the aforementioned period.

Mentioning that, much of the northern, north-eastern, eastern and central Ethiopia will have unseasonal rainfall, the Director General has urged stakeholders to intensify harvesting



works in these areas where crops have been grown during the rainy (Kiremt) season.

Likewise, the southwestern and western portions of the country will dominantly receive above normal rainfall with occasional heavy rainfall pattern, Fetene stated.

On the other hand, above-normal to slightly near-normal temperature is expected over the eastern, central and southeastern part of Ethiopia, while the daily minimum temperature expected to reach 5 degree Celsius over northeastern, eastern and southern areas, he noted.

According to the Director General, the reliability of weather forecasts of the institute is increasing through time which has been proved by its successful predictions including the above normal rainfall the country experienced last Kiremt season.

Minister of Water and Energy, Eng. Habtamu Itefa on his part said that the country must work on harvesting rain waters to improve agricultural production and prevent floods.

Such measure is important as it helped the developed world to achieve prosperity and mitigate climate change impacts, he added.

## EU remains committed as Ethiopia's key trading partner

ADDIS ABABA - The outgoing European Union Delegation Head in Ethiopia, Ambassador Roland Kobia has reaffirmed the union's commitment to remain as one of the primary trading partners with the country.

In an exclusive interview with ENA, the delegation head praised Ethiopia's current macroeconomic reform policy to integrate its economy with the global market, pledging support from the EU.

Kobia stated that the European Union is consistently ranked among the East African nation's top three trading partners, revealing "a fact that often surprises many Ethiopians."

This demonstrates the EU and its member states are key trading partners for Ethiopia, the ambassador elaborated.

"We are consistently among the top three trading partners, year after year. This is crucial for Ethiopia's economy, as we facilitate both exports and imports essential for the country's development," he said.

The delegation head further explained the EU's relation with Ethiopia that has gone beyond trade.

To this effect, Kobia disclosed that the union has already invested approximately 350 million Euros in development projects in the country and it plans to boost the investment further.

Mentioning EU trade grant for Ethiopia, Everything But Arms (EBA), the ambassador noted that it allows Ethiopia to export all products to the European market without quantity restrictions.

A report indicated that there are 7,200 export products on the EBA list that Ethiopia can exploit with 20 percent of its goods with the total worth of 130 billion Birr.

Kobia figured out that this unilateral system benefits Ethiopian exporters by providing access to a vast market of 450 million consumers without customs duties.

"Our trade relationship is based on a very favorable regime for Ethiopia. This system is nonreciprocal, meaning we offer these benefits without demanding anything in return. It's our way of supporting Ethiopia's economic revival through trade."

Additionally, Kobia emphasized that European companies are among the top investors in Ethiopia.

He also stressed the need for fostering a conducive business climate in Ethiopia, which includes fiscal transparency, anti-corruption measures, and a strong governance system.

Speaking on the nationwide reconciliation process, the delegation head has pledged EU support for the initiative being facilitated by the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission. He also urged for robust implementation of the reconciliation process.

Acknowledging the national dialogue commission that has made significant strides, Kobia emphasized on delivering tangible results.

The ambassador affirmed EU's cooperation with Ethiopia in peace, security, and counter-terrorism efforts.

According to him, the EU is also providing humanitarian assistance for refugees and internally displaced people.

Finally, Kobia revealed that the EU is eager to continue supporting Ethiopia's economic growth through trade, investment, and development aid, thereby strengthening the EU-Ethiopia partnership.



# Editorial

## Ethiopia's sacrifices for peace in the Horn ought to be recognized

Owing to its strategic vantage point, The Horn Region draws the coveting eyes of many. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise watching advantage-seekers as well as the belligerent with a bent of fishing in troubled waters poking their noses in this part of the global center of attention seen as a goldmine. This tragic episode has resulted in chaos and instability in the region rocking the peace of its inhabitants and hamstringing its development. For nearly six decades now countries in the region have been forced to undergo inestimable trials.

Especially the statelessness that ensued in Somalia had created a petri dish for extremists like Al-shabaab and ISIS, whose evil deeds created a domino effect world over. The logjam above has posed frictions both on the regional and global effort to usher in a sustainable peace. Out of fraternal considerateness, people of Ethiopia, standing by the side of their government, martyring themselves while carrying regional, continental and global peace-warranting banners have been paying huge sacrifices to forestall the nasty surprises of bloody terrorists. In so doing, to the delight of the Somalia people and their neighbors, Ethiopians have allowed the oxygen of peace waft across the sky of the otherwise terrorists-petri dish Somalia. The incalculable role of Ethiopia in incapacitating the terrorist groups from marring the peace of countries in the horn and beyond is worth mentioning here. This fact is not a secret shrouded in mystery to the Somalia people. Ethiopian Peace Keeping Force's stay in Somalia for close to two decades is in the same wavelength with this claim.

Ingratitude on the part of the Somalia government and attempts of the same to belittle Ethiopia's friendly gestures cemented in blood in time of its neighbor's need are being witnessed. This temper tantrum creates dismay on the cool-headed. It suffices to leave the case to morale and history. If left undetonated, certainly, the challenges, on their wake, bring moral questions and accountability.

Instead of seeking amicable solutions round a horseshoe table with their Ethiopian peace-votary counterparts, the Somalia officials have opted to connive with forces and historic enemies, which see the horn's peace and development as a threat to their skewed national interest. Unless checked in good time, this zero-sum political game of their government is rather inimical to the people of Somalia that does not buy the fatal misstep. There is no ginsaying this.

The people and government of Ethiopia believe in the common strategic benefit of a sustainable peace in the region. As such, one way or another, it is not with unpeeled eyes they watch any activity that eclipses the tranquility of the region. They vigilantly monitor terror-and-war-exporters' heinous move at the cost of mainly Ethiopia's peace and national interest. They know as to whose face emerges when Trojan horse's mask is cracked. Peace and stability are decisive ingredients in shaping the fate of people of the region and the development that grows out of the situation. That is why chalking out strategies for common growth of the region they are making socioeconomic thrust to crystalize the amenities of modern life in their era. The sacrifices Ethiopia paid on the altar of peace and the bold step it took to economically integrate countries of the region could be traced back to the aforementioned sentiment.

Ethiopia will press ahead with its cautious and responsible move of reinforcing regional peace and common growth that finds echo with its national interest. It pays of amicably dealing with friendly Ethiopia that believes in a win-win approach and peaceful common growth lends a heeding ear to reasons and stretches out its arms to plausible solutions. Better ironing out differences with thoughtful Ethiopia via discussions than provoking it, for such a wrong move, as attested by history, is tampering with a wildfire.

# Opinion

## Any attempt to contain, chock Ethiopia is a pathway to disaster in the Horn of Africa (Part I)

BY SOLOMON DIBABA LETA

Ever since the post-independence period of 1960s, despite formal political independence, many regions in Africa have remained a hot bed of conflicts and destabilization. Suffice it to mention conflicts and wars in DRC, Central Africa, the Magreb, Southern Africa, West Africa and other pocket areas which are still marred with conflicts triggered from within and without. The Horn of Africa among others, have now become a bone of contention more than ever. Attempts are being made to transfer the crisis in the Persian Gulf to the Middle East which will ultimately culminate in the Horn of Africa.

The recent heinous move made by Somalia and Egypt in an alliance to destabilize the Horn of Africa is not a new phenomenon but a repetition of historical policy of containment earlier made by colonial powers on Ethiopia. While Ethiopia has never invaded its neighbors, Egyptian forces have employed a policy of containment on Ethiopia ever since the battles of Khedive Ismail (1874) Gundet (1875) Gura (1876), in which the invading Egyptian forces were utterly defeated by Ethiopian defense forces who were only interested to ascertain their unity and territorial integrity. Recorded history shows that between 1826 and 1935, Ethiopia was invaded 34 times by foreign powers intent on colonizing or even destroying it. Egypt, under the Ottoman Turks and later Khedive Ismail Pasha, invaded Ethiopia 17 times.

The main objective of the above wars was both economic and political. It was a combination of politically containing Ethiopia and controlling the sources of the Blue Nile. This was later cemented by the Agreement made between Britain and Egypt (1929) and another agreement between Sudan and Egypt (1959) to have a total share of the waters of the entire water of the Nile ignoring Ethiopia which contributes 86 percent of the waters of the Nile River.

Egypt inherited the policy of containment from the US which attempted to contain the expansion of the former Soviet Union during the era of the cold war.

The policy of containment was a geopolitical strategy used by the United States and its allies during the Cold War to prevent the spread of communism. This strategy was articulated by U.S. diplomat George F. Kennan in 1947 and became a cornerstone of American foreign policy.

The policy of containment was controversial and led to significant military engagements, including the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Critics argued that it sometimes led to support for undemocratic regimes as long as they were anti-communist. However, containment is also credited with preventing the spread of communism and contributing to the eventual

dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.

The concept of an Egyptian policy of containment on Ethiopia is often discussed in the context of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and the broader geopolitical tensions between Egypt and Ethiopia, particularly concerning the Nile River. However, there is more to this.

Egypt has historically used diplomatic channels to apply pressure on Ethiopia regarding the GERD by mobilizing the members of the Arab League. Egypt has sought the involvement of international organizations, including the United Nations and the African Union and the US, to mediate the dispute and ensure that its water security concerns are addressed.

Egypt has worked to build alliances with other Nile Basin countries and has sought to influence the policies of upstream nations. By engaging Sudan and other neighboring countries, Egypt aims to counterbalance Ethiopia's influence and limit its unilateral actions on the Nile.

Egypt has pursued legal avenues to challenge Ethiopia's actions, including attempts to involve international courts or seek binding agreements that would limit Ethiopia's ability to control the flow of the Nile through the dam.

While Egypt has primarily focused on diplomatic and political strategies, there have been discussions within Egyptian circles during the presidency of about the possibility of using military force or economic sanctions as a last resort to protect its interests in the Nile waters.

The situation remains a delicate and ongoing issue. Despite various rounds of negotiations and international mediation, a comprehensive agreement on the operation of the GERD and water sharing among the Nile Basin countries has ever materialized due to economic and political hegemonic policy of Egypt which refused equitable use of the waters of the Nile in accordance to the agreement stipulated in the NBI. Egypt continued to use a combination of containment policy and policy of hegemony in the Horn of Africa.

Egyptian hegemonism often involves one state exerting significant influence or control over the political systems of other states in the Horn of Africa. This can be demonstrated by the fact it has signed military agreements with a number of Nile Riparian countries including South Sudan, Uganda, Burundi and Kenya and Somalia outside the Nile Riparian countries. This indicates that Egypt is not interested in economic cooperation among the countries in the region but attempts to create a military alliance with total rejection of the NBI.

These military agreements have a potential to leads to instability, conflict, and the suppression of diverse cultures and systems of governance in the already fragile region of the Horn of Africa.

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## ECWC surpasses revenue targets, eyes int'l expansion

•Amasses 1.4 bln Birr profit before tax

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

**ADDIS ABABA-** The Ethiopian Construction Works Corporation (ECWC) reported a revenue of 11.8 billion Birr for the fiscal year 2023/2024, exceeding its target and showcasing strong growth.

ECWC CEO Yonas Ayalew (Eng.) presented the corporation's annual performance report to stakeholders and staff yesterday, revealing that ECWC achieved over 11.84 billion Birr in revenue, surpassing the planned 11.78 billion Birr target. The corporation also recorded a profit of nearly 1.4 billion Birr before tax, marking a significant 81% increase in revenue and a doubling of profit compared to the previous year.

The CEO highlighted that revenue was generated from various sectors, including transport infrastructure, water infrastructure, building construction, and house development projects. ECWC is currently managing 85 construction projects worth 71 billion Birr across Ethiopia and in three branches in Djibouti.



Yonas Ayalew (Eng.)

Yonas also announced plans for further expansion, both domestically and internationally. ECWC aims to establish new branches in African countries such as Kenya, Rwanda, Somaliland, South Sudan, and South Africa to enhance brand visibility, attract a broader customer base, and increase foreign currency access.

Looking beyond Africa, the corporation has set its sights on markets in the Middle East, Europe, and China to forge international partnerships, tap into new customer bases, and adopt advanced technologies and best practices.

## Commission launches...

national unity and addressing long-standing issues.

In a press briefing held on Friday in Hosanna town, the Commission announced its readiness to commence this vital phase of its mission, starting yesterday. This initiative underscores the government's commitment to inclusive governance and participatory problem-solving.

Commissioner Yonas Adaye elaborated on the Commission's progress, stating, "The National Dialogue Commission, established to enable citizens to resolve their challenges through dialogue, has been diligently working on various fronts. Having completed several essential preparatory tasks, we are now transitioning to the agenda-gathering phase, which has already begun in other states."

The Commissioner revealed that the Commission has finalized preparations to conduct agenda-gathering activities in the Central Ethiopia Region for six consecutive days, beginning August 31, 2024.

This comprehensive process will involve over 1,500 participants representing diverse societal groups from seven zones and three special districts within the state.

"As a nation, it is incumbent upon us to address and heal our long-standing issues

through dialogue, seeking sustainable solutions," Commissioner Adaye emphasized. He added that this approach is crucial for ensuring the effectiveness of the dialogue process.

The agenda-gathering phase will encompass a wide range of stakeholders, including political parties, religious institutions, civic associations, influential individuals, and various organizations within the state.

The Commission stressed the importance of participants' contributions, urging them to uphold principles of inclusivity, transparency, engagement, and credibility to ensure the success of the dialogue.

Commissioner Adaye concluded with a powerful call to action, stating, "This historic process holds immense potential for liberating our country from various challenges and sustaining its bright future. Every citizen must strengthen their contribution to ensure this pivotal initiative reaches its goal."

The National Dialogue Commission's efforts in Central Ethiopia represent a critical juncture in the nation's journey towards reconciliation and progress. As the process unfolds, it is expected to play a pivotal role in shaping Ethiopia's path to a more unified and prosperous future.

## Integrated transport...

improve intra-African air connectivity. These developments could significantly benefit passenger transport and boost overall connectivity across the continent.

"Improving road, rail, and air traffic connections among African nations would stimulate tourism, attract new businesses, encourage investment, and enhance productivity," Mgangira noted. He pointed out that the current infrastructure among some African countries is inadequate and requires significant improvement to foster stronger economic linkages.

Ethiopia, aiming to become a regional center of excellence, has established a road research center dedicated to advancing research and development in transportation. The country hosts an annual road research conference, bringing together researchers and experts from across Africa to share

knowledge and technology, facilitating the implementation of research findings on transportation issues.

The research specialist emphasized the importance of continuous and systematic road study to support infrastructure development and address the need for adequate funding for maintenance. He also mentioned the Ethiopian road research center's participation in a recent conference in South Africa, stressing the need to translate shared knowledge into practical applications to achieve the continent's transportation goals.

By fostering collaboration among road agencies and researchers across Africa, there is an opportunity to solve common infrastructural problems and advance the continent's connectivity and economic growth, Mgangira remarked.

## Ethiopia launches food...

According to Mekdes, approximately 39% of children under five in Ethiopia suffer from malnutrition, with 11% experiencing wasting and 22% being underweight. The ministry is also developing mechanisms to ensure food safety from production to consumption across the country.

The Food and Beverage Industry Research and Development Center General Manager Bekele Mekuria stressed the cost-effectiveness of food fortification as a simple solution to improve public health and minimize socioeconomic crises. He cited a study by the Ethiopian Public Health Institute, noting that malnutrition

affects over 5.8 million children under five and leads to an annual loss of \$4.5 billion.

The enforcement of mandatory food fortification standards for local producers has been in effect since April 2024, targeting edible oil, wheat flour, and iodized salt. Bekele also advocated for the inclusion of fortified foods in school feeding programs, universities, and government procurement directives.

The officials called on the media and stakeholders to raise awareness about the importance of fortified foods to enhance public health and combat malnutrition in Ethiopia.

## Reforms, AfCFTA...

engagement aims to enhance Ethiopia's competitive edge internationally, creating lucrative trade opportunities worth billions of USD, as highlighted by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) official website. Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen reaffirmed the government's commitment to supporting local manufacturers and exporters, emphasizing the need to improve competitiveness amid efforts to boost economic growth and balance trade.

Despite facing challenges in its import-export trade balance, Ethiopia's commitment to economic reforms is seen as a critical step toward achieving a more balanced market environment. During a

recent public-private dialogue, Temesgen reiterated the government's dedication to policy and structural reforms to foster private sector participation, a vital aspect of enhancing the country's trade position.

International observers, including AfCFTA Secretary General Wamkele Mene, have praised Ethiopia's proactive approach to economic reforms and its significant role in implementing the agreement. Ethiopia's alignment with AfCFTA modalities and tariff offers underscores its commitment to facilitating trade across the continent.

With its strategic position as Africa's second most populous country and a resilient economy, Ethiopia is well-positioned to be a key player in AfCFTA.

Despite global challenges, Ethiopia's economy is projected to grow by 6.2% in 2024 and 6.5% in 2025. These economic reforms and strategic positioning offer substantial opportunities for the private sector to expand beyond East Africa and deepen its integration into the continental economy.

The AfCFTA is considered a catalyst for enhancing Ethiopia's export trade, offering substantial benefits for businesses to extend their reach and integrate more fully into the African market. Ongoing policy reforms, such as liberalizing the currency exchange regime and opening state-owned enterprises to private investment, are designed to create a more favorable

environment for private sector growth.

MoTRI Minister Kasahun Gofe emphasized that these reforms will only succeed if the private sector actively engages in export activities. The government's support for the private sector is evident through fostering public-private partnerships and engaging in regular dialogues to address export sector challenges and opportunities. "The AfCFTA platform provides a unique opportunity for local traders to tap into the broader continental market," he remarked.

To maximize these opportunities, the private sector must intensify efforts to align with the government's trade and economic goals.



# Opinion

## Ethiopia's right to access the Sea vis-à-vis the future of Horn region

BY ATIKLIT ATNAFU

### PART II

However international law and UN convention clearly stipulates that land-locked countries have the right to access the sea .

#### Economic, security implication

The geopolitical impact of lack of access to the sea is currently affecting Ethiopian foreign policy and national interest in different ways.

After Ethiopia lost its coastal territory and ended up being a land-locked country, it immediately become dependent on the use of ports of the neighboring countries, its import-export trade is critically hampered ever since.

The economic and security issues are also very important factors to consider when one investigates the right of access to sea although these factors alone cannot be sources of sovereign right of access to the sea.

The absence of access to the sea constitutes a major obstacle for economic and social development. "The major economic difficulties that landlocked countries in the developing world face include incurring additional transport cost. It also exposes to foreign trade deficit, trade between landlocked and coastal developing states is rarely important because the two economies do not complement one another.

On the contrary, they often enter into competition for foreign and external resources within the international market. Land locked countries face additional economic burdens that emanates from their lack of access to the sea. They depend heavily on the transport policies of transit states including payment of a portion of their transport costs in convertible currencies and bear increased costs resulting from the necessity of warehousing stocks, port delays and expenditures in the itineraries of re- exchange.

Poverty is the main enemy of Ethiopia, and the main threat of Ethiopia's existence. And unable to access the Sea exacerbates it. To sustain long-lasting peace, security, and stability, Ethiopia has to get rid of poverty. Poverty can be minimized and eradicated if there is immediate and sustainable development. One of the vital instruments is international trade which demands efficient, cost effective and competitive market. All obstacles to this trade and especially the transit process should be tackled with. External forces who do not want Ethiopia to develop may exploit Ethiopia's lack of an outlet to the sea and destabilize Ethiopia.

There can be no long lasting peace, stability or security when a state's system cannot feed, educate, or maintain the health of the great majority of its people. Denial of access to the sea is a source of insecurity because it hampers development.



Ethiopia's quest for sea access is legitimate – photo Google

The security of Ethiopia is significantly affected by and may be decisive of the security of the region because of its strategic position and the historical role of countries.

The security of Ethiopia is also a guarantee to the peace and stability of its neighbors and that of the international community. Ethiopia is at the forefront of the combat against terrorism. Over and beyond, hundreds of thousands of people that fled their countries due to war and persecution call Ethiopia home. Ethiopia's security and development has a conspicuous implication to the international community. Still Ethiopia is playing great role to contain migration to European countries for it works to contain illegal migration.

What is more, Ethiopia's peace-keeping mission role and its standing as a third diplomatic center of the world, is huge. Despite the security aspect, currently the Ethiopian economy becomes highly vulnerable due to lack of a reliable access to the Sea.

#### Ethiopia's contemporary policy towards accessing sea outlet

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) has set the record straight on the issue of Ethiopia's policy to access the Sea. In a televised parliamentary session, the premier said Ethiopia has the right to have access to the sea through peaceful means due to geographic, historical, and economic reasons.

Since 1993, Ethiopia has been dependent on Djibouti in terms of sea access. According to media reports, 70% of the cargo at the Port of Djibouti is shipped to or from Ethiopia, accounting for over 95% of the landlocked country's foreign trade in 2021.

In addition, the prime minister noted that while Ethiopia is pressured to remain silent on the issue of access to the Red Sea and Gulf of Eden, other states are entitled to talk on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) that is taking shape on the Nile River and other trans-border rivers, which seems paradoxical.

Furthermore, the Prime Minister underlined

that the country's fate is determined by the Red Sea and the Nile River, which are key factors of its development. He further explained the double standard of some entities saying: "Let us share yours, but never ask from ours" is wrong, and it is necessary to share resources in a balanced manner. They want to share our clean energy. That is not a problem and it is our very interest to share clean energy form the GERD. And we need also to get sea outlet.

#### The interests of global powers

The world is becoming increasingly interdependent as if growing interconnectedness affects everyone the same way. In the 21st century the world may indeed be more interdependent. The absence of hierarchy among states and dwindling of coercive force make the global system more anarchic.

Regional power shifting dynamics may see significant changes, with regional powers such as India, Russia, Brazil, Turkey, UAE and others increasing their influence. This could potentially result in a more multipolar world order rather than a unipolar or bipolar one that is dominated by a few major powers.

Predicting how global power orders will change in international relations is highly complex and subject to numerous factors. However, several trends and possibilities are frequently discussed by scholars and experts. It is important to note that these predictions are speculative and not definitive ones. Ethiopia is a lynchpin in the Horn of Africa region in pacifying the region and leading to the needed regional economic integration. It is crucial to note that predicting global power shifts is inherently uncertain and depends on a multitude of variables. Additionally, the changing power dynamics can lead to both cooperation and conflict depending on how various actors adapt to these shifts.

**Security Cooperation:** Global superpowers have strategic interests in the stability and security of the Horn of Africa. Their military presence or cooperation agreements with countries in the region

could influence Ethiopia's sea outlet access. For instance, the US military base in Djibouti Camp Lemonnier, close to Ethiopia, provides assistance in securing the region and could indirectly impact Ethiopia's access to sea outlets. Put another way, the relative decline of traditional global powers such as the United States, Europe, and Japan could also alter the global power order. Economic, demographic, and other factors may lead to a redistribution of power and influence among both established and emerging powers.

**The Rise of China:** China's increasing economic and military prowess suggests that it may challenge the existing global power order dominated by the United States. As China seeks to expand its influence, it may reshape the existing norms and structures of international relations.

**Emerging Technologies:** The development and deployment of emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, cyber capabilities, and biotechnology may significantly alter the global power order. Countries that are at the forefront of these technologies may gain greater influence while others could struggle to keep pace.

Global superpowers' foreign policies and diplomatic relations with regional countries can have significant influence on Ethiopia's access to sea outlets. International alliances, conflicts, and agreements can shape the political landscape, affecting decisions related to sea access, trade routes, or disputes over territorial waters.

Overall, the interests and actions of global superpowers in the Middle East and Africa, including US, the China, Russia, and other powers can create their impacts on Ethiopia's ambition of accessing a sea outlet.

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



# Business & Economy

## Import substitution for reasonable economic progress

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Import Substitution (IS) does economically mean the satisfaction of a greater proportion of a country's total demand for goods, i.e. production plus imports through its own domestic production. Import substitution refers to a government policy aimed at protecting local businesses in developing countries like Ethiopia from being overwhelmed by foreign firms.

*The Ethiopian Herald* interviewed Meskerem Tolcha, an economist working for a private entity as an expert with a view to having reliable information from professional point of view.

She said, "IS refers to a policy that reduces or eliminates entirely the importation of the commodity, and hence leaves the domestic market exclusively for domestic producers. Measures of IS that are based on changes in the ratio of imports of specific products to their total domestic absorption are of course concerned with this definition. A policy that reduces the proportion of the quantity of a product that is imported."

As to her, historically, import substitution industrialization has been the instrument through which governments of developing countries bolstered the transformation from an agricultural-based economy to an industrial-based one.

She further said that, the idea of import substitution is to initially close to a country from imports which will allow local firms in new 'infant industries' room to grow and then eventually, as the local firms grow strong enough in the protective environment, markets would be opened to competition.

As to her, this policy involves initially closing the country from imports to allow local firms in new industries to grow, and then gradually opening up the markets to competition once the local firms become strong enough. Agricultural goods and import substitution on manufacturing goods often from imported materials and parts of products that were once purchased from abroad.

Import substitution has focused on domestic production through industrialization and required high import content. The machinery, technology, skills and processes requisite for installing high value production assets are often not developed and produced within Ethiopia, she opined.

Most of the industries targeted by Ethiopia's import substitution policies are heavy duty industries with resource intensive outlay necessitating large volumes of foreign exchange, consequent transfer pricing and negative value-added found that manufacturing activities in the country were net users rather than net savers of foreign exchange.

She said, "The principal industries are food processing, textiles, brewing, and other related sub-sectors. Production of cement, clothing, footwear, tires, batteries, and bottles takes place in that line, too. However, import substitution programs have shown limited success in promoting economic growth and poverty reduction, and have often led to



Gov't striving to boost productivity, enhance imports substitution – photo google

insufficient and slower growth compared to more outward-looking strategies."

She further stated that, the primary goal of the implemented substitution industrialization theory is to protect, strengthen, and grow local industries. This is accomplished through a variety of tactics including tariffs, import quotas, and subsidized government loans.

The issue can be put into an understandable framework by identifying the objective of IS policies that are aimed at reducing imports of specific commodities. Part of the rationale of the structural change objective is that the existing structure makes the economy undesirably dependent on matters outside its own control.

The scheme aims at ensuring the supply of energy sources and resources from abroad, increase the investments in overseas exploration and development of energy sources and resources, improve the economic, trading, political and diplomatic relations, she said.

A possible way to achieve the target of import substitution is pursuing a strategic plan of industrialization, due to the positive correlation between industrialization and economic growth. It is in these circumstances that inward-looking development policies established themselves in different countries' trade strategies, recalling protectionists' features of covering national industries by introducing barriers to imports to promote self-reliance through the substitution of imports with domestic products and sources, involving initially manufactured consumer goods.

This means that import substitution it is not only connected with a decrease of the total level of products and resources imported, but also with the application of trading policies aiming at reinforcing the current industrial base or protecting new industries.

She said the process of import substitution often relied on a large amount of imported intermediate goods which were funded by subsidies of the government to the local companies. Basically, companies that succeeded in settling themselves behind protective barriers have been the ones that took advantage the most from this policy; indeed, these businesses used to transfer abroad their earnings in the form of private transfer payments instead of reinvesting these capitals to improve their efficiency as

they were supposed to act.

The Ethiopian government policy, which has often been tried to protect small local businesses from being overwhelmed by large foreign firms, is the use of the concept of import substitution. The idea of import substitution is to initially close a country from imports which will allow local firms in new 'infant industries' room to grow and then eventually, as the local firms grow strong enough in the protective environment, and markets would then be opened to competition.

After time to grow and develop, it has been claimed the local firms would be mature enough to compete on an equal footing with foreign competition. However, these programs have rarely resulted in strong home-grown industries and the programs have done more to retard poverty intensification.

The economies of developing nations like Ethiopia did start to see economic growth and poverty reduction gain speed as the shift away from import substitution to more open policies became more common.

True, Meskerem said implementing an import substitution strategy that has made many countries rich and well developed ones, while there are a few cases of growth being correlated with import substitution strategies.

As to Meskerem, import substitution is an economic tool designed to complement exporting, to provide a more balanced and integrated approach to local economic development and sustainability. A community focusing on import replacement would seek to produce goods and services that are currently imported in order to keep money circulating locally. By developing local production, the country would increase its capacity to meet the economic, social, and cultural needs of the people from within.

Import substitution is not a replacement for exports, but a way of decreasing a country's vulnerability to external pressures. Homegrown industries diversify and expand the local economy and they naturally begin to look toward regional, national, and global markets as they expand and grow. While the export model has dominated politics, public policy, and economic development discourse, this alternative complementary model has slowly been gaining recognition as 'the other side of the coin' – this complementary model is import substitution.

Import substitution can function as a strong incubator for exporting – as local capacity is built up through the successful displacement of imports, this naturally leads to exporting. From a local economy's point of view, an export is any good or service sold outside of that local economy. Hence, a sale to a neighboring community, region or economy constitutes an export – it does not necessarily have to be an international export.

A positive change in productivity could be the most significant factor in lifting economic growth, and the prosperity that goes with it.

However, as consumers can choose among more varieties, they also become more sensitive to price. An often overlooked aspect of open trade is the added competition imports create in the domestic market. If not for imports, domestic producers would have a higher degree of market power. This lack of competition could allow them to set higher prices, give them less incentive to innovate, and result in lower quality goods and services being supplied to the market place.

She said, "Foreign exporting companies are thus usually world-class producers, offering leading-edge, high-quality, or innovative goods and services, while others offer lower-cost goods from countries with more abundant labor. The very presence of foreign competitors compels domestic firms to seek out efficiencies and cost savings and to offer higher-quality goods at the same or lower prices. This, in turn, makes domestic firms leaner, more efficient, and more competitive, thus benefiting consumers."

Although additional competition may force some domestic firms to exit the marketplace, this is more than offset from the productivity growth as more efficient producers take over, and the resulting gains are passed on to consumers, she added.

In a nutshell, IS policies should focus on small scale manufacturing industries as the country could benefit much out of it. These are capital intensive and lead to a lot of importation of capital equipment, cost outlays, technology and skills importation and massive repatriation of earnings. Focusing on small scale industries provides a better value proposition for IS, as the economies of scale, competitive advantage, strategic capabilities and flexibility favor the industrialized countries more in terms of high-value, large scale manufacturing installations.



# Planet Earth



## Promoting green technologies to speed up energy transition

BY FIKADU BELAY

Ethiopia is leading the charge in the global shift towards a green economy, recognizing the critical need for sustainable development that harmonizes economic growth with environmental stewardship. The government identifies that economic prosperity, environmental health, and social equity are interconnected and has committed to transitioning to a climate-resilient economy.

The country has set an ambitious goal of becoming a climate-resilient economy by 2030, targeting crucial sectors such as agriculture, energy, and forestry. The country that enjoys rich natural resources heavily invests in renewable energy, including hydropower, wind, and solar. These initiatives aim to minimize ecological impact while generating employment and enhancing the livelihoods of its citizens. By embedding sustainable practices within its economic structure, Ethiopia is positioning itself as a beacon of green growth in the region.

Ethiopia is making significant strides in its commitment to various climate initiatives aimed at reducing carbon emissions, combating air pollution, and promoting clean energy solutions. These efforts are underscored by the Climate Resilience Green Economy strategy, a comprehensive framework designed to transition the country toward a sustainable future.

Sahrela Abdulahi, the Director-General of the Petroleum and Energy Authority, highlighted the importance of this strategy in cutting carbon emissions and facilitating investments in e-mobility. This initiative not only addresses environmental concerns but also aims to position Ethiopia as a leader in green technology within the region.

She pointed out that, Ethiopia intends to increase energy access via mini-grids from the existing 10% to 35% within the framework of the National Electrification Program (NEP). Its ambitious goal reflects Ethiopia's commitment to ensuring that all citizens have access to clean energy.

Sahrela mentioned the vital technical support from GIZ-Energy and emphasized

the importance of coordinated efforts with various stakeholders. Such collaboration is crucial for overcoming challenges and ensuring that the electrification initiatives are both effective and sustainable. In addition to expanding electricity access, the Ethiopian government is also focused on developing a climate-resilient transport strategy.

Yizengaw Yitay, a Senior Climate Change Expert at the Ministry of Transport and Logistics, outlined the government's plans to establish standards for electric vehicles (EVs) and the necessary charging infrastructure.

He pointed out the urgent need for incentives and policies that will facilitate the transition away from fossil fuels and promote the growth of the EV sector. To this end, the ministry is revising its draft strategy to aim for 500,000 electric vehicles on the road within a specified timeframe. This target draws inspiration from successful examples in California, China, and Oslo, which have made significant advancements in electric mobility.

Ethiopia is making a 10-year plan to double the amount of electric vehicles (EVs) on Ethiopian roads. By 2030, the country desires to have increased the current number of EVs on the road from about 70,000 to 152,000. This initiative is part of a larger movement to replace gasoline-powered vehicles with more environmentally friendly and sustainable modes of transportation.

He stated that, to support the burgeoning EV sector, the Ethiopian government is collaborating with private investors to build the necessary infrastructure. This includes providing incentives such as excise tax and VAT subsidies to encourage investment in electric vehicles. He further stated that, efforts are being made to facilitate tax-free imports of charging machines, streamline land access, and simplify licensing processes for EV-related businesses. These initiatives are crucial for building investor confidence and promoting a sustainable e-mobility market.

Yizengaw highlighted the rapid increase in vehicle numbers, which has grown by 14% annually. Despite the infancy of the EV sector in Ethiopia, he advocates for

incentivizing investors and business people to build their trust in this emerging market. The government recognizes that a robust EV sector can significantly reduce the country's dependence on imported fuels, which currently costs Ethiopia approximately 2.4 to 2.6 billion USD annually. Transitioning to electric vehicles will not only help mitigate this financial burden but also promote energy independence, he said.

Furthermore, the government prioritizes renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and efficient resource management to reduce its carbon footprint while bolstering productivity and resilience. The green economy strategy also encourages innovation and entrepreneurship, fostering the development of green technologies. By investing in research and development, Ethiopia is nurturing a sustainability-focused culture that empowers local communities and creates jobs in emerging green sectors.

Beyond environmental advantages, this strategy tackles urgent social issues such as poverty and inequality. By embedding social equity into economic planning, Ethiopia ensures that the benefits of growth are distributed across all segments of society, particularly marginalized groups. This comprehensive approach enhances social cohesion and fortifies the overall resilience of the economy.

The role of technology in enhancing Ethiopia's electric network cannot be understated, Mintesnot Gizaw, an Assistant Professor and Renewable Energy Researcher at Addis Ababa University, emphasized the importance of deploying artificial intelligence (AI) and other advanced technologies to digitize the electric network and infrastructure.

This modernization is essential for improving power quality and ensuring a reliable and scalable EV system. He further pointed out that, Ethiopia's abundant renewable energy resources, if effectively harnessed, could significantly contribute to the country's energy needs. However, the researcher stressed that viable policies and strategies are necessary to encourage private sector involvement in off-grid developments, which can boost job creation and contribute

to national development.

Ethiopia's reliance on imported fuel is a significant challenge, as the country currently spends a substantial amount of its foreign exchange reserves on fuel imports. By focusing on renewable energy and electric vehicles, Ethiopia aims to tap into its off-grid and renewable energy potential, which is currently utilized at only 10%. This transition is seen as a critical step toward reducing dependency on imported fuels and fostering a more sustainable energy future.

Moreover, the shift to electric vehicles aligns with global trends towards sustainability and climate resilience. As countries around the world increasingly prioritize reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing air quality, Ethiopia's proactive measures position it favourably on the international stage. The government's commitment to climate initiatives not only reflects recognition of the urgent need for environmental stewardship but also opens doors for international partnerships and investments in clean energy technologies.

Significant to this effort is the Green Economy Strategy, which focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting sustainable land management, and advancing clean technologies. This strategic framework not only aligns with global climate initiatives but also serves as a model for other nations.

Besides, Ethiopia is at a pivotal moment in its journey toward a sustainable, climate-resilient future. With initiatives aimed at reducing carbon emissions, expanding electricity access, and promoting electric mobility, the country is taking significant steps to address environmental challenges while also fostering economic growth.

The collaboration between government agencies, private investors, and research institutions will be essential in realizing these ambitious goals. As Ethiopia continues to harness its renewable energy potential and develop a robust e-mobility market, the benefits will extend beyond environmental sustainability to include economic opportunities and improved quality of life for its citizens.



# Art & Culture

## History as fiction: How and who should write historical novels?

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

Historical novels are novels written on the basis of historical facts as backgrounds to the story with the techniques borrowed from creative writing or imagined narratives. History, in its broadest sense, is the totality of all past events, although a more realistic definition would limit it to the known past. "Historiography or the study of history is the written record of what is known of human lives and societies in the past and how historians have attempted to understand them."

The problem with these books was that they had not been reviewed by professional or academic writers who had the knowledge and training on how history should be written. Beharu Zewde, author of books on Ethiopian history and the history of the Ethiopian student movement, is of course a living example of an academic historian who devoted his entire academic life to studying and writing books on Ethiopian history. His is no doubt an expert or authority in Ethiopian history.

Writing authentic history of a period or an event has the potential to create consensus among the various stakeholders who are directly or indirectly involved in that history or event. Consensus is needed to bring about understanding and unity and a sober understanding of historical events. In order to create consensus there must be an authoritative voice or voices that write history objectively and in order to prevent conflicts and misunderstandings that may lead to serious challenges. This in turn requires seriousness and a sense of responsibility on the part of those who are writing the history of a country or a community.

In other words, history should be written with authenticity and honesty as well as integrity. One cannot write history without adequate academic or personal preparation, maturity, moral integrity and vision. This does not necessarily mean that anyone who is trying to write the history of a country or a community or an event should have a Ph.D. in historiography. The best historians in the world are not always the best-educated or with the highest academic achievements. Most of them have not visited universities or higher education. Yet, they were genuinely talented, hardworking, diligent and committed to research and eager to write the truth and only the truth. This requires a great deal of discipline and commitment if not dedication.

History is one of the most serious subjects in human learning and a serious commitment and discipline is required on the part of the researchers who are engaged in this endeavor. Sometimes, historians are required to read hundreds of books to conduct research around their subject matter at hand, do serious analysis, comparison and critical work before they even start to write the first drafts of their books.

By comparison, writing historical novels may not be as demanding as writing history. The most dominant talent required by historical novelists is imagination and creativity which



may be acquired by nature or from education. Half of the job is already done when the historical novelist outlines his story and writes his first draft. The other half of the job is to write the actual narrative against the specific historical background or setting the author wants to place his novel.

Of course research is also needed in this particular area. As a matter of fact fiction writing in all its forms is not something that comes out of the imagination of the writer as ready-made materials. There are frequent moments in the course of the writing the historical when it is necessary and relevant to research the historical part of the novel for authenticity or plausibility.

One cannot write a good historical novel by giving the reader false historical accounts. That would be serious flaw that may diminish the acceptability and beauty of the novel. The imagined narrative depends on the imagination of the author but the historical fact should be based on true events that cannot be distorted for the sake of accommodating the imaginary part of the book.

Those authors who write history books may not often have the talent for creative writing or historical novels. The reverse is also true. Those who write historical novels may not have neither the taste nor the preparation for writing books on pure history. Yet, there are authors who are trying to link imaginative literature to history. "Many scholars have turned with sharpened interest to the theoretical foundations of historical knowledge and are reconsidering the relation between imaginative literature and history, with the possibility emerging that history may

after all be the literary art that works upon scholarly material."

The more fortunate or more talented among them may also be good at writing history books at the same time that they write historical novels. Historical novels are not new to Ethiopian literature in Amharic. There are also historical novels in English written by the some of the most prominent authors in this country. There are also history books written by professional or academic historians as well as amateur or non-historians. Ye'tewordros Enba (Theodore's Tears), by Berhanu Zerihun in Amharic and "Warrior King" by Sahelsellassie Berhanemariam in English are only two examples. Ye'Ethiopia Tarik (History of Ethiopia) by Tekeletsadik Mekruia is considered a classic of Ethiopian history written in Amharic.

Since the 1990s, that is to say, after the fall of the military government in Ethiopia, there appeared many non-professional or self-proclaimed history writers who tried to write about the history of the rise and fall of the Derg government and about its military adventures. These authors were either military officers in the Derg army who witnessed history in the making or took part in the major battles. These books are allegedly written from a subjective point of view and lacked the objectivity or mental detachment required to write non-partisan history books or historical novels.

However, this does not mean all books of history suffer from objectivity or are partisan in their approach. There many historians in history who wrote excellent books of war histories without even taking part in those

events. Greek historian Herodotus, who lived in 5th century B.C. was one of them. "In the 5th century B.C. Herodotus, who has been called the father of history, wrote his famous account of the Persian Wars. Shortly afterward, Thucydides wrote his classic study of the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta. These men recorded contemporary or near-contemporary events in prose narratives of striking style, depending as much as possible on eyewitness or other reliable testimony for evidence."

There are also many fiction writers who wrote excellent novels on war such as German writer Rene Maria Remarque's "All Quiet on the Western Front" which is a novel about war during the First World War. There is course, the classic "War and Peace" by Russian writer Leo Tolstoy. Theoretically speaking, writing historical novels gives the writers a certain degree of creative freedom and can handle their material relatively freely by using hard historical facts as backgrounds to their narratives.

The following short definition of what historical novel may be gives a synopsis of its meaning. A historical novel is "a novel having as its setting a period of history and usually introducing some historical personages and events." What is history or what is historical? The well-known British historian E.H. Carr gives us another brief definition. According to Carr, "the facts of history are simply those which historians have selected for scrutiny." In another instance Carr says that, "historians make history in and through their selection of which are the important facts." Carr has written a famous book entitled, "What is History?" a book both controversial and influential.

Herodotus was the first Greek historian who has left behind a corpus or works that have transcended time and are still influential in our time. In the 5th century B.C Herodotus, who has been called the father of history, wrote his famous account of the Persian Wars. Shortly afterward, Thucydides wrote his classic study of the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta. These men recorded contemporary or near-contemporary events in prose narratives of striking style, depending as much as possible on eyewitness or other reliable testimony for evidence. More recently still, Chinese writer Sun Tzu has given us the classic "Art of War" whose ideas about military strategy and philosophy is still relevant in our times.

A historical novel is different from the novel proper that fully depends on the imagination of the author. Here, the author has complete control of his materials while in historical novels or in the process of writing history what matter most is its truthfulness, the authenticity of its sources and the authority with which the writer is handling his material or his subject matter. Badly written historical books might turn out to be explosive or divisive materials that may distort reality and lead to division rather than understanding. That is why the responsibility of the author who should not only be good at putting words to paper but also works with integrity and responsibility.



# Society

## Capitalizing on healthcare system for productive posterity

BY MENGESHA AMARE

In this ever-growing realm of socio-economic trajectory, people of many nations have achieved many milestones in the field of medical science, technological advancement, and comprehensive change, but still, there is a dire need for improvement in the quality of the former. Low-quality health care, wrong diagnosis, and uncivilized patient treatments, among others have been common problems for almost every citizen of the respective nations of the continents the globe encompasses. Ethiopia is not exceptional along this line, indeed!

Keeping this in mind, *The Ethiopian Herald* conducted an interview with Medhanit Yitbarek, a Health Officer working for a private hospital, to solicit a piece of information about the issue under discussion.

She said, “The breadth of health promotion activities including systemic regulatory, political, educational, and organizational actions have most of the time resulted in conditions conducive to individuals, groups, and communities. In order to lead to good health and well-being, individuals need to be well-aware in terms of methods and approaches.”

Health promotion activities need to ensure that these are put into operation in a well-organized manner. Apart from methods and approaches, the entire community and individual practitioners need to be well-equipped with various types of activities that are put into operation to promote good health and societal well-being.

She further stated that, when individuals appropriately implement activities, not only are they able to promote good health and prevent diseases, but they would also enrich their living conditions. She further stated that, Ethiopia should invest in improving its citizens’ healthcare capital funding via engaging new sets of investors and increasing its sophistication in capital planning and allocation in the years to come.

Yes, she said that Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa, with a population of over 120 million. Since 1995, the country’s health sector has undergone significant reform through the implementation of a healthcare financing strategy. The Health Sector Transformation Plan has identified four transformation priority agendas: ensuring the delivery of quality health services in an equitable fashion; focusing on district-level transformation; strengthening health information systems; and creating a compassionate, respectful, and caring health workforce.

In tune with the current climate of an aging population coupled with rising chronic disease and increasing demand for services, the government has to make the provision of the healthcare system modern, as to her.

Medhanit said, “Making quality an integral



part of universal health coverage is also a matter of striving for longer and citizens’ better lives. Building quality in a health system needs to be affordable for citizens at all levels of economic development; in fact, the lack of quality is an unaffordable cost, especially for the poorest segments of the society.”

According to Medhanit, since capital funding is used to build new facilities, and redesign or restructure existing care operations, the country should work in collaboration with development partners and other local and foreign collaborators.

The vital measures such as carrying out a coordinated and unified medical and health management system, an efficient and standardized operation mechanism for medical and health institutions, a government-led diversified health investment mechanism, and a scientific and rational medical price formation mechanism, among others, have to be scrupulously taken to help the nation to make a difference, she said.

According to Medhanit, with the development of the economy, public health has become increasingly important. Therefore, it is important to establish a comprehensive and scientific public health level index system to measure public health level as a research priority.

The Ethiopian government has consistently made efforts to enhance the overall public health of the nation; of course, she stated adding that the efficiency of public health services and investment in healthcare resources are significantly higher in localities with higher economic levels compared to less developed regions. Due to unbalanced economic development, many towns and cities in less developed areas, such as are located in the remotest spots from the capital and big cities, are experiencing a shortage of healthcare resources. Hence, the government should attach due emphasis to the healthcare sector; and has to make financial subsidies since such a bold move is of significantly useful in helping the nation have healthy and productive citizens.

She said, “The advancement of public health is a continuous process that evolves alongside the development of the economy, and its society. Therefore, to ensure that the level of public health levels in different parts of the country can be simultaneously compared both horizontally and vertically across regional states.”

As learnt from Medhanit, reaching the goal of a truly equitable health system in Ethiopia will definitely require a multitude of meaningful national strategies including a national commitment to adequate, affordable, and accessible care for all citizens of the nation with the required quality; greater state-level experimentation; and better designed financial assistance for coverage.

She further said that meeting the goal of quality healthcare service will also need a strong community health system that emphasizes political commitment, wider community awareness, and part of the problem and solution through active participation as this step would be instrumental in combating all sorts of hurdles influencing the health sector.

As to her, within the context of these strategies, achieving equity also requires tactical ladders that are consistent with broader strategies, building institutions and procedures within under-resourced communities that will help address the specific health needs of those in need, indeed!

She said, “For example, in our work examining healthcare and social determinants of health, we have encountered several examples of initiatives that should be considered as deliberate approaches to help improve healthcare and mitigate inequities in health—including access, resources, and environment, culture, and health behaviors.”

“Basically, the healthcare system can be well improved via expanding public funding for treatments proven to be cost-effective, investing in primary care provision, using information systems that make it easier for clinicians to work together with patients; engaging patients as well as standardizing and embedding quality improvement tools into practice and healthcare provision

approaches,” she underlined.

Yes, Medhanit said Ethiopians deserve better access to healthcare services and affordable medicines, regardless of where they live or their ability to pay. However, the health system in the country has been facing significant challenges, such as overwhelmed emergency rooms, lack of access to doctors and healthcare workers being under enormous strain. The government has to augment concerted and collaborative efforts by federal, state and even other parties and should continue addressing myriads of challenges the health sector is facing these days.

Undeniably, according to Medhanit, the government has invested a great deal of money to improve healthcare services for all Ethiopians. Every Ethiopian and their health care providers should be able to access their health information securely and confidently.

The burden of medical treatment for urban and rural residents is still relatively heavy she said adding that with the development of the economy and society and the improvement of health security levels, the demand for health services throughout the life cycle is increasing, and the demand for medical and health services for residents is becoming more diversified, with an increased demand for high-end and diversified medical services. This can be met by moving in unison at all levels, she added.

Yes, she said all the problems revolving around the health sector need to be fundamentally resolved through deepening reforms. Although Ethiopia’s unique national conditions and healthcare system have characteristics, the related concepts, and methods can still provide valuable insights for healthcare reforms in many ways.

No doubt, as to her, the improvements in service delivery have increased the confidence of citizens that they can get the services they need at health centers, stations, hospitals, and other medical institutions.

According to Medhanit, the government has to work hard in a bid to address critical health sector challenges including reducing infant and maternal mortality rates and contributing to Ethiopia’s progress toward the Millennium Development Goals. Here, Ethiopian healthcare system targets at providing citizens with universal coverage and quality provision as much as possible.

In sum, Ensuring high-quality healthcare for newborns is also essential for improving their chances of survival within the country’s healthcare system. Mainly, healthcare investment is essential for bolstering the healthcare workforce, enhancing infrastructure, and ensuring the availability of necessary supplies. Besides, expanding community involvement including initiatives like raising public awareness, conducting health education sessions, and engaging local leaders and traditional birth attendants can also be a viable weapon for promoting a national healthcare system.



# Law & Politics

## Somalia dashes the Horn's hope for peace

BY SOLOMON WASSIHUN

With the recent news from Ankara about the series of meetings between the Ethiopian and Somali authorities, the bright light of hope for peace hung on the horizon of politics in the Horn, until it was overshadowed by the unexpectedly reckless speech by Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamed early last week.

It remains to be seen whether this disappointing statement by the Somali president would be the official last word from the Somali government, putting the final nail in the coffin of what the Turks call the Ankara Peace Process, in which both the Ethiopian and Somali people have placed much faith, hope, and expectations.

The reason for our hope was the impressive progress made recently under the Ankara Process, which was a series of indirect negotiations between Somalia and Ethiopia mediated by the host country Turkey. The second phase of the Ankara Process, which concluded two weeks ago, was praised not only by the host government but by both sides of the negotiating parties, as well.

The Somali Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation issued a press release on the same day the second round of the talks concluded saying "During the talks on August 12-13, progress was made.... Somalia is committed to participating in the upcoming third round of talks". Similarly, the Ethiopian Foreign Ministry said "Ethiopia looks forward to having continued engagement that will ultimately help resolve current differences and restore normal relations."

Nevertheless, there was a stark contrast between the tones of the two press releases, which could have been considered a red flag for what was to come later from the Somali side. The contrasting tones of the press releases by the two governments on the same topic issued almost at the same time reflect their predisposition and attitude toward each other.

For instance, the first paragraph of Ethiopia's foreign ministry press release mentions Ethiopia and Somalia as neighborly countries. Even at the joint press briefing, he made in Ankara standing along with his Somali and Turkish counterparts, the Ethiopian Foreign Minister described the Somali government negotiating team as 'Brothers'. "We definitely look forward to a more fruitful third-round discussion with our brothers from Somalia."

On the other hand, there was nothing whatsoever in the entire content of the Somali press release or in the speech of the Somali foreign minister at the press briefing in Ankara that conveyed any idea about the special bond between Ethiopia and Somalia. After hearing the statement of the Ethiopian foreign minister addressing him as 'brother', the Somali foreign minister, instead of reciprocating appropriately, chose to restrict himself, praising the host nation, Turkey.

This contrast is inductive of the differing

viewpoints and spirit the negotiating sides see one another and to be more specific, the lack of diplomatic niceties and open-heartedness on the part of the Somali government.

After all, both rounds of the Ankara peace talks went without a face-to-face engagement of negotiating parties. This happened because of the refusal of the Somali side to sit and talk with the Ethiopians. Given all these facts, no one would be surprised by what was heard later on from Mogadishu about the peace process.

The fiery speech of President Hassen Sheikh that stopped short of boycotting the Ankara process did not get as much attention from the major international media as expected. They have been closely following the developing tension between Somalia and Ethiopia, and they do not seem to be excited enough to dwell on the Hassen Sheikh speech. Perhaps, they have noticed that he had been swearing similar anti-negotiation statements before the start of the Ankara process last July. Thus they may just interpret the Somali president's speech as nothing more than a diplomatic bravado, aimed at boosting the morale of his supporters, assuming a defiant image of a leader in full power and control.

And yet, the truth is, even after 32 years of continued foreign military force support in Somalia, its government, currently headed by Hassan Sheikh, is still struggling for its survival, and is still dependent on the African peacekeepers, ATMIS, whose major contributor is Ethiopia that provided tens of thousands of highly trained and war-hardened soldiers.

Hassan Sheikh regime officials are reiterating their commitment and readiness to ensure the national security and sovereignty of Somalia; but on the ground, they failed to maintain the security of the capital city Mogadishu, which has become a scene of a rising number of horrendous terrorist attacks incidents.

After the arrival of the good news from Ankara on July 13, the peaceful resolution of Ethio-Somali diplomatic row appeared to be within reach and peace seemed closer than ever. However, in less than a week, the Ankara process was thrown into limbo because of Hassan Sheikh's inflammatory speech, which created a peace conundrum. As a result, Somalia became reluctant to follow through on the Ankara process despite the commitment it pledged before the global audience. The wavering and volatile attitude of the regime in Mogadishu proved to be another challenge to reaching an agreement and its effective implementation.

One of the foreign powers that fuel the misguided policy of the Mogadishu authorities is Ethiopia's arch-foe. In the signing ceremony of a military pact between Egypt and Somalia, Hassan Sheikh shook hands warmly with his Egyptian counterpart a day after the conclusion of the second phase of the Ankara process. In its own right, the body language shown in the picture of the handshake reveals the

nature of the power dynamics between the two leaders. The relationship is not one of equals, but one of master and servant.

With the signing of the agreement, the Mogadishu regime has essentially positioned Somalia as a Trojan horse for the implementation of the counter part's malicious policy in the Horn which, if not foiled in time, will result in a cycle of violence that will never end. Things would be easy for Ethiopia's arch-foe to provide support without blinking an eye to any anti-peace force in the Horn that works to destabilize Ethiopia.

Several community leaders in various regions of Somalia have already begun voicing their objections against the military pact with Ethiopia's arch-foe. They know that such element is not coming to help Somalia maintain peace and the rule of law. They recall that elements were not eager to provide security support to Somalia over the last three decades when they needed it most. They knew Ethiopia's enemy wanted to march in there just to serve its strategic interest, which is to make Somalia a launching pad to export violence and terror to neighboring Ethiopia. The majority of Somali clan leaders understand the presence of this party and its forces in Somalia would do much more harm than good to the interest of the Somali people.

Another point that makes us doubt whether Hassan Sheikh would bear the consequences of his exit from the Ankara peace process is that this would be bad news for the Turks, on whom his regime is heavily dependent. As one of the emerging world powers pushing for a strong influence in the Horn, Turkey seemed adamant about ensuring a successful conclusion of the Ankara process. The Turks believe their interests in Ethiopia and Somalia would be best served by maintaining peace in the Horn.

The Turks are already heavily involved in the Horn's politics. The shuttle diplomacy of the Turkish foreign minister a few days before the start of the second phase of the Ankara process is quite revealing. He was in Addis Ababa to meet the Ethiopian prime minister before flying to Cairo to meet the Egyptian president. The Turks know that they need to exert diplomatic pressure on the negative role against the multilateral effort that was made to bring the Ankara peace process to fruition.

The Turks were trying to make the Ankara talks a success in the shortest time possible. The announced date for the second round of the Ankara talks, as stated at the end of the first round in early July was September 2. But the second meeting was held much earlier than the set timetable, August 12-13. The question that should be asked here is what are the Turks racing against? Time will tell soon. Regional bodies like AU and IGAD should scrutinize and react to the move of the Ethiopia's arch-enemy in Somalia. Ethiopians and Somalilanders should join hands, stand their ground, keep on advocating peace, and be ready for any eventualities.



BY EPHREM ENDALE

# Between you & me

## Popular vs. Productive!

She wasn't at all a happy clad. In fact, she was so enraged they say she almost turned into a completely different person, the exact opposite of what she had been all through. Recently they say she has started to listen to reason and was slowly retaining her former self. It was all about her hubby. Not that her husband did any harm to infuriate her; his employers did. What happened was that her husband was passed over as if he didn't exist when almost all the staff got a salary raise. This was his third or fourth time when he was thrown by the wayside while he had every right to expect even demand salary raise. So why is this happening to him over and over again? Was he such a bad guy that his bosses had the guts to repeatedly deny him the raise he deserved and he worked for? That still remains a riddle as no one could even guess why they were treating him with such disdain. On top of all that, there was something which couldn't be denied or ignored. He was a hard worker! Aha! So what more do they want from him? Isn't that the million brr question? The case, so they say, is still unresolved and it is said he has had enough and was about to resign. Some things aren't as easily understood as they should have been. But one thing is perhaps some person or persons upstairs must have some unsettled issue with the fellow.

Allow me to ask this question which might sound stupid as stupid can be. "Does hard work really pay?" That must be the silliest question you ever heard since you started being asked questions. Of course, it does! Of course, hard work means success all around! Hmmm... Well since we've heard of and actually witnessed hard work paying

many times there is no dispute that it really does pay. The riddle comes when we rephrase the question, "Does hard work always pay?" Not an easy question to answer with full confidence, wouldn't you say? It all comes down to how we interpret things these days and how we actually act. So in times when all the values of the past are being out the window, in times when all of the most bizarre ideas and activities are filling the vacuum it's only natural to ask, "What do we really mean by hard work?"

Say there's this fellow who always reports for work sharp on time and leaves at the end of the working day not a single minute before the actual time. He is that person who's always at his desk; you know one of those very rare faces who are always there no matter the time or the circumstances. By the way, it's sort of reassuring seeing those 'common faces' at their desks in an environment where not many seem to care. So this guy we're talking about is the perfect specimen of near-perfection when it comes to discipline. But then there is the other side of the story; productivity! Isn't that as important at times even more important than always reporting early for work and leaving not a minute before the day is up for the office?

Say, this disciplined guy is not your shining star or anything that comes anywhere close to the real winners when it comes to actual productivity. For some reason, he isn't a guy who can't the minutest responsibility entrusted to him. Everybody's aware of this fact as it is a daily spectacle, but few if any speak about it in the open; But few, if any talk about it openly for one they want to keep the

waters calm by not offending the guy who never utters any bad word against anyone. The other thing is that he happens to be a popular guy! You know a guy with all those passionate hugs and shoulder bumps with almost everyone except, maybe, the top brass who aren't very friendly with the rank and file anyway. But even they haven't gone the length to say anything to him concerning the actual work performance. His popularity is his visa to stay as a staff member for as long as he feels like or he lands a high-paying position somewhere else. So, in many places, popularity overshadows productivity and you can imagine what that means to the other who find themselves engaged in the very responsibilities that directly concern them. The other thing while the exterior self of such popular guys is all smile and joy that workers who can't manage to wear those wide and sparkling but meaningless grins. (Yes, you're right; these days there are more meaningless grins and smiles all around and smartness and protection for the unseen come in sorting which is which. By the way, popularity doesn't always come with someone being all smiles or a passionate hugger. Though there might be some pitfalls in saying this, the fact is that there probably are layers beneath the surface layers which blow apart the entire mystery of the guy's popularity. Believe me, there are many such guys all over the place and unfortunately the innocent are entangled in traps they don't see coming.

Then say there is the guy who probably is sometimes late for work, but sometimes also overstays the working hours. He also has no time for the crushing bear hugs and high-fives

everyone seems addicted to these days even with people one never met before. His greetings are measured and the briefest they could be most of the time things starting and ending with a single fast-forward motion nod. If you ever see him shaking hands with another staff member you've every right to demand some int'l honor because no one sees him in such a situation! "Him shaking another person's hand! You must be out of your mind! When it comes to productivity he's the very person you'd give the sky and the earth to have him in your staff. Being a no-nonsense worker he is one of those very rare beings who enjoy doing their best whatever is assigned to them. There are even times he stays late after working hours because he isn't comfortable throwing what he can accomplish today for another time.

Now if there was some universal standing ovation for the best, dedicated workers anywhere in the world he should be the one to deserve the loudest of them. No, especially these days seldom does that happen.

Now if this world of ours was a fair one our first guy who is far more popular than he is productive should have been given advice or two or taught a lesson or two. "Hey, hugs and shoulder-bumps don't put the brad on the dinner table! So tie your belt tighter and sweat it out!" Our productive guy meanwhile should get those real pats on the back with "That's it man; that's it! Keep it up!"

If the world worked this fairly many things would have changed for the better and our smiles would have been genuine. Popular vs. Productive; that's some duel that is a very long way from being settled!

## Lucifer's Signature is all over the Place!

As the Ethiopian New Year draws closer, as the world gets even messier a few questions to HIM maybe would soothe us in ways no highly skilled psychiatrist does.

Me:- Don't you think we deserve some good words as go nearer to the New Year and after all we've gone through over those dozen months?

HIM: - Are you asking or demanding?

Me:- Why do you say that? Was there something wrong with the way I talked?

HIM: - Of course, there is everything wrong!

Me:- I can't believe you're saying that.

HIM: - Believe it, son, believe it. I'm saying this for your own good so that you will turn the binoculars towards yourself. And again believe me, and you'd wonder finding out so many things about yourself, things you never knew were part of your overall makeup.

Me:- But I was...

HIM: - Sorry; I didn't raise that for discussion because I know like many of your country people you'd try to sound like some philosopher the world doesn't know anything about yet.

Me:- But what is wrong with that? When YOU created you have some philosophical genes and we just try to use them. As they say, there are bits of philosophy in every one of us.

HIM: - Where in the world did you hear such, such astounding? I don't know what philosophical genes you're talking about. If there are any in you I didn't put them there.

Me:- Who else could put them in us but you?

HIM: - Look, the problem is it's only just now I heard about what you called philosophical genes. In fact, I didn't know genes were charac-

terized that way. Anyway, let's get back to what you first said. You said something about you people deserving some good words from Me.

Me:- Yes, that was what I said.

HIM: - Now don't get all worked up but what makes you think I've any good words for you?

Me:- I don't want to believe that came from you. Maybe the winds are messing with my hearing.

HIM: - Nothing is messing with your hearing. I'll say it again. Am I in any obligation to have good words for you people?

Me:- Yes, you are. Yes, you are!

HIM: - Hey cool it down. Ok! I said there was no need to get worked up. I'll tell you why I'm saying that.

Me:- Please do so; I can't wait to hear it.

HIM: - Tell me do you people down there really have good words for Me?

Me:- What! This can't be happening!

HIM: - Let me finish; now, I'm not talking about those dedicated ones who just can't pass the day without praising and thanking me or genuinely asking me to help one way or another. And also they do it quietly without having to call attention to themselves or even trying to advertise themselves. Most of the time their questions are genuine I try to help them and lessen or even destroy whatever the burden weighing them down. And I do it happily because I know they never turn their backs on me especially when everything seems to go well for them.

Me:- Then what are our sins?

HIM: - Sins! You said sins and that is an important step forward. Knowing that you sinned first

and admitting it doesn't come easy, especially with the pole inhabiting this planet. You know what makes me wonder?

Me:- "What makes you wonder?"

HIM: - You have made such a complete mess of Earth and instead of putting it right you're now hunting for other planets to inhabit. Isn't what you've made to the beautiful earth enough? I'm not accusing you. But tic doesn't give me comfort seeing you denying the reality that over the past several decades you have done more damage to this earth than all that has been done since its birth. Do you agree with what I'm saying?

Me:- To a certain extent, if you allow me to say.

HIM: - Come on and say it out loud. Tell Me in My Face that I'm blowing up things way beyond proportions like you people have made a habit of.

Me:- No, that wasn't what I was trying to say. Look at all the earthquakes, the storms, the natural...

HIM: - Hold it; hold it there. You still are not getting My point. I'm not talking about natural disasters. Though many times you have a hand in what are called natural disasters I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about all the human tragedy unfolding all over the place; I'm talking about your bombs, your missiles, your drones, your poison gases; I am talking about the millions and millions of innocents being mowed and blown apart because of your lust for power and your wish to subjugate and enslave others. I am talking about all the senseless things being done the enrich the few at the expense of the billions of poor. May I go on?

Me:- No, no need to. I perfectly understand what you are trying to tell me. But though what you said mostly is true we too face strong and

unbearable daily challenges we don't have the strength or the weapons to defend ourselves from.

HIM: - Could you give Me examples...

Me:- Well there are forces beyond our control that push us to do things we wouldn't normally do.

HIM: - No, not again! You're not to bring up that excuse I'm tired of hearing.

Me:- But I haven't yet finished what I wanted to say.

HIM: - You don't have to. Let me save you some breath. You are to tell me Lucifer is behind all this. Aren't you?

Me:- Ye...yes I am.

HIM: - Again him! He must be a lucky fellow to be credited with all things he didn't do. Don't you think you people should sometimes leave that guy alone and take the blame yourselves? Don't you think it is high time your fingers started pointing towards yourselves before you train them on others? There is nothing more brilliant than admitting mistakes because it's only the solutions could come. I'm sure you'd agree with that.

Me:-I do agree.

HIM: - Thanks; I hope you'll visit Me some other time. Then we might have more things to talk about since you people always come up with newer things that surprise me and even many times alarm Me. For now, I wish you all a Happy New Year!

That was what I was waiting to hear. Thanks!

And while we're at it, is Lucifer's signature present in all the bad and unholy things of this world?



## In Pictures



### First Lady inaugurated bread factory in Assosa

*A bread factory built by Office of the First lady with the capacity of producing 300,000 loaves per day was inaugurated in Assosa City, Benishangul Gumuz regional state. The factory was inaugurated this week by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and First Lady Zinash Tayachew. The above picture shows First lady Zinash Tayachew and Benishangul Gumuz Regional State President, Ashadli Hassen cutting a ribbon during the inauguration of the factory.*

*The Office of the First Lady also constructed two high schools in Assosa.*

### Visiting Yelimat Trufat initiative in Sidama

*Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) with First Lady Zinash Tayachew and other senior federal and regional government officials visited the activities of Yelimat Trufat (The 'Bounty of Basket') initiative in Sidama Region.*

*He launched a grand poultry project in Sidama targeting the development of poultry farming as part of the Yelimat Trufat initiative. The 'Bounty of the Basket' is a national agricultural development program being implemented across the country to improve dairy, poultry, egg, honey, fish and meat production.*



# Road to prosperity!

BY DARGIE KAHSAY



## ***PM Abiy launched operation two GERD turbines***

*Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) with First Lady Zinash Tayachew launched the operation of two turbines, 3rd and 4th, of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) this week. The first two turbines of GERD were operational before a year, producing energy that covers 17 percent of the national supply for the concluded year. The launching of the operation of the 3rd and 4th units makes the operational units of GERD in to four.*

*The launching ceremony of the third and fourth units of GERD was attended by senior government officials, by Chief of General Staff of ENDF Filed Marshal Birhanu Jula at Guba, the project place of GERD.*

