



The Ethiopian Herald

Vol. LXXXI No 017 29 September 2024 - Meskerem 19, 2017 **SUNDAY EDITION** Price Birr 10.00

AGI CONSTRUCTING THE FUTURE AFRICA
Abyssinia Group of Industries

Manufacturer of Rebars, Angles, Channels, Flat Bars & Round Bars. Introducing cut & bend service for rebars.

Contact & Address
Tel: +251 116 63 97 53/ 251 116 63 51 22/25
Mob.: +251 962 009 072/ +251 949 440 868
+251 911 45 9790
E-mail: sales@agiethiopia.com
4th Floor, Dabi Building, Bole road Addis Ababa Ethiopia



Medhin Decor

የተንጣላ ጽንቅ የሰርግ አዳራሽ ከጎረቤት የውበት ስራ የተሟላ የምግብ ዝግጅት ከሙሉ ሙስተግጽ ጋር

Medhin Decor
ሎጂስቲክስ አገልግሎት ለልዩ ልዩ ዝግጅት

አድራሻ 1ኛ ቦሌ ጌታ ኮሚርሻል ጆርጅ 2ኛ ከቃሊቲ ማሰልጠኛ አለፍ ብሎ ቆርኪና ጣሳ ፋብሪካ ገባ ብሎ
Contact Us 0911222993/ 0911208918



Ethiopia continues efforts to ensure peaceful navigation on high seas: FM

• MoU with Somaliland based on existing political dispensation

Page 4

Lemi cement showcases Ethiopia's commitment to building fast: Premier

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA - The Lemi National Cement Factory stands as a testament to the government's commitment to building fast, building big, and building clean, Prime

Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said. The premier made the aforesaid remarks while sharing story of the official inauguration of the Lemi National Cement Factory yesterday on his X. This mega project has a production capacity

of 150,000 quintals per day, it was learnt. Congratulating those who involved in realizing this important project, Prime Minister Abiy stated that the factory exemplifies the swift and efficient delivery of crucial infrastructure. See Lemi cement ... page 4

Ethiopia's unique festivals leave tourists enthralled

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

September marks the peak tourist season in Ethiopia, an ideal time for visitors as the country's landscapes transform into stunning vistas. The rainy season comes to an end, leaving the land lush and green, rivers clean and vibrant, and flowers blooming everywhere, captivating the eyes of every visitor. Farmers witness the fruits of their labour, with fields adorned in vibrant hues of various crops. The weather is at its best, with the highlands enjoying cool, dry climates, sunny days,

See Ethiopia unique ... page 4

From Nile Basin Initiative to Nile Basin Commission

BY HAILE DEMEKE

The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), signed in May 2010 to promote equitable and reasonable utilization of the Nile among riparian countries, is set to establish the Nile Basin Commission (NBC). This initiative has been instrumental in reducing disagreements among member states by ensuring inclusive benefits and moving away from colonial-era agreements that favored downstream countries. The agreement will become binding once ratified by six member states, at which point it will enter into force. The first task will be institutionalizing the NBC, a key decision outlined in the agreement.

Speaking at the 79th session of the United See From Nile Basin ... page 4



IMF to let Ethiopia access ECF

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

ADDIS ABABA: IMF team and Ethiopian authorities have reached staff-level agreement on the first review of the four-year 3.4 billion USD Extended Credit Facility (ECF) arrangement.

Formal completion of the review by the IMF Executive Board would give Ethiopia access to financing of about 345 million USD.

According to the press release sent to the Ethiopian Press Agency, the IMF staff team led by Alvaro Piris paid a visit to Addis Ababa from September 17 to 26, 2024 to discuss progress on reforms and the authorities' policy priorities in the context of the first review of Ethiopia's economic program supported by the IMF's Extended Credit Facility.

Ethiopia's move towards the implementation of its homegrown economic reform program, including the adoption of a floating exchange rate is also appreciated by the IMF, adding the exchange rate in the official market has largely closed the gap to the parallel market, with little disruption to the broader economy.

Concluding the visit, Piris stated: "The IMF staff team and the Ethiopian authorities have reached staff-level agreement on the first review of Ethiopia's economic program under the ECF arrangement."

"The agreement is subject to approval of IMF management and the Executive Board in the coming weeks. Upon completion of the Executive Board review, Ethiopia would have access to SDR 255.60 million (equivalent to about 345 million USD)."

The new exchange rate regime, as to Piris, is alleviating the acute shortage of foreign exchange that previously existed, lifting a significant impediment to economic activity.

"The homegrown economic reform plan will help anchor macroeconomic stability and support economic growth. Continued tight monetary policy and the end of monetary financing of government will reduce inflation while a temporary fiscal spending package will help cushion the socio-economic impact of the reforms."

The team also acknowledged the Ethiopian authorities for their commitment to ensure the success of the IMF-supported economic program, Piris underlined.

It was stated that the IMF team has met with Ethiopian higher officials including Ahmed Shide, the Minister of Finance, Mamo Mihretu, Governor of the National Bank of Ethiopia, EyobTekalign, State Minister of Finance, and other senior officials.

The team also had productive discussions with banks and private companies, the statement disclosed.

Ministry to distribute 31.5 mln smart ovens by 2030

• Paving way for clean energy in rural communities

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA- The Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE) announced plans to distribute 31.5 million smart ovens to rural communities by 2030, as part of its efforts to promote clean energy across Ethiopia.

MoWE's Rural Energy Technology Development and Transfer Executive Officer Birhanu Woldu told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that significant strides are being made to achieve this goal. The initiative includes constructing 150 small rivers for power generation to support the distribution.

According to Birhanu, the smart ovens will play a crucial role in reducing health risks, minimizing energy waste, boosting economic productivity, and promoting environmental sustainability in rural areas. "So far, 20.5 million smart ovens have already been distributed, offering clean cooking technologies to families, especially providing relief to mothers from harmful smoke produced by traditional stoves," he said.

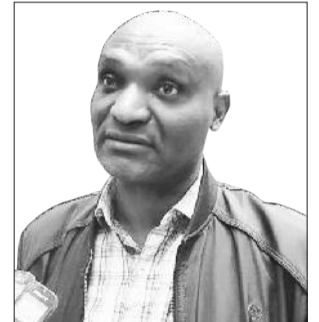
The government is prioritizing clean energy solutions to replace traditional ovens, which contribute to significant energy loss. Various strategies are underway, including



Birhanu Woldu



Tilahun Shimelis



Teketel Matiwas

the promotion of solar power, biomass energy, and clean ovens, accompanied by awareness campaigns to ensure fair access to energy in rural communities.

"To enhance energy consumption in these areas, digital applications integrated with solar power distribution are being implemented. This technology will increase power distribution, and the smart ovens will save up to 70% of energy," Birhanu added. Last year, MoWE constructed 14 solar mini-grids and commenced the development of three small rivers for power generation, one of which is set to begin operations soon.

The Amhara State Water and Energy Bureau Deputy Head Tilahun Shimelis emphasized that clean cooking energy technologies are vital for safeguarding the health of women and children, addressing climate change,

and providing economic benefits to rural communities. However, Tilahun mentioned the ongoing challenges, such as a shortage of skilled labor and insufficient budgets, in meeting the high demand for power.

Supporting this, Central Ethiopia's Mines and Energy Bureau Alternative Energy Development Director Teketel Matiwas stated that providing clean cooking technologies to rural areas is critical for protecting forests from destruction and preventing health issues for mothers and children. "We are working on ensuring fair utilization of clean energy in the coming years," he noted.

This widespread smart oven distribution marks a significant step toward a cleaner, healthier, and more energy-efficient future for Ethiopia's rural communities.

Gold mining sector set to generate 800 mln USD

• New factories underway

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA - The Ministry of Mines (MoM) announced that the construction of three gold mining factories is progressing swiftly, with the goal of generating approximately 800 million USD from the sector this fiscal year.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), MoM State Minister Million Mathewos stated that Ethiopia is intensifying efforts to explore and harness its vast mineral and construction resources. He indicated that the three gold mining factories are expected to become operational within the next 18 months.

Once completed, these projects will boost the country's gold production by an additional 10 tons annually, significantly contributing to mineral exports and increasing foreign currency earnings. The factories are located in Benishangul, Gambela, and Tigray states, with the largest facility in Kurmuk District, Benishangul-Gumuz State, projected to produce about nine tons of gold per year.

In addition to these developments, the Gugi Gold Mining Company is undergoing major project expansion, and plans are in place to launch potash mining projects in Afar State, Million revealed.



Given the sector's critical role as one of Ethiopia's top economic pillars, the government is prioritizing its development. The nation earned 420 million USD from mineral exports in the previous fiscal year, and the ministry is working tirelessly to surpass this target in the current year.

The state minister also noted that the government has introduced various systems and incentives to attract both local and international investors, thereby boosting

income generation and promoting the sector. Furthermore, efforts are underway to support the importation of industrial inputs and enhance job creation across the country.

Ethiopia, a country with a rich geological history, has been increasingly exploring its mineral resources to boost its economy. The gold mining sector, in particular, has emerged as a significant contributor to the nation's foreign exchange earnings.

Editorial

Capturing current realities

Member countries of the UN zoomed in on the increasing need for reforming the institutions of global governance. The centerpiece of the developing countries voices, at the UNGA-79 and sideline meetings, is one and the same—multilateral institutions must be fitted to the context of the 21st century.

Ethiopia, as usual, puts forward its solid stance for the creation of a fairer world system. The Minister of Foreign Affairs Taye Atseke Selassie at a BRICS meeting of foreign affairs on the sidelines of the UNGA-79 mentioned the fact that there is “a rising expectation and interest in what the BRICS framework seeks to achieve by advocating for reform of institutions of global governance by ensuring equitable representation and voice in global affairs.”

Peace and development are hard to come by in the absence of equality. If the voices of some quarters are heard and of others never get a chance to be made on world stages, it brings damage of unparalleled proportion to our world. That is why countries are urging the global body, the UN, and its systems to undertake reforms.

In what could be regarded as a step forward, the G20 under Brazil’s presidency adopted a “Call to Action on Global Governance Reform” on September 25, 2024. It also reasoned out the benefits of the reform and listed out the entities of the global governance system that need the reform. It raises its concerns on the practices of the UN and WTO as well as the loan and quotas at the IMF.

The topic of reforming the global governance system has received increasing traction this time around among the member states of course. The UN on its coverage of the meeting on the 23rd of September 2024 published a story headlined “Warning Inaction Could Create ‘Dark Future’, Delegates Urge Remaking Global Governance to Benefit All Countries, Not Bolster Powerful Few, as Summit of the Future Concludes.”

The bottom line is—such repeated calls must not fall on deaf ears.

The current system was crafted to capture the realities of 1940s and a few decades may be, of course. Today, our world is moving at an unprecedented speed due to the advent of digital technology. And practices of the global governance system must be fine-tuned with the current realities. Its wheels must be lubricated with the oils of equality and fraternity.

If goes unchecked, the current system will end up in friction of higher proportion that wears out the essential components of the global apparatus. That is a real danger ahead of us.

No denying, we are living in a multipolar world. The emerging of various economies in various parts of our globe has flickered hopes that the room for equality and cooperation will get expanded. Emerging economies are coming together to make their voices heard louder. The emergence and expansion of BRICS and the G-20 that incorporated the AU in its membership ranks are cases in point in this regard. Through these groupings, developing countries could push for the creation of a fairer world.

The reform will shape the old global body to grow young and its systems bear sweet fruits. And it is high time to quickly take concrete measures that level the way for a better future.



The Ethiopian Herald

Established in 1943

Published daily except Mondays
By The Ethiopian Press Agency

Office of the CEO

Tel. 011-126-42-22
Fax. 251-011-156-98-62
email- epa@press.et

Advertisement and Dist. Department

email: etpresspromotion@gmail.com
Tel. 011-156-98-73/011-811-13-15
Telegram :- 0976084707 - press
Editor-in-Chief: Worku Belachew
email- workubelachew@press.et
Address- Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-city
Woreda - 05, House No----
Tel- +251 111 26 41 98

Managing Editor: Wakuman Kudama
Email: wakuma220@gmail.com

Deputy Editors-in-Chief:

Alem Hailu
Elizabeth Mengistu
Zekarias Woldemariam
Desta Geberehiwot
Daniel Beyene

Website: www.press.et
email: ethiopianherald@press.et
Fb//Ethiopian Press Agency/
The Ethiopian Herald

Opinion

Harmonizing electricity tariffs, cost reflectivity in COMESA region

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

COMESA has been pivotal in fostering economic integration and development across our Member States. Energy, as the lifeblood of our economies and societies, is undeniably central to this progress. Harmonizing our regulatory frameworks is therefore not just an option, but an imperative.

By aligning our approaches, Africa can unlock the full potential of regional energy trade, enhance energy security, and ultimately improve the lives of our citizens.

Africa, a continent blessed with abundant energy resources, paradoxically faces a severe energy crisis. Despite significant progress, the pace of electrification is far from adequate to meet the growing demands of our rapidly expanding populations. The stark reality is that 75% of the world’s population without access to electricity resides in Africa.

The Eastern and Southern Africa region is not immune to this challenge. The gap between energy supply and demand continues to widen, affecting industries, businesses, and households alike. A staggering 365 million people in the region lack access to electricity, and 558 million lack access to clean cooking.

Despite hosting 18% of the world’s population, Africa consumes less than 6% of global energy. Excluding South Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa’s per capita energy consumption stands at just 180 kilowatt-hours (kWh), compared to 6,500 in Europe and 13,000 kWh in the United States.

Without significant intervention, the region’s energy supply will not keep pace with rising demand driven by urbanization, economic growth, and population expansion. According to the World Bank, the pace of electrification in the region needs to triple to achieve universal electricity access by 2030. Otherwise, there will still be more than 300 million people without electricity in the COMESA region by that time.

In Ethiopia, the national grid remains concentrated in major population centers, limiting access to electricity for the vast majority of our rural population. Expanding electricity access to rural areas, townships, and commercial centers is a long-term necessity and essential for balanced socio-economic growth at the national and regional levels.

The limited power supply also significantly impacts economic and industrial development in our region. It raises the cost of doing business and diminishes the ability to attract new investments.

By harnessing our collective expertise and political will, the region can accelerate electrification, attract investment, and build a sustainable energy future for all. As we (Africans) embark on this journey, let us be guided by cooperation, a shared vision, and a commitment to excellence.

Holding the aforesaid mission, the technical validation workshop on Framework and Maiden Reports on Harmonized Comparison of Electricity Tariffs and Cost Reflectivity Assessment of power utilities in the COMESA Region was held recently in Addis Ababa.

The workshop is dealing with a component of a broader assignment which also involves

Elaboration of Regional Electricity Regulatory Principles (RERP), Regulatory and Utility Key Performance Indicators (UKPI) for COMESA, including an Information Management System (IMS) for REARESA.

As participants witnessed, the workshop was quite an important undertaking to foster optimal development of electricity generation resources in the region along with interconnectivity and multilateral electricity trade through progressive development of competitive electricity market.

The project is funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB) to REARESA of COMESA for efficient coordination of the various activities aimed at realization of the project objectives. Realization of the ultimate objective of this project is contributed a great deal to collective effort to deepen regional power system integration in the continent.

Deepening regional power system integration in the region yet requires deployment of many more interconnection lines including concerted actions to allow for expansion of multilateral power trade and seamless operation of the regional grid formed through interconnection of the national power grids.

In line with that, the GS is overseeing implementation of various activities aimed at advancing development of new interconnection projects, like Uganda-Tanzania, Ethiopia-Somalia, ensuring reliable & secure operation of the interconnected regional power system, fostering multilateral power trade through operationalization of the EAPP Day Ahead market, and adoption of Framework Bilateral Trade Agreements, and enhancing EAPP’s institutional capacity on integrated resource planning to lay the basis for development of a Regional Power Master Plan with own resources

The project is a regional initiative designed to enhance the sustainability of the electricity sector of the region through effective, uniform, transparent and enforceable regulatory frameworks that set out clear principles, rules, processes, and standards for the region.

COMESA is also collaborating with the World Bank to increase energy access (100 million people) and support the deployment of renewable energy. I wish to indicate that COMESA and the World Bank are currently implementing two programmes, one of the them is the Regional Infrastructure Finance Facility (RIFF), whose main objective is to expand long-term finance to private firms in selected infrastructure sectors in Eastern and Southern Africa, through Trade and Development Bank, which is a COMESA institution, with a component which is a grant facility implemented by COMESA focusing on Capacity Building and Technical Assistance to COMESA Secretariat (US\$ 10 million).

The other programme is the Accelerating Sustainable and Clean Energy Transformation in Eastern and Southern Africa Multi-Phase Programmatic Approach (ASCENT MPA), which intends to align the comparative advantage of all parts of the World Bank (IDA, IFC, MIGA) and build on the IDA financing envelope of US\$5 billion to leverage US\$10 billion from public and private financing through strategic partnerships. The programme has three pillars. Pillar I is the COMESA Platform which is a \$US 50million facility.

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

News



Ethiopia's unique festivals...

and chilly nights.

As a result, foreign tourists flock to Ethiopia to experience its rich festivals and historical attractions. In light of this, The Ethiopian Herald spoke to several visitors about their experiences in the country.

Many of the tourists interviewed expressed their admiration for Ethiopia's cultural diversity and natural beauty. Mark Blood, who visited from New Zealand with his family for the first time, was particularly impressed with Ethiopia's history, religion, and scenic landscapes. They toured iconic historical sites such as Gondar, Lalibela, Harar, Afar, and Axum, which left them deeply impressed.

"What impressed us most is the diversity of Ethiopian culture. We were captivated by the country's history, religion, and natural beauty. Everything here is unique," Mark said. He also highlighted Ethiopia's untapped tourism potential, calling for more recognition of the nation in the Western world.

Chris Casabant, a visitor from the U.S., shared a similar sentiment. She spent time learning about Ethiopia's religious festivals and diverse cultures and encouraged others to visit and experience

Ethiopia's warm and welcoming people.

Marika Griehsel, a Swedish tour guide, visited Ethiopia with 14 guests to attend its vibrant festivals. She praised the unique experiences, particularly the music and religious festivities, calling them unlike anything she had encountered elsewhere. "It's a beautiful country, and visiting its festivals is a source of pride," Marika stated, urging more people to explore Ethiopia.

Similarly, Tina Berye, another tourist from Sweden, expressed her fascination with Ethiopia's rich culture and historical significance. She encouraged others to invest, visit, and experience Ethiopia's vibrant traditions and heritage. "I highly recommend it to anyone seeking a unique travel experience," she emphasized.

With Ethiopia's natural beauty, deep cultural roots, and historical richness, it is clear why the country continues to draw tourists from all corners of the globe.

Ethiopia, a country steeped in ancient history and rich cultural heritage, has been witnessing a surge in tourism in recent years. September, in particular, is the main tourist season, offering visitors a breath-taking spectacle of natural beauty and cultural vibrancy.

Lemi cement showcases...

As to the premier, the factory now produces 50% of the cement made by factories across the country.

"Returning to this site after two years, I am astounded by the progress, which reflects our governance principles. It shows that with hard work, future generations will not inherit poverty but a foundation for growth and prosperity."

If Ethiopia replicates industrial projects like Lemi across the nation, the ripple effects in job creation and national development will be unmatched, particularly in sectors like steel manufacturing, fertilizer

production, which can catalyze a broader industrial and agricultural revolution, he said.

Talking about the challenges facing nations like Ethiopia, the premier underscored the need of large-scale solutions and the joint cooperation between the private and public sectors in a bid to unlocking national opportunities and addressing most pressing problems.

"By investing in initiatives like this, we can uplift more people and ensure they live dignified lives."

Ethiopia continues efforts to ensure peaceful navigation on high seas: FM

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia would continue its efforts to contribute on durable bases to ensure peaceful navigation on the high seas, said Foreign Affairs Minister.

Speaking at the 79th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), Foreign Affairs Minister Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie said that maritime insecurity in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean is a concern for Ethiopia. With over 120 million population significant maritime trade Ethiopia entirely depends on the safe and secure maritime activity in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean. The region is threatened by conflicts, piracy and other illicit activities.

Over the years, Ethiopia has played an instrumental role in combating the cause of insecurity. "We also continue our efforts to work with other neighbor to contribute on durable basis to ensure peaceful navigation on the high seas. "We see a great need to chart a new path for inclusive maritime security engagement with equal participation of countries with stakes on both sides of the Red Sea and Indian Ocean."

Furthermore, terrorism continues to be a grave threat to the peace and security of the Horn of Africa. The growing rise of violent extremist groups like Al-Shabab and its international and internal affiliates have continued their vicious attacks against civilians and security of the region.

The region has reached a milestone in degrading terrorism owing to the resilience of the people of Somalia and the sacrifices of the sons and daughters of Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya, Uganda, and my country Ethiopia, he said.

The authorization of the Security Council and the international finance for the African Union Peace Support operation has indeed played an instrumental role. "I am confident the government of Somalia will soon reckon with and recognize the sacrifices we made to Somalia's liberation from the grip of terrorist groups. Ethiopia's memorandum of understanding with Somaliland is based on existing political dispensation in Somalia." He added.

"Our objective is shared growth and prosperity in the region. Similar agreements have been concluded by other states and there is no reason for Somalia to incite hostility that obviously intends to cover internal political tensions. "I therefore reject the unfounded allegations leveled against my country. Ethiopia's name can never be associated with any one of the allegations. I rather call upon the government of Somalia to join hands to eliminate terrorist groups that are causing mayhem on the people of the region."

The recent maneuvers of actors from outside the Horn of Africa region undermine these efforts. Nevertheless, Ethiopia will not be deterred from its resolute commitment to combating terrorism.

He called upon these actors to immediately stop their reckless actions.

He also called on the international community to recognize the imminent risk originating from these irresponsible acts and to take concrete measures to prevent the loss of hard-won gains in combating terrorism in the Horn of Africa.

He reiterated Ethiopia's commitment to the maintenance of global peace and security and upholding multilateralism

From Nile Basin Initiative...

Nations General Assembly, Ethiopia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie, emphasized the country's commitment to working with the Nile Basin states to ensure the fair and equitable use of water resources, as demonstrated by the signing and ratification of the Nile River Basin Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA).

The CFA, once fully ratified, will become the first-ever comprehensive treaty governing the Nile, paving the way for sustained cooperation and shared growth across the region. Ambassador Taye underscored that Ethiopia, along with other riparian states, is determined to realize the CFA's principles and unlock the full potential of the Nile River.

The Foreign Minister also highlighted the role of the Abbay Dam, which is now generating electricity and meeting the energy demands of Ethiopia and the Eastern Africa region. "We hope the remaining riparian countries will join the CFA and play a constructive role in ensuring the equitable and reasonable utilization of the Nile River," he said.

Water resource development consultant Feki Ahmed Negashtold *The Ethiopian Herald* that the design for the NBC has been framed after analyzing the basin's objective realities. He stressed the need for member states to come together to finalize decisions on the formation

of the commission. The upcoming Summit of Heads of State in Uganda is expected to make significant strides in this regard.

The Nile River provides vast development potential for the basin countries, and cooperation is key to ensuring inclusive growth and resource sharing. However, recent political tensions in the region, largely stemming from Nile-related issues, need to be addressed and turned into opportunities for collaboration rather than contention.

Feki Ahmed emphasized that the ongoing tensions, particularly involving Egypt's view of the Abbay Dam stem from a perception of unequal benefit-sharing. He argued that the Abbay Dam does not harm downstream countries, pointing to the successful filling of the dam and the continued functionality of Egypt's Aswan Dam as evidence. Contrary to fears, no farmers have been displaced. He cautioned that conflict over water could be disastrous, but history shows that trans-boundary river disputes often end in agreements rather than violence.

To ease disagreements and promote equitable and reasonable utilization of the Nile's water resources, the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) was established in 2010. The NBI aims to foster cooperation among the riparian countries and develop a framework for managing the river's resources for mutual benefits.

Opinion

The Meaning, moral imperative of struggle: Some instructive insights from the *Odu Ifa*

BY MAULANA KARENGA (PhD)

In the midst of our and other ongoing struggles for liberation, freedom, justice and other indispensable and indivisible goods in the world, I turn constantly to the sacred texts of our ancestors for grounding and guidance, for constantly deepening insight, urgently needed answers, and uplifting and liberating inspiration. This is especially important to me, to Us, in these difficult, dangerous and demanding times in which evil seems ascendant, shape shifting oppression appears ever-enduring, genocide is shamelessly “justified” by the would-be “superior” and “civilized”, and righteous resistance is denounced and outlawed on campus, in Congress and society. But still we must bear witness to truth and set the scales of justice in their proper place especially among the voiceless, devalued, downtrodden, dispossessed and oppressed. And this requires resistance, righteous and relentless struggle to oppose evil, injustice and oppression, to affirm and enhance the good in us and the world, and to aspire to, in imagination and action, a whole new world of shared and sustained good.

Clearly, for the members of us, the sacred texts, the *Husia* of ancient Egypt and the *Odu Ifa* of ancient Yorubaland are, as the *Husia* teaches, a sacred gift of “that which endures in the midst of that which is overthrown”. And as the *Odu Ifa* states, it is teachings of a vital truth, a truth that “guides rightly, cannot fail, cannot be ruined” and is “a great power” in the world and “an everlasting good” (219:1). Thus, both sacred texts teach us, urge and inspire us to focus on and continue to wage struggle. And this waging of righteous struggle is laid out and lifted up as a moral imperative and a transformative and liberating good. Although both the *Husia* and *Odu Ifa* offer excellent lessons on the moral imperative and moral good of struggle, I want to share insights from the *Odu* in this discussion.

Now, the *Odu* teaches the value of both internal struggle and external struggle. But I want to focus on external struggle while not minimizing the importance of internal struggle which is indispensable to the quality and success of the external struggle. The *Odu* tells us that struggle is essential to life, to our growth, to our success, well-being and flourishing in life and our victory over evil, injustice and oppression. In regard to internal struggle, the *Odu* stresses the need for humbleness saying that given the demands of growth, development and good in the world, “We are constantly struggling, all of us. We are constantly struggling” to grow, to develop, flourish and come into the fullness of ourselves” (10:6).

But given the need to create the conditions and capacities for human good and the well-being of the world, and to overcome evil,

The *Odu Ifa* also teaches moral and psychological courage in struggle, the courage to hold moral ground in the midst of the powerful and oppressive majority or minority

injustice and oppression, we must wage righteous and relentless struggle. Indeed, the *Odu* (78:1) states we should engage life and struggle with joy, saying “Let’s do things with joy. . . For surely humans have been divinely chosen to bring good in the world”. And this, Kawaida teaches, is the fundamental meaning and mission of human life. As the sacred text says later, we are also to struggle to not let any good be lost. Indeed, in the same chapter, it says that what is needed to achieve a good world is “the eagerness and struggle to increase well in the world and not let any good be lost”.

Now, if the struggle we wage is to be a good

and meaningful struggle, we must always be rightfully attentive to its character and conduct, the *Odu Ifa* teaches us to commit ourselves to this teaching, i.e., “May the struggle we wage always add to our honor”. We read this concept of adding to our honor (*iyi*) as expanding and enriching our sense of ourselves and increasing the respect of significant others for us. The Yoruba word, *iyi*, means respect that we gain in the way we conduct ourselves, urging us be attentive to the moral means and goals of our struggle.

Here Nana Amilcar Cabral reaffirms this teaching when he speaks of our liberation struggle saying, “If national liberation is essentially a political problem, the conditions for its development give it certain characteristics which belong to the sphere of morals”. And Nana Dr. Anna Julia Cooper teaches us that while not denying our own peoplehood, we must “take our stand on the solidarity of humanity, the oneness of life and the *unnaturalness* (emphasis mine) of all favoritism (all oppressive sentiments, thought and practice) whether of sex, race, condition or country”. She thus defines freedom, justice and equality as natural and unfreedom, injustice and inequality as unnatural and compelling righteous and relentless resistance.

The *Odu Ifa* also teaches moral and psychological courage in struggle, the courage to hold moral ground in the midst of the powerful and oppressive majority or minority. The teachings harshly criticize the way of the coward, who bends with the wind, spits in the air to see which way the popular wind is blowing and walks that way. And the coward, the sacred text teaches, is one who “runs on the day of battle”, “who breathes in fear and who is half-dead before the struggle begins” (153:1; 204:1). In contrast, the courageous one imitates and embodies the courage, commitment and steadfastness of the lion. They are in the tradition of the Simba Wachanga, the Young Lions of Us in the 1960s, and all the lions, young and old, who preceded us and made us possible, lion-hearted and lion-minded. To be Simba-hearted and Simba-minded for us, then, is to be noble in conduct, courageous in combat, and uncompromisingly committed to victory that adds to our honor. Thus, again, the text teaches, the struggles we wage must add to our honor and “the battle, the struggle, that brings honor belongs to the lion” (150:2).

Also, the sacred text *Odu Ifa* teaches us that in our struggles we must be thoughtful. That is to say, giving careful consideration in both the moral and rational sense. In the moral sense, this means moral sensitivity to others and especially in struggle, not to be morally blinded by hate or have a depraved disregard for the life, well-being and interest of others. In verse 170:1, there is an emphasis on the need to respect human life in our struggle for liberation and good in the world. And the text suggests that weighed against the heavy

value of preserving human life, other issues are as light as a basket of dry leaves. Indeed, the text (170:1) says, “a basket of dry leaves is not heavy enough that its content should cause the death of a human being”. This recalls Nana Cabral’s teaching that we must be “reluctant soldiers”, never ever committed to antagonistic struggle or war as a way of life or imitate the genocidists whose bloodlust knows no end and admits no ethics. And as Nana Dr. Martin Luther King taught, as Kawaida interprets, our highest aim is to struggle in ways that win allies not leave victims, especially among ourselves.

Furthermore, the *Odu Ifa* teaches us that we must persevere in our ongoing righteous and relentless struggle for a good world. We must, it says, “be able to suffer without surrendering and persevere in what (we) do” (150:1). And we must, the *Odu Ifa* teaches us, sacrifice in the self-strengthening practice of self-giving. In Kawaida, sacrifice, as self-giving, is a dedicated and disciplined giving of our heart and mind; our efforts; our time; our resources; and eventually the wholeness of ourselves to the struggle for good in and for the world.

Finally, the sacred texts of *Odu Ifa* tells us we must be constant soldiers in the struggle in the interests of human good and the well-being of the world and all in it (199:1). It defines this soldier saying, “a constant soldier is never unready, not even once”. Indeed, the sacred text says, “One who stands ready to act for the good is supported by Ogun (the divine spirit of righteous struggle) on the day of battle” (185:1). The constant soldier knows with Nana Haji Malcolm that “wherever there are Black people, there is a battleline”. And thus as we say in Kawaida reaffirming this, “Everywhere a battleline; every day a call to struggle”. And these constant soldiers know that the struggle is worldwide as the *Odu* teaches saying, we are all divinely chosen to increase and sustain good in the world. And bringing good in the world requires that we accept the teaching of Nana Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune that “We must remake the world. The task is nothing less than this”. *Ase. Ase. Ase.*

Dr. Maulana Karenga, Professor and Chair of African Studies, California State University-Long Beach; Executive Director, African American Cultural Center (Us); Creator of Kwanzaa; and author of Kwanzaa: A Celebration of Family, Community and Culture and Introduction to Black Studies, 4th Edition, www.OfficialKwanzaaWebsite.org; www.MaulanaKarenga.org.

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

Business & Economy

Ethiopia's digital revolution progress in E-Governance, economic modernization

BY HIZKEL HAILU

The recent United Nations' E-Government Survey 2024 revealed that Ethiopia has made significant progress in its digital government landscape, climbing 10 positions in the rankings among Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs). This improvement is part of Ethiopia's broader efforts to modernize its governance and economy through digital transformation, a move that has been guided by the Digital Ethiopia 2025 Strategy.

The survey, compiled by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) through its Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG), highlights the advancements of countries in digital governance over the past two years. Ethiopia's steady progress in e-governance is evident, reflecting the country's commitment to utilizing technology for improved governance, economic development, and social inclusion.

The E-Government Development Index (EGDI) is a biennial assessment that ranks countries on their e-governance capabilities through analyzing their digital infrastructure, public service delivery, and citizen participation. Ethiopia's rise by 10 positions within the LLDC group, as highlighted in the report, underscores the country's substantial efforts to enhance its digital governance infrastructure.

The global survey, unveiled during the 79th United Nations General Assembly in New York, marked the thirteenth edition of the EGDI. The 2024 report noted that the global average value of the EGDI had risen, with a significant decrease in the proportion of the population lagging in digital government development, from 45% in 2022 to 22.4% in 2024. However, despite these positive trends, the EGDI averages for the African region and other developing groups remain below the global average, highlighting ongoing challenges in digital adoption across these regions.

Ethiopia's achievements in e-governance are deeply rooted in its Digital Ethiopia 2025 Strategy, a comprehensive plan to drive digital transformation across key sectors of the economy. The strategy recognizes the potential of digital technologies to not only modernize the economy, but also improve governance and service delivery.

The strategy emphasizes the importance of building a knowledge-based economy capable of addressing the needs of the country's growing population. Key sectors targeted for digitization include agriculture, manufacturing, and services. The integration of technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), block chain and the Internet of Things (IoT) plays a vital role in boosting productivity, reducing costs, and promoting transparency in these sectors.

Ethiopia has made significant strides in enhancing its digital infrastructure, which forms the backbone of its e-governance initiatives. As of 2024, nearly 30 million Ethiopians were using the internet, representing an internet penetration rate of approximately 19.4%. While this figure is relatively low compared to global standards, it reflects a steady growth in connectivity, particularly in urban areas.



Digital Ethiopia 2025-A digital strategy for Ethiopia inclusive prosperity

To support this expansion, the Ethiopian government has partnered with the private sector to launch a robust telecommunications network. Ethio Telecom, the state-owned telecom provider, has played a pivotal role in expanding access to digital services. In recent years, it has introduced 5G services across major cities and is in the process of rolling out such technology, which promises to revolutionize digital service delivery through offering high-speed internet access in both urban and rural regions.

This investment in digital infrastructure is seen as a critical enabler of Ethiopia's digital transformation journey, facilitating the delivery of online services to citizens and businesses alike. Moreover, the Ethiopian government's focus on developing smart cities and industrial parks equipped with high-speed internet has attracted foreign investment and boosted the country's manufacturing sector.

According to some documents from Ethiopian Electronic Services portal, currently, E-governance is becoming a central pillar of Ethiopia's digital transformation agenda. By leveraging digital platforms, the government aims to streamline public services, reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies, and enhance transparency. This portal, developed as part of this initiative, allows citizens, non-citizens, businesses, and organizations to access various public services online.

To date, over 587 digital government and trade platforms have been launched as part of Ethiopia's digital transformation efforts, covering sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, and e-commerce. Moreover, while there are more than 526,001 processed customer applications registered in the portal, the document further indicated that there are also about 266,654 registered customers. These platforms not only enhance service delivery but also contribute to economic modernization by promoting transparency and ease of doing business.

Ethiopia's digital transformation extends beyond governance to encompass economic modernization. In the agricultural sector, which employs the majority of the country's workforce, digital tools such as mobile apps and remote sensing technologies are being used to provide farmers with real-time information on weather

conditions, soil health, and market prices. These innovations are helping farmers make more informed decisions, increase yields, and reduce costs.

In the manufacturing sector, the Ethiopian government's focus on developing industrial parks with advanced digital infrastructure has attracted foreign investment, created jobs, and boosted exports. These parks are equipped with high-speed internet and other digital facilities that support modern manufacturing processes, making Ethiopia more competitive in the global market.

Public-private partnerships have also played a key role in Ethiopia's digital transformation journey. For example, collaborations between the government and tech companies have resulted in the creation of digital solutions that enhance public services and drive economic growth. The Gulf Information Technology Exhibition (GITEX) Africa 2024 exhibition, held in Marrakech, Morocco, showcased Ethiopia's achievements in this regard, highlighting groundbreaking digital solutions emerging from various sectors.

The 2024 United Nations E-Government Survey also introduced a Digital Government Model Framework, providing countries with a roadmap for effective digital government planning and implementation. A key component of this framework is the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into digital government systems.

In Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Artificial Intelligence Institute has been a key player in the country's digital transformation, contributing to research and infrastructure development. According to the information gained from the AI Institute, AI-driven initiatives are being used to enhance governance, with the potential to improve decision-making processes, streamline service delivery, and promote innovation.

In addition, the government has introduced the National ID Program, a major initiative aimed at providing each Ethiopian citizen with a unique digital identity. This system is designed to make it easier for individuals to access government services in a secure and efficient manner. Through digitizing the identification process, Ethiopia hopes to reduce bureaucratic delays, curb corruption, and promote social inclusion.

The Fayda Digital ID, which is part of the National ID Program, has been praised by Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) for its role in driving the country's digital transformation. The digital ID system allows for more efficient access to government services, reducing the burden of bureaucracy and fostering social inclusion. The Premier has highlighted the importance of supporting innovators and creating digital enablers to ensure that Ethiopia's digital transformation is inclusive and sustainable.

Despite Ethiopia's progress in digital governance, challenges remain, particularly in bridging the digital rift between urban and rural areas. While internet penetration is growing, a significant portion of the population still lacks access to digital services, particularly in remote regions. This highlights the need for continued investment in digital literacy and infrastructure to ensure that all citizens can benefit from Ethiopia's digital transformation.

Moreover, while Ethiopia has made great strides at the national level, disparities between national and local e-government performance persist. The Local Online Services Index (LOSI), part of the UN E-Government Survey, assesses city portals and highlights these differences. To address this, Ethiopia must continue to focus on strengthening digital governance at the municipal level, ensuring that local governments are equipped with the resources and technology needed to serve their communities effectively.

In a nutshell, Ethiopia's achievements in e-governance and digital transformation reflect the country's commitment to modernizing its economy, improving public service delivery, and promoting transparency. Through initiatives like the Digital Ethiopia 2025 Strategy, significant investments in digital infrastructure, and the adoption of emerging technologies, Ethiopia is well on its way to becoming a digitally empowered nation.

However, to fully realize its potential, Ethiopia must continue to invest in digital skills, infrastructure, and inclusivity. Through doing so, the country can unlock the full benefits of digital technologies and drive economic growth. It is also possible to enhance good governance and ultimately improve the quality of life for citizens, it was learned.

Planet Earth

Ethiopia fighting soil acidity to revamp food security

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Soil acidity is the concentration of hydrogen ions (H^+) in the soil, which affects its pH level. Soil acidity can result from natural processes such as rock weathering, organic matter breakdown, and leaching. Furthermore, the use of ammonium-based fertilizers can reduce soil pH over time.

The soil becomes much more acidic when acid rain is brought on by pollution. Acidity will rise if base cations (such as calcium and magnesium) are continuously harvested without sufficient replenishment. For ecosystems to remain healthy and agricultural systems to remain productive, controlling soil acidity is crucial. Proper additions and routine testing can assist attain ideal soil conditions for plant growth.

Ethiopia faces the problem of acidity in its soil, which has an impact on food security and agricultural output. The weathering of volcanic rocks and leaching from excessive rainfall have resulted in naturally acidic soils in several locations of Ethiopia, especially in the highlands.

Acidic soils diminish the availability of important nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphate, and potassium, resulting in lower agricultural yields. As a result, farmers may struggle to grow crops that need neutral or slightly alkaline environments, limiting food diversity and security. Soil acidity also causes nutritional deficits. Acidic soils frequently lack phosphate and calcium, both of which are essential for plant growth. Furthermore, higher solubility of hazardous metals such as aluminum can damage crops and diminish agricultural productivity.

Climate change can also lead to soil acidity since it can worsen problems with soil acidity through altered rainfall patterns and rising temperatures. Therefore, it's critical to modify agricultural practices appropriately.

Ministry of Agriculture Natural Resource Development, Conservation, and Utilization Executive Director Fanose Mekonon told the Ethiopian press agency that crops require all nutrients in the soil to thrive and yield fruit. They obtain all nutrients through their roots. During this process, they may take unneeded chemicals including acid soil which affects the growth of crops.

According to him, the worsening soil acidity in Ethiopia has become a big threat to the agricultural sector since more than four million hectares of land have been affected by high acidity. Of the four million hectares of land affected by high acidity, one million hectares do not produce any crops. In total, 12 million hectares of land have been categorized into low, medium, and high acid levels. This is a serious threat to the agricultural sector.

The land utilized for agriculture in Ethiopia has been affected by severe rain and soil erosion, totally removing agricultural leftovers that exposed the soil to being heavily acidified. Hence, each year, the soil that has a low acidity level turns into medium acidity while the soil that has a medium



Acidic soils diminish the availability of important nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphate, and potassium, resulting in lower agricultural yields



acidity level grows too high. Consequently, elevated acidity affects 12 million hectares of land overall.

Rainwater washes away the "catalysts" in the soil, as well as key elements for natural resources such as calcium, magnesium, and potassium, and the soil becomes acidic as the nitrogen and aluminum levels in the soil grow. As a result, this acidic soil inhibits crop growth and prevents complete yield, he noted.

He added that soil acidity burns crops' roots, limiting their growth and making it harder for air and water to penetrate underground. Furthermore, the soil's acidity hinders the usage of microbes that feed on the minerals required by crops, as well as the availability of phosphorus, which is necessary for plant growth. As a result, 70 percent of soil fertilizers are not being used, which has an impact on the country's agriculture and economy sectors.

Highly acidic soil can be found in Western Ethiopia, West and East Wollega, particularly Mendi; East and West Gojam in northern Ethiopia; Awi Zone; Asosa in South Gondar; Benishangul; and the Sidama region in southern Ethiopia.

Taking the issues into consideration, since 2006, attempts have been undertaken to remediate soil acidity in an attempt to boost productivity and production; however, only 140,000 hectares of the 43 percent of land affected by acidity have been treated so far.

In Ethiopia, soil and water protection and management are being implemented to prevent soil acidity, which is a hazard to agriculture. Particularly, the affected soil is being treated using agricultural lime. Currently, one hectare of land consumes 30 quintals of agricultural lime. He stated that once the land has been treated with agricultural lime, it will produce a good yield for four to six years.

Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture Soil Health and Improvement Desk Head Mulugeta Abera pointed out that soil acidity is increasing in high-rainfall areas of the country. As a result, the country uses agricultural lime to cure the acidic soil. This activity will continue throughout this fiscal year. Accordingly, 300,000 hectares of land will be treated in the current budget year.

According to a 1989 survey, soil acidity affected 40 percent of Ethiopia's land. The rate has now risen to 43 percent. Soil acidity has grown by 3 percent during the past 27 years. Three percent of arable land is a large amount, and it is not easy. This also demonstrates that soil acidity poses a significant impact on agriculture's productivity and output.

Furthermore, a national assessment conducted in 2014 revealed that 3.7 million hectares of soil are acidic. According to the study, moderate acidity affects seven million hectares of soil. Even if the best soil fertilizer and seedlings are used, acidic land will not produce yield.

Hence, across the country, several watershed management projects are underway, as well as the application of agricultural lime to acidic soil. As a result, the treated soil, which has been treated using various methods, including agricultural lime, is predicted to yield between 50 and 100 percent. Agricultural lime was used to treat 140,000 hectares of land between 2006 and the present, he elucidated.

To increase production and productivity by preventing soil acidity, the country uses soil fertilizers through research, implements soil and water conservation work, leaves crop leftovers on the farm field, and treats acidic land with agricultural lime. Additionally, natural fertilizers are being used to solve the problem sustainably. This needs the concern of everyone.

In general, controlling soil acidity in Ethiopia is critical to increasing agricultural output and food security. As a result, implementing sustainable management techniques, as well as conducting research and teaching, is critical to addressing this challenge and strengthening Ethiopian agriculture's resilience.

Art & Culture

International Day of Peace: Building a culture of peace in Africa

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

According to a recent report released on September 23, 2024, by the United States Embassy in Addis Ababa, in celebration of the International Day of Peace, the US Government through USAID reaffirmed its commitment to sustaining sustainable peace and stability in Ethiopia. A Peace Walk was held in the eastern Ethiopia city of Dire Dawa on September 21, 2024. The theme of this year's International Day of Peace is, "Cultivating a culture of peace."

The press release from the US Embassy further noted that, "True peace is not just the absence of conflict but the presence of justice, dialogue and mutual respect. For Ethiopia to achieve stability and unity communities must embrace tolerance and ensure that the voices of all Ethiopians are heard."

According to the same report, the International Day of Peace celebrations also included a roundtable discussion entitled "Let's talk about peace". The meeting was attended by partners for peace, community leaders of Dire Dawa, and interfaith council members who discussed peace and tolerance and discuss peace and tolerance in Dire Dawa and how it can be emulated in other areas.

If we look at the issue of peace building from a broader perspective, we realize that the main problem is that there is no strong culture of peace not only in Ethiopia but also across Africa where active conflicts are still going on and the possibility of enduring peace is still one of the most enduring challenges in many African countries.

It is therefore important to approach the issue of peace building or the absence of a culture of peace as something that is relevant to the future of Africa that is aspiring for socio-economic development. It is obviously impossible to dream of economic development without lasting peace and stability across Africa. By the same token, one part of Africa cannot enjoy peace and stability while another part of it is engulfed in conflicts. A discussion about the prospects of durable peace is something that needs to be addressed not only sporadically but also sustainably, because the struggle for peace and stability in Africa should always be on top of the agenda and assume a new dimension. The long term prospect should be the long-term need to lay the basis for a vibrant culture of peace. This work also needs to be started not tomorrow but today through discussions at higher intellectual levels and through permanent dialogues at lower community levels.

Generally speaking, culture is a broader and holistic concept that includes politics, economics, history and other related disciplines. Thus we have what we call the culture of peace as clearly defined nowhere else more than in the global covenant following the establishment of the United Nations.

As defined by the United Nations, "The culture of peace is a set of values, attitudes, modes of behavior and ways of lives that reject violence



and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation by individuals. This is however easier said than done as the ways of achieving or implementing a culture of peace have already proved extremely difficult or impossible unless the psychological, emotional and sentimental conditions are not conducive to the emergence of a genuine and lasting peace in any part of the world.

According to studies conducted in this area, "A culture of peace includes being in peace with oneself, others and the natural world. The primary tool to promote a culture of peace is peace education, which must be taught in families, all levels of education, workplaces, and disseminated through the media, and encouraged at all levels of society."

At the global level, conflicts may be prevented or resolved whenever they turn deadly, with a global and effective peace movement that would impact the attitudes of the conflicting parties long before cold war turns into a hot one. This is the most important factor that has allowed the actors to seek for emotional rather than rational solutions long before the conflicts turn deadly. Even after hostilities start, outside players need to keep cool heads and seek balanced, responsible and feasible solutions instead of taking sides that only exacerbate the situation.

Although it is a relatively less developed part of the world, Africa is currently better poised to try and make its real weight in international affairs to be felt by following a diplomatic road least trodden even by nations with a long history and experience in international relations. Africa has therefore a better and realistic perspective on global peace and conflicts because it has itself been a victim of great power policies during the colonial era and it is presently the only continent that is not actively and openly disputed as an object of great power hegemony.

Africa is a continent that is struggling to develop economically and not a continent that pursues ambitious plans or strategic interests in other parts of the world. For this and other

reasons, Africa has a better chance of generating ideas that benefit world peace both for its own development and useful for regional and global peace. The only shortcoming in Africa is its failure to deal with its own problems of peace effectively or seek outside help for one reason or another. This does not however prevent it from working for its own and for world peace because the two are organically linked and their solutions can only be applicable in internal as well as external situations.

The culture of peace in the world was born in the aftermath of WWII at a moment when the horrors humanity went through during the last war were still fresh in its collective consciousness. People scrambled to establish peace movement and build memorial to past atrocities in their bid to warn the world that it should work harder to avert hell from engulfing us again.

When we look at the situation from the post-WWII perspective, we realize that, "during the post-war occupation, a peace movement grew out of the suffering caused by nuclear weapons. The Bikini Incident in 1954 catalyzed a great expansion of these actions. In August the following year, the First World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs was held in Hiroshima."

For instance, what is known as the peace history society, "was established 1964 to encourage and coordinate national and international scholarly work to explore and articulate the conditions and causes peace and war and to communicate the findings of scholarly work to the public."

The world is now facing the possibility of going into a global inferno once again after witnessing less than 80 years of relative world peace punctured by smaller wars in Vietnam and Indochina and near misses in Cuba in 1960, and permanent bloodshed in the Middle East as a result of the failure to settle the Palestinian-Israeli historic enmity once and for all. Nowadays, the realities of conventional wars are becoming more and more rearing their ugly heads while the world is inching closer to nuclear conflicts or the possibility of

conventional wars turning into deadlier nuclear conflagrations.

The end of WWII had given rise to a powerful global movement for world peace and the creation of the United Nations as a beacon of it. Whether the UN has lived up to its mission of keeping world peace and preventing another global conflagration might be something highly debatable although it has so far prevented the eruption of another World War.

Traditionally, new global peace movements emerged in such dangerous situations in order to stem the tide of wars and save the world from greater destructions. But this is not the case nowadays, as nations and people hasten to take sides with this or that power for starting a new conflict while bitter and more venomous wars are going on over the social media that prepare the psychological environments for accelerating the momentums of new conflicts. Nowadays, wars are first fought on the social media and then continue on battlefields.

The weight and capacity of international institutions to resolve these conflicts are decreasing. In this context what may be palatable to launch a new international peace movement that would put pressure on national government and international institutions and boldly work in the preservation of humanity irrespective of race, color, ethnicity and economic conditions. It may not be too late but not impossible to start such a peace movement. Better late than never as they say.

As far as Africa is concerned, the task of building a culture of peace should not be left only for global or local institutions or organizations. The process should be owned by the people directly or indirectly affected by the absence of peace and through their national governments. It should also be a multifaceted struggle on all fronts, including the media and educational institutions, non-governmental organizations and think tanks. Most of all, this is not a challenge that need not be postponed for tomorrow. Building a culture of peace in Africa is of course a long-term process that needs to be started today.

Society

Meskel Demera: Ethiopia's must see street festival

BY STAFF REPORTER

Ethiopia's street festivals, such as *Meskel Demera* (Finding of the True Cross), *Irreechaa* (Thanksgiving Day of the Oromo people), and *Timket* (Epiphany), are well-known for attracting a diverse array of tourists to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

During these festivals, the number of tourists coming to Ethiopia from the four corners of the globe to learn more about Ethiopia and its religious and cultural richness through witnessing the unique, vibrant religious performances and public ceremonies presented on the merriments. Those visitors who got the opportunity to attend the open-air, colorful, and breathtaking festivals never leave without appreciating the magnificence of the festivals and Ethiopia's unique religious and cultural potential.

As usual, tourists who came to Ethiopia from different parts of the world and attended this year's Ethiopian *Meskel Demera* festival also expressed their feelings and appreciation about the celebration, emphasizing Ethiopia's cultural richness and untapped potential.

Mark Blood came to Ethiopia from New Zealand with his family. Speaking to EPA, he said "Our stay in Ethiopia has been impressive. The diversity of Ethiopian culture, its history, religion, and natural beauty are breathtaking. The Demera Meskel festivity is spectacular, gathering a huge number of people together to celebrate."

Mentioning that they had also visited Gondar, Lalibela, and the Afar State, Mark emphasized Ethiopia's immense potential and expressed surprise at how under recognized it is in the West. "*Meskel* is a huge celebration with so many people. It is new to us, but we are learning and pleased to be here. I urge others to come without hesitation-people here are friendly, and safety is not an issue," he added.

Chris Casabant, another foreigner attending the festival from the U.S., echoed similar sentiments. "The *Meskel* festivity is wonderful. We have spent a lot of time learning about the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, and what stood out to me was the lovely chanting during the celebration," she noted. Chris encouraged others to visit Ethiopia to learn more about its people, adding, "Everyone here is welcoming and friendly."

Marika Griehsel, from Sweden, attended *Meskel* with 14 guests and expressed her excitement at being part of such a unique event. "It is beautiful to be here. We came specifically to experience *Meskel*."

This tradition is new to us, and we feel honored to witness it. There is no celebration like this in our country, and we are happy to be part of it," she said. As a tour guide, Marika added, "I have visited Ethiopia several times, and I will continue to bring more guests here to experience this wonderful celebration and learn from Ethiopia's rich culture."

The *Meskel* festivity, marking the



The diversity of Ethiopian culture, its history, religion, and natural beauty are breathtaking

discovery of the True Holy Cross, left a lasting impression on the visitors. Marika concluded by expressing her hope for peace and prosperity for Ethiopia, saying, "This festivity truly celebrates humanity. We are happy to be here, and I will encourage others to join and experience Ethiopia with us."

In the same development, tourists approached by ENA expressed their excitement. Jean Pierre, is a Belgian tour operator who attended this colorful festival. Pierre praised the beauty of the *Meskel-Demera* festival and pledged to promote Ethiopia's rich culture and traditions back home.

Having visited Ethiopia multiple times, especially, notable heritage sites such as the Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela, Simien Mountain National Park, and the Obelisk of Axum, Pierre realized that Ethiopia has immense potential for tourism development.

"I am working for a travel agency in Belgium and we are working together with local agencies. So, I try to promote Ethiopia as much as possible. So, we can bring more people to see our beautiful country



[Ethiopia].

According to him, he has visited Ethiopia many times, mainly Lalibela, Simien Mountain, Axum and southern part of Ethiopia. So, he has learned that Ethiopia is a country that has a lot of things to show for the tourist sector.

Marikn Griehsel, another tourist from Sweden who came with fourteen guests, was captivated by the colorful celebration of *Meskel Demera*.

She described the music, the priests, and the large gathering as an extraordinary and unique experience, urging others to visit Ethiopia.

"I think that, in general, people should visit Ethiopia. It is a wonderful country with the beautiful city of Addis Ababa and many other places across the country. Experiencing this unique culture and scenery is something you won't find anywhere else in the world," she remarked.

Marianne Von der Esch, from the same country of Sweden, also found the *Meskel* celebration fantastic and incredible.

"I really think it is fantastic. We are so impressed and it is really incredible... I am so excited also to see not only the *Meskel*

ceremony but to see the city itself," she underscored.

Emanuel Garbin, an Israeli tourist on his part, shared his joy in witnessing the celebration, highlighting the unity and happiness of the participants.

"It is very powerful and feels very much a message of unity to see here people all around the country coming together to celebrate the holiday. It is very fun and very meaningful. And, I hope this day will remind people that we should always behave like this what one another celebrate and be united together."

Garbin also expressed his surprise at the warmth and safety he felt while in Ethiopia, stressing that he enjoyed, impressed and felt safe like a family.

"I really enjoyed it; and it is very surprising. When you are here, you feel first of all how safe it is. When you are here, you are safe; everyone is welcome in. It is like a family. This is the feeling I get when I am here," he emphasized.

Recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible World Heritage, *Meskel Demera* remains a powerful reflection of Ethiopia's ancient traditions, drawing international tourists eager to explore the nation's cultural treasures.

Law & Politics

The notorious act of Egypt in the Horn of Africa

BY WONDWOSSEN ALEMAYEHU

Ethiopia believes that the transboundary Abbay River is as important for the downstream countries, Sudan and Egypt, as it itself. For this reason, Ethiopia took into consideration all necessary precautions and steps and the international conventions on border rivers before launching the construction of the Grand Renaissance Dam over the Nile.

However, Egypt is still not in a position to accept the construction of the dam having no significant impact on the flow. Consequently, it has been leaving no stone unturned to deter Ethiopia's move to make the construction of a hydroelectric dam no better than delusion for a long time in history. They were making use of all possible mechanisms through the ages to prevent Ethiopia from putting up any grand project over the Nile River. For instance, Egypt was striving multiple times to avert Ethiopia's far-reaching vision of embarking on a hydroelectric development project by impeding international monetary institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank from making any grand donations and loans for development projects to advance its economic and technological future.

Egypt has been making its level best efforts to impede the construction of any grand hydroelectric dam over the River Nile for centuries. To Egypt's dismay, the people of Ethiopia have shown a strong sense of solidarity to embark on the Grand Renaissance Dam over the Nile which is drawing to completion after years.

The commencement of the Grand Renaissance Dam on the Nile River in 2012 by the absolute funding of its people gravely shocked the government of Egypt. The Ethiopian people, who steadfastly stood firm and true to their future advancement, made a solemn promise to themselves to realize the commencement and completion of such a historic project regardless of Egypt's aEgypt has never fallen asleep to obstruct the construction of the Renaissance Dam. However, the audacious hope of its heroic people for a better future and their sustainable resilience in the face of ferocious challenges made it unstoppable. The Ethiopian people who victoriously subverted the heinous acts of the Italian aggressors in the Battle of Adwa in 1888 and 1928 fervently stood in imminent solidarity once again against its historic enemy-Egypt. Egypt is standing on the line of delusion and acquiring a short memory of the shameful defeat it entertained in the battle of Gundet. Ethiopians had achieved eternal and historic victory over Egyptian forces in 1876. The ideologically and politically failed government of Egypt is recently making every delusional effort to thwart Ethiopia's stride for economic as well as technological advancement forgetting the mind-blowing defeat it incurred by the brave people of Ethiopia.

Like its historic act to abort Ethiopia's



development, Egypt is recently making all the visible and invisible effort to destabilize the Horn of Africa by deploying its troops in the failed States Somalia and South Sudan under the fake pretext of bolstering military cooperation of the two countries of the horn.

In response to Egypt's act of incitement to the horn regions, Ethiopia is watching all the moves of its historic rival with utmost vigilance. Ethiopia will always hold and hoist a flag of peace to the region and even beyond. Our country's incessant effort to bring sustainable security to the failed State of Somalia Republic and the priceless cost paid by its insurmountable troops in the region will always remain unforgettable by the peace-loving government of Ethiopia and its people.

Egypt's act of incitement in the Horn of Africa will undoubtedly jeopardize the hosting regions and Egypt itself. The deployment of its troops in Somalia and South Sudan would rather intensify tension in the regions of the horn making the effort to the normalization of peace in the area unachievable. Egypt should note that its effort of fueling up the tension in the region would rather come up with a tragic consequence to itself. The two conflict inciting countries; Egypt and Somalia would never stop Somaliland's future vision of proclaiming autonomy. Somaliland's objective of being a sovereign independent state did not emanate from Ethiopia in the first place. It rather emanates from the longstanding faction and maltreatment of its own people by the government of the failed State of Somalia. Consequently, Ethiopia cannot be held responsible for the political controversies that emerged between the Somaliland and Somalia Republic. As a matter of fact, the landlocked Ethiopia is looking out viable doors to advance its

economic opportunities of which using Somaliland's port of Barbara is one of the options on the table. In this connection, the failed State Somalia which did not make any foreseeable effort to bridge its political constraints with Somaliland for over 30 years appeared to roadblock Ethiopia's move for access to sea via Somaliland's Barbara port.

Egypt's claim to bring a more sustainable centralized government to the failed State of Somalia is illogical. The Ethiopian troops alongside the UN-led peacekeeping mission have made a costly relentless effort to bolster the centralization of Somalia's government for over two decades. Therefore, Egypt's purported claim of reinforcement to the government of Somalia is utterly groundless.

Hence, Egypt should never delve into the problems of other countries with the fabricated stance to bring security. Rather, Egypt should play a peaceful role by removing its troops instead of fueling up tension and escalation of conflicts alongside the terrorists and various armed groups in the region.

In conclusion, Egypt's military presence in Somalia and South Sudan would not help its objectives to assist the Army of the countries and raise its combat efficiency; however, conversely, the effort would be more counterproductive for the hosting regional countries, namely Somalia, Sudan, and Egypt. The devised calculation of Egypt to flare up the region with tension and military confrontation in the horn would rather jeopardize its future relations instead of helping the regional stability.

Wondwossen Alemayehu is a former university lecturer and currently working for education office. He can be reached at wondwossen.a.haile@gmail.com

Egypt's act of incitement in the Horn of Africa will undoubtedly jeopardize the hosting regions and Egypt itself

BY EPHREM ENDALE

Between you & me

Being Misunderstood & Misinterpreted!

“I didn’t say that! Did I? Why are they twisting things!

I was never talking about those people!”

“No you were talking about them.”

People’s comments or opinions being misunderstood, mostly deliberately, or misinterpreted is the very uncomfortable reality we are forced to live in these days. Interpretations seem to have become subjective. The meanings of words and terms aren’t what they are as stated in the dictionaries but what they are in individual minds! ‘Scary’ wouldn’t be too strong a word! It’s astounding how some people are so gifted in turning around what you’ve said. Yes, that might be common in politics. Over there it might be some strategic way of splashing cold water on your opponent’s arguments or whatever. It seems almost everyone who has anything to do with politics or what is supposed to be politics does it. That, dear readers, puts us in a difficult position to understand who is who or who stands for what. After all putting the genuine opinions and the biased opinions in the places they deserve removes many of the stumbling blocks which prevent us from having frank discussions. Misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the opinions and statements of others seem to be the Achilles heels preventing us from having candid discussions in any and all fields.

Quite a long time back when everything was too hot to touch this guy was in a certain meeting. There when he gets the opportunity to make his opinion heard he says a few harmless things he thought would give color to what he was saying. Apart from a few humorous quips he throws in a few what-if scenarios, scenarios his mind kicked off, to lend muscle and bone to his arguments. One

such what-if scenario was about this incredibly rich guy who was cheating on his far younger wife. According to the story he goes about it for quite a long time without his wife finding out anything, though it was a completely different story when it came to the public; his infidelity was already a household agenda.

As it was a matter of time before the unsuspecting wife caught wind of the story someone breaks it to her that her hubby was sleeping around and he was doing it with multiple partners. According to the guy’s what-if story it was rumored she too was in the marriage for the money. After being told the story it takes her a couple of months to react. Finally she tells dear old hubby of hers she knows all the story about his infidelity and that she wanted a divorce. The guy being so rich usually ‘talked’ with his money and wouldn’t hesitate to arm-twist anyone; that was how he had made sure his wife wouldn’t get more than a few thousands birr from him in case of a divorce.

He tries to convince her to stay because for him it was about reputation he has to keep. In his circle infidelity was nothing more than who slept in whose bed. (From what we hear seldom does infidelity come in the way of tight and strong reputation as everyone seems in that world seem to do it with ease and without having to look back!-- that was me speaking!--) the fellow’s young wife says there is no way she would stay any longer with him. Then he writes her a check for two or three million and she is finally tamed.

Ha! You know, “Who said anything about me seeking divorce!” sort of being tamed. (Money, oh money!) She continues as a good housewife.

Now this cooked up this scenario while talking about how money could just destroy the strongest of morals and beliefs. Now this young wife who he said was pretty would have no trouble of finding other suitors. There was no danger of her being thrown out into the streets or going back to her family. The question he posed was if her decision to stay after getting the huge check was right or wrong. Discussions ensue with many denouncing her and saying she was in the marriage for the money.

Now this seemingly very harmless story would have been thrown into the memory archives once the meeting was over. But something happens. The guy gets news that some goons were after him. Why! What in the world did he do? Well, this son of a gun cooks up the wrong story which unfortunately knocked some doors. There was this real life couple who almost fit the what-if story structure and the wife whose friend was a participant in the meeting gets the news. She takes it personally! She says the person who said those things at the meeting was referring to her! She wasn’t going to let that pass without him being taught a lesson or two. Mind you she doesn’t know the fellow and learned about his identity through her network of friends and ‘informs.’ By the way this friend who told her the story was later said to have regretted she ever opened her mouth as it was

her idea of small talk and nothing more.

The real life rich man’s wife buys a trio of goons ordering them to beat him up good. But as leak has it the news leaks and reaches our fellow and his friends. They take it seriously and discuss what they can do to save him from being beaten up. Going to the police was off the charts as they have no evidence other than rumors, however legitimate the rumors were.

One friend among them who has enough knowledge of the darker worlds of the town tells them to leave things to him and he’d return with some news in a couple of days. Until then our fellow would say in personal lockdown. So this friend works his sources and as he has promised calls the others a couple of days later and tells them there was nothing to worry about. What the hell are you saying?” he tells them the goons have been dealt with and they wouldn’t be bothering their friend. None of them knew how did it and no one asked. Later the news came that the goons who were promised quite hefty money trued to their employer and warn her if she ever tries to contact them or even mention their names they would go to the police with their story. Our guy was saved but the story was as shocking as it should have been.

These days there are many stories of opinions and comments being misunderstood and misinterpreted and what makes the whole thing scary is that most of the time they are deliberate! It is not what you say it is what people decide you say! Chilling indeed!

The ‘Unwanted’ Handshake!

I don’t know much about the occult. Read quite a significant amount in the hope of having more genuine and dependable info but I’ve to admit that I’m still in the dark. Why are many of us really eager to know more about such things? Well it might be a tricky and slippery question as we’d have our own motives. Months back someone I know warns me not to shake hands of anyone I don’t know. Well, that sounds a very strange warning as shaking hands is the most natural thing you do when you meet people strangers or otherwise. Yes, I asked him what he meant. He says that was the new way of criminals practically sending into open eyed comma, as they’ve administered some anesthesia into your system. Haven’t I heard that before? Indeed I have. The only thing is that this time the warning was “Don’t shake hands with...” while before it was mostly “Don’t eat or drink with others...” Why? Well, they’d put some potent herb or such things into the food you eat or into your drink and render you defenseless. In that state it is said they could make you do whatever they wanted.

Such talk is common. You can say much of the city must have heard such stories at some stage in their lives. The only thing is no one’s coming up with some proven issues or events so that people could put up their defenses in case they come across such scenarios.

A few years back some fellow I used to go to school with returns home for a visit after practically decades. It was some mixed homecoming. While finding old friends and acquaintances was the greatest of enjoyment also learning that quite a number of them haven’t made it this far was sad.

Anyway we were talking all kinds of issues with this friend whose reserved and humble demeanor seems to have survived the years when the name of a person we knew and lives in the European country our friend resides. I can tell you that in these days almost overnight behavioral flip flops finding a friend you used to have the utmost respect for not having even an inch to the wrong side of life is a sort of blessing.

The person whose name cropped up, my friend tells me, was doing well. But it was a statement so sarcastically said I knew he was trying to hold some things back. But I thought I must have overplayed things since he told the guy asked him to buy some book. So what’s the big deal with a friend asking another friend to buy him some book? Well, maybe not much. But the person we were talking about had this reputation of being a book hater. Never has anybody heard him discussing any book he read. In fact he mocked his friends for buying books, “Why are you squandering your money?” Now this very guy asks his friend to buy him one. As curious as I was I asked him the title of the book he was supposed to buy his friend. He told me, and without any exaggeration I almost shouted “What!” My friend was taken aback at what he was seeing. How in the world could the title of a book create such reaction, and from someone who thinks himself, at least as a moderate book enthusiast. He just dug his quizzical eyes into me without uttering a word. So the ball was in my court and I have to explain myself.

Now the book he mentioned was thought to be religious text. Initial reaction would have been that

the guy probably nearing the last quarter of his life was seriously concerned about his prospects of making it all the way to Heaven. But that wasn’t all there was to it. Conventional wisdom has it that some who knew it deep enough could also use it for occult practices. At hearing this my friend was shaken to his marrow! There and there he decides not to buy the book since it would be implicating himself in such ugly things.

After a couple of weeks he flies back. A month hasn’t passed since he returns when he broke to me some news about the person with the book request. Being in the early stages of his sixties he was looking for a very young wife all the way from Ethiopia and the only way he could manage was through other doors as conventional doors wouldn’t be that easy to pass through due to the four decades of age difference. Someone supposedly with such ‘skills’ (Skills!) promised him that if he could get someone to big him the book from the homeland things would be easy. The person goes finds another person who indeed got him the book. And what happens? He finally gets a seventeen year old girl for a wife all the way from Addis! That could be one of those tricky coincidences or there could be other things confusing and difficult to understand.

On the other hand you’d be pardoned to think that since our brethren in western countries have more opportunity in search of knowledge and info about issues which they want to know about more. Also the lucky ones who were blessed with advanced education especially in the Western world acted as we expect to. How do we expect them to act?

Now the answer to this question wouldn’t be nice. Well much of the time we expect them to shun everything local, cultural and traditional and reinvent themselves in the form of the societies they were in. So any person in such a situation isn’t expected to have some book of ‘occult’ just because his limbs which have started to make noises demanded younger blood. Well the person we talked about happened to be highly educated in a couple of the best universities in the world. That didn’t prevent him from acting as the illiterate laborer in some not-so-imposing Addis hamlet would have acted.

Recently a guy I know tells me on late morning a middle-aged woman suddenly comes towards him and begins saying “I wanted to talk to...” he says he immediately raises his hand and warns her not to come any closer. He said the lady was somewhat surprised and turns back mumbling some words.

“What made you act like that?”

“I don’t know!” he says. But later talking about it he said it must be all the stories he hears about not socializing with strangers that prompted it to snap at the woman he never met.

Researchers! Researchers! Researchers! Researches are what we need to save us from being confused over such issues we’ve been talking about and other equally important things. Next time you thrust your hand for a handshake with some stranger for one reason or another and they refuse to shake hands don’t blame them as there is quite a volume of not nice stories about handshakes out there.

In Pictures

Priests religious song ceremony

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church Priests present religious songs and praying ceremony at the Meskel Square during the Demera ceremony. The priests dressed traditional cloths, most commonly used by the Orthodox Church priests were presented the praying ceremony in front of the guests where Patriarch of the Church, Abune Mathias, President Sahle-Work Zewdie, religious fathers of the church and other guests attended the ceremony.



Sunday school students praying ceremony

During the Demera ceremony in Addis Ababa, dressing traditional cloths, Sunday School Students of the Church were presented religious songs and a praying ceremony.

Ethiopian Orthodox Christians celebrate *Meskel* (the founding of the True Cross)

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church faithful have celebrated Meskel, to commemorate

the discovery of the true cross upon which Jesus Christ was crucified, according to the Church's dogma. Meskel is an annual festival celebrated every year on 27th of September. Demera, an annual bonfire

lighting ceremony also is an annual festival celebrated on the eve of Meskel.

On Thursday, believers of the church were gathered in Addis Ababa Meskel Square

and in their surroundings in other parts of the country. Priests, Sunday school students and the faithful were singing religious songs, prayers and practicing other rituals.



Meskel was inscribed by UNESCO in December 2013 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritages of Humanity. The picture shows, Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Abune Mathias, President Sahle-Work Zewde and religious fathers starting the bonfire lighting ceremony in Addis Ababa.

Demera (Eeve of *Meskel*) bonfire ceremony in Addis Ababa

Bonfire ceremony of Demera in Addis Ababa, which signifies the efforts made by Empress Helena to find the true cross, which had been buried for many years under dirt and earth, according to the teaching of the church. The bonfire lighting ceremony was attended by huge gathering of the faithful.

