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## Chinese investors involving in GLI: Amb. Chen Hai

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - Chinese investors have been making contributions to the realization of Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative (GLI), said Chinese Ambassador to Ethiopia.

In an exclusive interview with The Ethiopian Herald, Chinese Ambassador to Ethiopia Chen Hai said that China continues to implement an active national strategy in response to climate change, adopting a series of policies and measures to strive for carbon emissions peaking before 2030 and carbon neutrality before 2060.

China is actively collaborating with Ethiopia and Africa as a whole to achieve green and sustainable development for generations to come. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) proposed Green Legacy Initiative, which exactly conforms to Xi Jinping's thought on Ecological Civilization, he remarked.

Both countries are transforming words into deeds, and sparing no efforts to pursue an eco-friendly development model and cushion the climate change impacts, Hai expressed.

According to the Ambassador, Chinese investors are also making contributions to the realization of the GLI. For example, Sino Aluminum Manufacturing PLC, located in Tulefa, is turning local plastic waste into fiber, which is used for textile,



Chinese Ambassador to Ethiopia, Chen Hai

pillows, quilts, etc. Its annual production reaches thousands of tons.

The Embassy encourages more Chinese companies to contribute to the Initiative through concrete action, he stated.

"My priority is to promote China-Ethiopia all-weather strategic partnership and bring more benefits to our two peoples. I would join hands with our Ethiopian friends to deepen political mutual

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## Ethiopia to host regional Red Sea youth conference

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA – Uplift Initiative Ethiopia is preparing to host the regional peace conference of the Red Sea Diplomatic Youth in the near future.

Uplift Initiative Ethiopia Founder and Director Abubeker Seman told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the organization is working diligently to organize the Red Sea Diplomatic Youth Conference, which will focus on fostering regional peace and collaboration.

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Tilahun Esmael (PhD)

## ESX eyeing amicable investment opportunities

• To commence operation in January

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA - The Ethiopian Securities Exchange (ESX), which sought to promote public private investment undertakings, set to officially start its operation in January 2025.

See ESX eyeing... Page 3

## Muslim aid America donates over 750M Birr in medical supplies

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA – Five government hospitals in Ethiopia have received medicines and medical supplies worth over 750 million Birr from Muslim Aid America under the coordination of Ustaz Abubakar Ahmed. The donation ceremony took place yesterday.

President of the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC), Sheikh Haji Ibrahim Tuffa, announced that Muslim Aid America has provided emergency kits to hospitals in different parts of the country. Sheikh Ibrahim emphasized the critical role the donation plays in supporting hospitals in need of medical supplies and expressed gratitude to the charity organization for offering assistance regardless of religious



Photo: Degne Abera

or other differences.

The president also acknowledged the Ethiopian government for its support through public institutions such as the

Ministries of Health, Finance, and Customs, which facilitated the delivery process.

Ustaz Abubakar Ahmed, Head of the

See Muslim aid... Page 3



# News

## Farmer managed land restoration generates over 1.8 mln USD

BY EYUEL KIFLU

**WOLAYTA SODO**—The Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration program, initiated by World Vision Ethiopia (WVE) has enabled farmers in South Ethiopia to successfully generate over 1.8 million USD from carbon sales.

WVE's Climate Change and Environmental Projects Coordinator Workneh Yadesa expressed that farmers in the Humbo and Sodo areas have generated over 1.1 million USD from carbon sales as part of the Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) program, which has restored more than 268,000 hectares of degraded land.

He emphasized that the program not only focuses on reforestation but also addresses community challenges such as food insecurity and flood risks, which have previously forced residents to migrate.

In Humbo and Sodo, 5,800 hectares of forest have been restored, resulting in the sequestration of 426,000 tons of CO2 and generating the aforesaid amount of income for cooperative members. According to Workneh, this income has enabled the community to ensure food security and fund essential services, including the construction of a primary school.

He also highlighted World Vision Ethiopia's ambitious plans to restore 4.6 million hectares of degraded land over the next decade.



Hobicha Beda Weito Mountain Forest Development and Conservation Basic Cooperative, Chairman Mekonen Gujo noted that the land had been neglected due to a lack of ownership, which led to deforestation for firewood and fodder.

He pointed out that this deforestation caused famine, reduced agricultural production, water shortages, and livestock deaths.

However, through collective efforts to reforest the degraded land, the area is beginning to recover. Mekonen mentioned that the community is actively working to protect the forest, benefiting from carbon sales to fund development projects, establish a milling operation, and support local

schools.

The FMNR program is being implemented in various states across Ethiopia, including Tigray, Amhara, Oromia, Sidama, Central Ethiopia, Southwest Ethiopia, Southern Ethiopia, and Afar, contributing significantly to the country's environmental and economic sustainability, according to organization.

World Vision Ethiopia also expressed that efforts are underway to register additional areas that currently do not qualify for carbon sales, by adhering to established carbon sale procedures. This initiative aims to expand the scope of reforestation projects and enhance the livelihood of the society as well as financial viability.

## Bruh Finance closing knowledge gap in finance institutions: Association

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

**ADDIS ABABA** – The Association of Ethiopian Insurers said that Bruh Finance is filling the knowledge gap in Ethiopian insurance sector by designing customized solutions tailored to the needs of the national market.

Association President and CEO of Nyala Insurance SC, Yared Molla said that the introduction of Bruh Finance enabled insurance industries that had been operating in a fragmented manner to come together and equip insurance and bank experts with necessary skills.

“The collaboration with Bruh Finance is paving the way for the creation of innovative systems that address the unique challenges faced by the industry,” he noted.

Yared made the above remark in a recent ceremony, where Bruh Finance graduated 27 students drawn from insurance and banking institutions in level 3 certificate in capital markets-securities.

According to him, the graduation is a significant move towards strengthening Ethiopia's financial landscape. “We have successfully trained 250 insurance experts and this initiative aims to elevate the country's capital market by enhancing the expertise within the insurance sectors.”

Bruh Finance Founder and CEO, Getachew Beshahwred remarked that the graduation is the beginning of the Chartered Institute for Securities and Investment (CISI) Level 3 Securities qualification.

He stressed the need for these professionals to continue pursuing advanced levels, to build a skilled workforce that will drive the success of Ethiopia's capital markets.

“Today's graduates are the first wave of professionals expected to shape the future of Ethiopia's economy and marked a significant achievement for Ethiopia's incoming capital markets as well as Ethiopian insurance and bank industries.”

Ethiopia's financial sector requires more professionals with specialized knowledge to ensure the success of the capital markets, he said, adding that this with the launch of Ethiopia's Securities Exchange on the horizon, there is an urgent need for skilled professionals who can navigate complex securities, investments, and financial products.

“Bruh Finance will continue to support insurance and banking sector professional growth through ongoing training and development opportunities to deliver internationally recognized qualifications that align with global standards that advances personal careers that fosters the broader growth of the financial sector in Ethiopia,” Getachew said.

The newly graduated experts are expected to come up with fresh perspectives, skills and knowledge to drive the industry forward.

## Addis warns against deceptive medical advertising

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDISABABA**—Health service providers that misuse their registration credentials to commit false advertising should refrain from deceptive acts, the Addis Ababa City Drug and Food Administration warned.

Speaking at a dialogue on medical service advertising yesterday, Authority's Chief Executive Officer Muluemebet Tadesse criticized some media and advertisers for violating legal and ethical standards noting that such practices are harmful to individuals and public health.

“For example, traditional medical practitioners are not authorized to use terms like ‘curable,’ ‘choice of most’ or ‘no side effect’ in their advertisements. The Authority only provides a certificate of registration. However, we have observed hospitals and traditional medicine practitioners claiming their services are ‘testified.’ This is completely deceptive,” Muluemebet explained.

She also noted that the Authority is collaborating with legal institutions and media organizations to tackle the spread of false and misleading advertisements.

“Some media outlets are broadcasting illegal advertisements that violate societal norms and advertising regulations. For instance, treated patients cannot serve as



Photo: Gebabo Gebrie

testimonials for healthcare providers. Yet, several institutions misuse their clients to promote their services,” she added.

Preventive measures are being taken by the Authority to combat such abuses, but she stressed the need for greater involvement from other institutions.

Ethiopian Media Authority, Advertising Desk Head Bedria Hussien highlighted public complaints about deceptive healthcare advertisements.

“Individuals misled by such advertisements are suing advertisers and

media outlets, claiming they incurred unnecessary expenses,” she stated.

Similarly, the Addis Ababa Traditional Medicine Practitioners Association, President Merigeta-Tibeb Mengistu Desta called for administrative action against those misleading advertisers.

“Being a traditional medicine practitioner should not be interpreted as bribery or deception. Unfortunately, some are exploiting the concept, tarnishing the reputation of genuine traditional medicine services,” he remarked.



# News

## Muslim aid...

EIASC President's Office, noted that the donation, valued at approximately 6.4 million USD, addresses the pressing challenges hospitals face, such as shortages of medicines and medical equipment. This marks the sixth donation from Muslim Aid America, which has previously delivered similar assistance worth 15 million USD to hospitals in the southern and northern parts of the country as well as, in Oromia and Afar states over recent years.

In addition to the emergency kits, which meet international and World Health Organization standards, Ustaz Abubakar noted that five containers of medical supplies have already reached Djibouti port, ready for further distribution.

He praised Muslim Aid America's significant contribution and urged Ethiopian nationals and organizations worldwide to actively collaborate with such initiatives, which play a crucial role in improving the country's health sector. He added that the Council would continue its efforts to support hospitals and communities in need.

Mabratu Masebo, representing the Ministry of Health, commended Muslim Aid America's support, stating that it is instrumental in complementing the government's ongoing efforts to provide adequate and sustainable health services to citizens. He emphasized that government efforts alone are insufficient without the support of charitable organizations like Muslim Aid America.

The emergency kits were handed over to representatives from Del Chora Hospital in Dire Dawa, Assosa Hospital in Benishangul Gumuz, Jijiga Hospital in the Somali State, and Selte and MehurAklil Primary Hospitals in Central Ethiopia State by Sheikh Ibrahim.

The donation is a testament to the importance of collaboration between charitable organizations and government institutions in addressing the healthcare needs of Ethiopia. It serves as a call to action for more initiatives that can support the country's health system and its people, it was learned

## Chinese investors...

trust with mutual respect and support, to enhance our communication and cooperation across the board as a partner on our way to modernization, and to play a constructive role in maintaining regional peace and stability," the Ambassador said.

Ethiopia is a home to hard-working and diligent people. With vast fertile land, abundant natural resources and beautiful scenery, the country has a good foundation for economic development. There is still great potential to be tapped in trade, investment, infrastructure and other cooperation fields, he added.

The important consensus reached by Chinese and Ethiopian leaders draws a blueprint for future practical cooperation between the two

countries. Chinese agricultural experts come to Ethiopia for 15 consecutive years with advanced expertise, Hai mentioned.

China expands import of coffee, sesame and other agricultural products from Ethiopia. Chinese companies are also exploring more possible export goods such as fertilizers to cater to the needs of Ethiopia's agricultural development. China, with similar experience to Ethiopia in agricultural development, is the best partner to the latter's agricultural modernization, the Ambassador stated.

Chinese companies are tentatively conducting feasibility research on getting involved in the construction of the new airport in Bishoftu, another mega project proposed by the Ethiopian government, he noted.

## ESX eyeing...

Briefing the media yesterday, ESX's CEO Tilahun Esmael (PhD) stated that the exchange has finalized all the preliminary activities to jump into full-fledged securities exchange operations which are highly believed to promote inclusive, cost effective fast financial literacy and participation in the country's growing business ecosystem.

The CEO also highlighted that it helps to create a fertile playground for public-private investment, businesses and the overall development of a vibrant capital market which in turn contributes to the nation's economic development.

"The development of the existing and emerging financial industry has brought a golden opportunity for their seamless operations," he said.

Over the last few months, corporate bond instrument activities have been taking place to incorporate the Over the Counter (OTC) market and other chores in a bid to promote private sectors and enterprises participation in the market, Tilahun remarked.

Mentioning the improvements registered in the government's Treasury bill, he elaborated that Ethio-telecom's 10% share offer would be a vital springboard for the progress of the exchange.

Urging the business communities and keen participants to fulfill the requirements which enable them to be involved in the market, Tilahun cited the inclusion of Sharia compliance services for profit sharing.

The Exchange's Chief Operating

Officer Michael Habtie stated that they have been mobilizing funds, establishing directives, restructuring human resources and raising awareness to the general public.

Aside from operational activities, Michael further stated that the exchange has been undertaking legal framework, human capacity building training, trading technology installations to facilitate bond and stock markets.

In addition to technological advancements, the exchange has been mobilizing capitals, working on human capital and other business operations. Also, risk management framework, cyber security issues are impelled to mitigate the possible risks occurring while operating, the COO added.

Unveiling the significant achievements gained from the bank-to-bank services, Treasury bills, pension funds, and stock exchange market are on the pipeline to be operational in a few weeks on.

It was also indicated that chains of forums along with universities, chambers, associations and investor related trainings have been offered. It is also proposed to deploy the ESX digital academy system to raise awareness, reach out to all segments of the community in the investment undertakings.

Since establishment last year, ESX has been operating under the provisions of the Capital Market Proclamation No. 1248/2021, which facilitates cooperation between joint stock companies and the private sector, it was learnt.

## Ethiopia to host...

The forum will bring together over 300 youth from countries bordering the Red Sea to Addis Ababa for discussions about the strategic importance of the Red Sea. The conference will highlight the geographical significance of the Red Sea and Ethiopia's proximity to it, making Ethiopia's quest for access to the sea a logical and reasonable aspiration.

Abubeker emphasized the importance of raising awareness among the youth about Ethiopia's sacrifices for neighboring countries and the legitimacy of its request for sea access. "It is crucial to engage the youth from Red Sea neighboring countries in dialogue to promote peace and build stable regional relations," he noted.

Uplift Initiative Ethiopia, known for its work in empowering youth in climate change, education, and peace and security, recognizes the critical role young people play in regional development. Given that Ethiopia's export trade relies heavily on the Red Sea, challenges in the region directly impact the country. Therefore,

partnership and collaboration with neighboring nations to develop, utilize, and maintain the Red Sea is vital.

The director also underlined the importance of Ethiopia's access to both the Nile River and the Red Sea as pivotal negotiating and development opportunities. Leveraging the Red Sea will allow Ethiopia to become a full participant and beneficiary in the global trade system, which could, in turn, help stabilize the country's cost of living.

He stated that the issue of Ethiopia's access to a sea port is a generational and collective development matter that must be resolved peacefully. "Free access to the Red Sea is a gateway to unlocking Ethiopia's diplomatic and economic potential on the global stage," Abubeker added.

Moreover, he highlighted the need for cooperative efforts among Red Sea countries to curb the loss of youth migrating across the sea in search of better opportunities. "Resources should be harnessed for shared development rather



Abubeker Seman

than fueling dangerous migration," he remarked.

With a focus on strengthening ties among youth and fostering mutual understanding,

the Red Sea Diplomatic Youth Conference aims to serve as a platform for meaningful discussions and a step toward long-lasting peace and prosperity in the region, it was learned.





# Coffee and tea are bringing Chinese, Ethiopian cultures and people closer

*Chen Hai, Chinese Ambassador to Ethiopia*

BY WORKU BELACHEW

*The new Chinese Ambassador to Ethiopia, Chen Hai recently presented his credentials to FDRE President Taye Atseke Selassie. Given that the Ethiopia-China relations has grown to all-weather strategic partnership, and the two-sides also cooperate at multilateral fronts, including in BRICS family, The Ethiopian Herald sat down with the Ambassador and dwelt on the topics. Enjoy reading!*

**Where have you heard about Ethiopia for the first time?**

I learned about Ethiopia for the first time in our history text book when I was a middle school student decades ago. I learned that Ethiopia, with splendid culture, time-honored history, and brave and hard-working people, is the only African country that hasn't been colonized by western countries. Since then, I have been greatly respectful to Ethiopia and its people.

**Could you please share with us your experience in the spheres of diplomacy?**

I have long worked on Asian affairs and been posted to countries in the region. Before I am honored to be the 16<sup>th</sup> Chinese Ambassador to Ethiopia, I have worked as the Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar for more than 5 years. This is my first time to work in Africa, and I feel so lucky and honored to set my foot on the second home of all humanity.

**Ethiopian coffee is one of the best in the world, what is the reaction in China?**

I enjoy coffee every day. I feel lucky and happy to work in the origin of coffee. Though I have worked in Ethiopia for only 4 months, I already visited Yirgacheffe and will soon visit Kaffa. In my newly published article *There is great potential for cooperation between China and Ethiopia in the coffee sector*, I highlighted popular Ethiopian coffee in China. In recent years, the Chinese coffee market has expanded at an astonishing rate. Young Chinese people are increasingly keen to try different origins and flavors of coffee, and they are particularly fond of the unique taste of Ethiopian coffee. Small coffee beans have traveled across oceans, becoming an important bond of friendship between China and Ethiopia. Just as the Maritime Silk Road brought tea and porcelain to the East African coast, today Ethiopian coffee is entering households across China. The two-way exchange of coffee and tea is bringing the two countries' cultures and people closer. During my tenure, one of my important goals is to help increase more export of Ethiopian coffee to China and introduce Ethiopian coffee to more Chinese people.

**What are your priorities as an Ambassador of China to Ethiopia in your tenure?**

As Chinese Ambassador to Ethiopia, my priority is to promote China-Ethiopia all-weather strategic partnership and bring more benefits to our two peoples. Specifically speaking, I would join hands with our Ethiopian friends to deepen political mutual trust with mutual respect and support, to enhance our communication and cooperation across the board as a partner on our way to modernization, and to play a constructive role in maintaining regional peace and stability.

**What do you think would be the prospect of Ethiopia as a suitable destination of Chinese investment? Could you tell us your expectation for the economic and social cooperation of the two countries?**

Ethiopia, as the second largest African country in terms of population, is home to hard-working and diligent people. With vast fertile land, abundant natural resources and beautiful scenery, the country has a good foundation for economic development. Having said that, there is still great potential to be tapped in trade, investment, infrastructure and other cooperation fields.

We should seize the opportunity presented by the FOCAC Summit to expand practical cooperation between the two countries. At the Opening Ceremony of the FOCAC Beijing Summit, President Xi Jinping announced that the overall characterization of China-Africa relations has been elevated to an all-weather China-Africa community with a shared future for the new era. He proposed the Partnership Action for Trade Prosperity: China will voluntarily and unilaterally open its market wider. We have decided to give all least developed countries (LDCs) having diplomatic relations with China, including 33 countries in Africa, zero-tariff treatment for 100 percent tariff lines. This has made China the first major developing country and the first major economy to take such a step. It will help turn China's big market into Africa's big opportunity. China will expand market access for African agricultural products, deepen cooperation with Africa in e-commerce and other areas, and launch a "China-Africa quality enhancement program." We are prepared to enter into framework agreements on economic partnership for shared development with African countries to provide long-term, stable and predictable institutional guarantee for trade and investment between



**Small coffee beans have traveled across oceans, becoming an important bond of friendship between China and Ethiopia**

the two sides.

All these dovetail well with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali's highlight on our bilateral cooperation in the fields of economy, trade, investment, industry, agriculture, sci-tech innovation, digital economy, security, law enforcement and tourism. The important consensus reached by Chinese and Ethiopian leaders draws a blueprint for our future practical cooperation. Let me elaborate on the following highlights:

In industrial modernization, China helps Ethiopia by building industrial parks, investing in different industries and offering conducive experience. During my travel to Sidama, I visited JOJO Flavored Milk invested by Chinese and saw in person how the staff, including local employees, produce the beverage. JOJO means not only one of the most popular beverages in Ethiopia, but also how China helps Ethiopia in a certain sector of industry.

*Continued to page 13*



# Editorial

## Ankara Declaration: A significant step towards regional stability, development

The recent signing of the Ankara Declaration between Ethiopia and Somalia has captured the attention and commendation of nations and international organizations alike. This groundbreaking agreement, finalized on December 11, 2024, under the auspices of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of the Republic of Türkiye, represents a pivotal step forward for stability and development across the Horn of Africa.

The Declaration, endorsed by Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, underscores the sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of both nations while advancing a framework for collaboration on shared interests. It also holds the promise of addressing long-standing challenges that have hindered regional progress, marking a significant shift toward mutual trust and cooperation.

The Ankara Declaration has been welcomed by key international stakeholders, including the United Nations, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Qatar, the UAE, and the European Union (EU). Statements from these nations and institutions highlight the importance of the agreement in fostering mutual respect, dialogue, and cooperation. For instance, the U.S. Department of State emphasized the need for ongoing dialogue and cooperation, particularly in combating al-Shabaab and advancing economic ties. Similarly, the EU underscored its commitment to supporting the unity and sovereignty of Ethiopia and Somalia while recognizing Türkiye's instrumental role in brokering the agreement.

Among the many critical aspects of the agreement, the United States has expressed hope for technical negotiations that would enable Ethiopia to secure reliable and sustainable access to the sea. Such an outcome would be a game-changer for Ethiopia, offering the landlocked nation a pathway to enhance trade and economic growth while respecting Somalia's territorial integrity. This balanced approach to addressing contentious issues demonstrates the maturity and pragmatism of the negotiations.

Security cooperation is another cornerstone of the Ankara Declaration. The fight against al-Shabaab, a mutual threat to both nations and the broader region, requires concerted efforts. Enhanced collaboration on intelligence sharing, coordinated military actions, and community-focused counter-extremism initiatives can significantly weaken the group's influence and create a more secure environment for citizens.

The successful mediation by Türkiye highlights the importance of neutral, committed facilitators in resolving regional disputes. The Declaration stands as a testament to the power of diplomacy, providing a blueprint for conflict resolution in the Horn of Africa and beyond. The involvement of IGAD, the African Union Commission (AUC), and the EU further demonstrates the value of multilateral engagement in fostering sustainable peace and development.

While the Declaration has laid a strong foundation, its success will depend on the sustained commitment of Ethiopia and Somalia to its principles. Implementing the agreement's provisions—whether related to economic integration, territorial integrity, or security—requires vigilance, goodwill, and constructive engagement.

The international community's readiness to support Ethiopia and Somalia in this endeavor is evident. As noted by the EU, ongoing mediation efforts and technical support will be crucial in translating the Declaration's promises into tangible outcomes. This collaborative approach ensures that the vision of a stable, prosperous Horn of Africa becomes a shared reality.

The Declaration is more than just an agreement—it is a symbol of hope and a catalyst for change. By reaffirming their commitment to sovereignty, unity, and mutual interests, Ethiopia and Somalia have set a precedent for addressing regional challenges through dialogue and cooperation. As the world watches, this historic accord could very well be the turning point for a region long marked by adversity, steering it toward a future of peace, stability, and shared prosperity.

# Opinion

## Ethiopia's ongoing efforts in reintegrating ex-combatants

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

It becomes apparent that since the signing of the Pretoria peace agreement between the federal government of Ethiopia and the Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front (TPLF), the northern part of the country has set in motion moving forward in the right direction.

The pact signed between the two parties under the auspices of the African Union (AU) has set in motion yielding fruits. Though some groups have made many efforts to belittle the role of the continental bloc for various lame reasons, Ethiopia, in the fullness of time, has triumphed over them and become the talk of the wider international community.

Some worrywarts time and again had been pulling out all the stops to smudge the encouraging moves of the cessation of hostilities agreement turning their back on the existing reality on the ground. However, the federal government has proven them wrong sticking to successfully implementing the Pretoria Agreement.

In the present climate, the meaningful participation of the federal government and other significant participants has been paving the way for the achievement of the national demobilization and rehabilitation program.

As the federal government of Ethiopia and other stakeholders are in the forefront in backing the ongoing endeavors to help ex-combatants lead a meaningful life, the pursued objective is being attained ensuring peace as well as tranquilly in the northern part of the country.

As the demobilization and rehabilitation undertakings require the active participation of the wider international community, they should stand by the side of the federal government at the earliest possible juncture.

As things stand now, the government has sustained successfully working to disarm the ex-combatants in close collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders and transform the lives of ex-combatants.

As demobilization and reintegration are important moves for ensuring lasting peace and tranquility in the length and breadth of the country, all pertinent bodies have been partaking in the process. It is true that the effectuation of the demobilization and reintegration process completely depends on the unwavering stance of the federal government of Ethiopia, global bodies, competing parties, and other sectors of society.

As the realization of the program fully needs the commitment of all of them, they should join hands in less than no time. Some 640 former combatants in the Tigray region have concluded training and reintegrated into the society, according to the National Rehabilitation Commission (NRC), ENA reported.

Demobilization Director at the National Rehabilitation Commission, Lieutenant colonel Gosaye Tilahun said that some

640 combatants from the training centers of Mekelle and Idaga Hamus have now reintegrated into the society. The remaining of the 1,360 total demobilized trainees will reintegrate into the society next, he added.

“To date, the total numbers of ex-combatants who went through the process and reintegrated into the society are 640. They have gone through rehabilitation training and reintegrated to the society.

This is what we have done so far while 1,360 former combatants are still going through the process. We will continue reintegrating them into the society in the coming days starting from tomorrow,” he explained.

As the government has been effectively implementing the Pretoria Peace Agreement, the war-affected areas in the northern part of the country have kicked off breathing a sigh of relief and leading a meaningful life. More to the point, Ethiopia has been signifying in black and white its unwavering endeavors to get to the bottom of the conflict through round table discussion.

As peace is the foundation for the whole kit and caboodle under the sun, pertinent bodies should keep expediting the implementation of the Pretoria peace agreement.

It is important to make it clear that the federal government in a number of instances has demonstrated its unflinching stance to comply with the rules and regulations of the continental bloc.

On the heels of the positive strides unfolding in the northern part of the country, humanitarian assistance and the restoration of basic services in conflict-affected areas have begun sowing the seeds of peace in the left, right, and center of the northern part of the country.

It is obvious that subsequent to the signing of the Peace Accord, the federal government has been putting in place the pact. In actual fact, Ethiopia's peace accord has contributed a noteworthy share to turning the adage African solutions to African problems into reality in the shortest possible juncture.

Former militants from the Tigray region have expressed optimism that rehabilitation training will enable them to contribute to the country's development and peace efforts following the endeavors to reintegrate them into society, according to information obtained from a local media.

National Rehabilitation Commission (NRC) announced on 21st November 2024 that disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) program for 75,000 former combatants in Tigray Region officially began in the presence of senior officials from the Federal Government of Ethiopia, the Tigray Regional Interim Administration, and representatives from international organizations.

President of Interim Regional Administration, Getachew Reda hailed the ongoing efforts to rehabilitate 75,000 former militants in Tigray Region for the first phase alone as a major breakthrough.

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



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### 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



## Art & Culture

# The State of Reading Culture in Africa, The Way forward

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

According to one definition, “Reading culture is an environment where reading is celebrated, appreciated and respected. Reading is the bedrock of the curriculum and is paramount to a child’s personal, social, and academic success, as well as their general wellbeing.” The level of reading culture varies from country to country. For analytical purposes, we can categorize the reading culture of countries according to or along many variables.

Africa is ranking as a continent where the reading culture of the people is at a very low level. While reading books, newspapers and magazines is a daily exercise without which life loses much of its meaning in the developed world, most Africans do not enjoy this privilege for many reasons. There are many hurdles against the development of the culture of reading in Africa. These barriers vary from place to place or from one country to the other. Although a few countries have attained a tolerable level of reading culture, most of them are still at a very low level of growth in literacy or the culture of reading.

The fact that many African countries have no developed their own written scripts is sometimes mentioned as one of the hurdles in the retardation of the reading culture across the continent. Under colonialism, most African countries were forced to use the metropolitan language as their national languages and this has constrained the growth of local languages. Colonial languages were used for administrative and political purposes rather than as tools of communication among the indigenous populations. As a result of these people were forced to use oral communication while a few of them who were educated in the languages of colonialism were privileged to read and write in these languages.

According to one theory, language growth and develops when it used in day to day communication as both oral and written language. This process should come naturally and should not be forced or enforced. Colonial language policies in many former African colonies forced the indigenous populations to speak their languages to the detriment of their own. In the long run, this was believed to have led to low levels of literacy and the absence of a reading culture in many of not most African countries. The opportunity to use local languages widely and promote literacy was created long after the colonial powers left the continent.

In many African countries, the level of literacy and reading culture is at a very low level. Although Africa has produced many writers and educated people the average African could not benefit from their knowledge due the continuation of the old colonial language policy in a new guise. As a result of this, most writers in Africa preferred to write in the European



languages and neglect their native language.

The reason behind this trend was, and still is, the low level of literacy in Africa, and the consequent low level of reading culture has made it difficult for the writers to sell their books within the continent. As a consequence of this, the book market in the continent is underdeveloped and incapable of withstanding the stiff competition from European publishers and booksellers that are now controlling the global book markets.

Among the variety factors that contribute to the prevalence of poor reading culture in Africa is the state of overall poverty that is discouraging the pursuit of culture in general. People have to enjoy the basic necessities of life before they indulge in cultural activities that may sound luxuries under the now prevailing economic condition in most African countries. Poverty is therefore is a major factor that hinders reading habits in Africa. “Some of the other factors that hinder the growth of reading habit in Africa are, teaching methods, distractions like the use of mobile phones, poorly stocked libraries, insufficient physical infrastructures, unreliable electricity and excessive family responsibilities, overwhelming academic workloads and poor internet connectivity.”

The impacts of these constraints on society are substantial. “A lack of reading culture can have a negative impact on society, especially the youth. It can lead to anti-social behavior, low moral standards, and poor grammar. It can also negatively affect the development of writing skills and authorship.”

Additional factors that impact the reading

culture in Africa are, “lack of materials, poor preparation of teachers, lack of interest, poor libraries or none at all, home background and lack of adult readers as models.”

In many African countries the growth of the reading culture is considered an important game changer. According to a recent research on reading culture, “Aggressively growing a sustainable reading culture in Africa has long-term advantages. There is an untapped market for reading for leisure and thus, an thus growing the reading culture in the long run will result in increased demand for books in the medium to long term. This demand directly and positively impacts the growth of the local publishing industry. Second, reading donates ideas about one’s identity, image, culture. Therefore by encouraging wide reading the narrative and perspective through which future generations perceive Africa and write about it will be increasingly positive.”

The situation is no different in Ethiopia. Ethiopia now ranks among African countries with low level of growth in the reading culture. Ethiopia now ranks among the lowest in adult literacy development in the world. We have now more than 100 million people according to official statistics but how many of them are illiterate is something we rarely ask or hear because deep down we know it is a shame to be unable to make at least the majority of the people literate instead of bragging about the number of universities we have built for spreading an educational system which is considered by many scholars as dysfunctional.

The situation has increasingly become difficult. How can you teach million of

hungry people how to read and write when their immediate need becomes to get food and save their lives? How can you convince illiterate people to learn new skills to better change their lives when hundreds of thousands of degree holding youth are roaming the streets of big town in search of jobs? How can you ask the new generation of youngsters to read books while their biggest dreams has become to own a kindle a smart phone or a tablet? These are the million dollar questions for which no one seems to have an answer at least for now. What we know for sure is that reading culture is in free fall.

There have been many literacy campaigns or programs in Ethiopia in the past. The literacy programs started as a kind of “reading and writing for their own sake”. Reading and writing were rightly conceived as tools of knowledge and enlightenment on the assumption that “an illiterate population could not help build an informed or democratic society.

Then came the concept of “functional literacy” and replaced the notion of reading and writing for their own sakes. As you cannot practice art for art’s sake, there was no rationale in learning the alphabets simply for the sake of reading. Functional literacy supposed that literacy should be functional, that is to say, it has to fulfill some practical purpose as it should be directly relevant to the careers or productive lives of the practitioners. To give you a simple example, under functional literacy, farmers are supposed to read materials related to farming and try to improve their farming techniques and productivity. This project too was quickly abandoned as there was no time, resources or appetite to carry it through.



# Law & Politics

## The internationally praised 'Ankara Declaration'

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

Ethiopia and Somalia have reached a declaration following Turkish-mediated negotiations in Ankara, marking a breakthrough to resolve misunderstandings between the two nations.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan hosted the talks between Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud.

Following the conclusion of the declaration, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud issued a joint statement. Both leaders emphasized cooperation and dialogue between the two countries.

According to them, both parties committed to "resolutely move forward in cooperation towards common prosperity" while ensuring Ethiopia's access to the sea.

Following this breakthrough, the reactions from all directions were positive and encouraging for the two countries to work more closely rather than engage in hostile statements. Ethiopia was patiently waiting for such a development because the Ethiopian government has always reiterated its cooperation stance in front of this issue arguing that it had to seek access to the sea through peaceful and diplomatic means and not engage in any form of force.

Thus President Teye Ateke-Selassie was among the first to express his satisfaction about the historical agreement. He said the Ankara Declaration signed between Ethiopia and Somalia in Türkiye is the right step in forging stronger regional cooperation between the peoples of Ethiopia and Somalia and the greater Horn of Africa and beyond.

President Teye said in his social media post that the Ankara Declaration is the right step in forging stronger regional cooperation between the peoples of Ethiopia and Somalia, the greater Horn of Africa, and beyond.

After the signing of the accord, Prime Minister Abiy and President Hassen Sheik Mahmoud emphasized cooperation and dialogue between the two countries.

According to them, both parties committed to "resolutely move forward in cooperation towards common prosperity" while ensuring Ethiopia's access to the sea.

In his statement, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed appreciated the government of Türkiye for its commitment to peace efforts in the Horn of Africa.

The premier said President Erdogan has taken the initiative to facilitate a series of discussions at the foreign minister level between the fraternal nations of Ethiopia and Somalia over the past few months.

Furthermore, Premier Abiy indicated these efforts have been committed in the meeting at the level of the leaders with a commitment to address misunderstandings that had transpired over the past year. He said "As neighbors, Ethiopia and Somalia have endured relations for centuries. We are not only neighbors but brothers and sisters

whose fates have been bound by blood.

Not only do Ethiopians in Somalis share a common history, language, and culture, but we are also held together with the blood sacrifice that has been paid by thousands of Ethiopian soldiers in defense of the security of the state of Somalia from terrorist forces.

Abiy expressed his gratitude for the efforts of many to facilitate discussions over the past year. He noted "Ours was never the case fit for third party intervention. Rather, it was meant to be a family dialogue,"

According to the premier over the past six years, Ethiopia has asserted its commitment to regional integration, not only in words, but in tangible needs.

He also expressed his strong belief, adding that as does his government, that the growth instability of the Horn of Africa regions is promised mutual development, peace, and growth is a shared dividend.

"Allow me to assert here again, that Ethiopia's aspiration to a secure and reliable access to the sea is a peaceful venture, and one that would benefit all our neighbors," Abiy reaffirmed.

He further stated with the growing youth population the demand for Ethiopia's economy warrants such access, enabling this economic dynamism and growth is then a positive undertaking with undeniable positive spillover effects to the wider horn region.

Hence, this venture must be met in the spirit of cooperation and not suspicion. He said he believed that the constructive discussions conducted between the two leaders would push us into a new year with cooperation, friendship, and the willingness to work together instead of against each other. Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud on his part pledged to strengthen mutual relations and cooperation in all aspects. He also recognized the sacrifices of Ethiopian troops in Somalia and safeguarding his country from terrorist attacks.

He said, "As we said here, we have recognized that the sacrifices that Ethiopian forces made in Somalia within the African Union peacekeeping missions, many, many years in the past, that shows how much our people are interlinking, and we will keep continuing on that besides that, Ethiopia and Somalia have so many commonalities than differences.

The President also pledged to do everything that moves forward and peacefully benefits both people. He said, "Our region needs our cooperation. The Horn of Africa is a very fertile, very volatile region, which needs both Ethiopia and Somalia to work together to provide a mutual benefit for both our countries, our people, and the people of the region as well."

In the wake of this historical agreement, the United Nations, the United States, the UK, Germany, Qatar, UAE, and other countries have welcomed the December 11 Declaration between Ethiopia and Somalia reaffirming each country's sovereignty, unity, independence, and territorial integrity and advancing cooperation on shared interests.

The "Ankara Declaration" was signed

by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud under the auspices of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Türkiye. The countries, in their respective statements, have acknowledged the role of Türkiye in facilitating the negotiations.

The United States welcomes the December 11 Ankara Declaration between Ethiopia and Somalia reaffirming each country's sovereignty, unity, independence, and territorial integrity.

"We look forward to technical negotiations to permit Ethiopia to enjoy reliable, secure, and sustainable access to the sea for mutual economic benefit while respecting Somalia's territorial integrity," says a statement from the US Department of State.

"Ongoing dialogue and engagement are essential for a stable and prosperous future for Ethiopia and Somalia. The statement adds the US Department of State revealed that America encouraged the agreement between the two countries that will advance cooperation on shared interests. The US also appreciates the leadership of Türkiye in facilitating this Declaration.

It added ongoing dialogue and engagement are essential for a stable and prosperous future for Ethiopia and Somalia.

"We encourage Ethiopia and Somalia to intensify their cooperation on mutual security interests, particularly the fight against al-Shabaab, and look forward to continuing our close bilateral cooperation with both nations" the statement underscored.

Similarly, the United Kingdom (UK) has welcomed the agreement reached between Ethiopia and Somalia, reaffirming their commitment to one another's sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity.

In its statement, the UK has affirmed support in all steps to promote cooperation, stability, development, and shared prosperity in the Horn of Africa.

"We welcome Türkiye's mediation and the participation from all sides which has led to this agreement," the statement noted.

The UK, as a long-standing partner in the region, has also pledged to continue to work closely with Ethiopia and Somalia, including Somaliland, in the pursuit of these objectives.

The African Union as well as among those bodies that hailed the agreement with interest always wants problems among fellow members of the continental body should always be settled peacefully in a brotherly manner. Africa has had enough of conflicts and it is high time that it focuses on how to develop the countries and improve the lives of their populations.

Hence, the African Union Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat, the EU, and IGAD have all individually expressed their satisfaction about this watershed event and thanked with appreciation the role of all those who facilitated the Ankara Declaration signed between Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, President of Somalia.

In his statement, the Chairperson of the

Commission welcomed this important act of high responsibility on the part of the leaders of Somalia and Ethiopia.

He strongly encouraged them to implement, without delay, the relevant measures adopted.

The Chairperson further congratulated President Tayyip Erdogan for his support to the two parties in their shared commitment to resolve their differences through consultation and dialogue, in the best interests of their countries and peoples.

In another development, the European Union also welcomed the declaration. In a statement issued Thursday, the EU said this agreement reflects the importance of mutual respect and dialogue in de-escalating tensions in the Horn of Africa.

In its official statement communicated via its website, the European Union (EU) welcomed the declaration between the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Federal Republic of Somalia.

In that regard, the Diplomatic Service of the European Union noted that this agreement reflects the importance of mutual respect and dialogue in de-escalating misunderstandings in the Horn of Africa. In its statement, the European Union said it reiterates its support for the unity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of both countries under principles enshrined in international law.

The EU also recognized the role played by the Republic of Türkiye in achieving this agreement and said it stands ready to support further efforts by the parties involved, continuing our involvement in mediation efforts.

Similarly, IGAD has welcomed the peace deal with the Executive Secretary Workneh Gebeyehu having commended the landmark Ankara Agreement reached between the two East African nations.

In its official statement, IGAD underscored that this significant accord marks a substantial step towards strengthening the long-standing social fabric between the two sisterly nations and demonstrates a commitment to resolving bilateral issues amicably. Workneh praised the leaders of both countries for their constructive engagement and spirit of cooperation.

He further emphasized the importance of such diplomatic efforts in addressing shared challenges and fostering stability and prosperity in the Horn of Africa.

Furthermore, Workneh expressed his gratitude to the President of the Republic of Türkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, for his instrumental role in hosting and facilitating the discussions.

He acknowledged President Erdoğan's dedication to diplomacy and regional collaboration as a crucial factor in realizing this important milestone.

He added that IGAD remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting its Member States in their pursuit of sustainable solutions through dialogue, partnership, and cooperation.

Ethiopia expects brighter days in its relations with all neighboring countries as it is one of the pillars of its diplomacy.



# Opinion

## Ethiopia and Somalia's path to stability

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

The recent landmark agreement between Ethiopia and Somalia, brokered by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, marks a significant diplomatic breakthrough in a region historically characterized by conflict and discord. After a year of heightened tensions, this accord not only addresses Ethiopia's pressing need for access to the sea but also upholds Somalia's sovereignty. Described by Erdogan as a New Chapter of Collaboration this pivotal moment serves as a beacon of hope, signaling the potential for lasting peace and cooperation amidst the complexities of the Horn of Africa.

The successful negotiations in Ankara indicate a willingness on both sides to prioritize dialogue over discord. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's commitment to transforming a year of tensions into partnership is commendable, and President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's readiness to collaborate is equally encouraging.

Turkey's involvement as a mediator exemplifies the potential for external actors to facilitate dialogue. Erdogan's efforts underscore the importance of constructive engagement rather than turning the region into a battleground. As nations grapple with their differences, it is vital to remember that cooperation is far more beneficial than conflict.

To countries in the Horn of Africa contemplating escalation, the message is clear: the path to prosperity lies in partnership and mutual understanding. The agreement between Ethiopia and Somalia serves as a reminder that even deeply rooted disputes can be resolved through diplomacy. As we look to the future, the international community must continue to support such initiatives, reinforcing the notion that dialogue, rather than warfare, is the key to stability.

As 2024 approaches, this agreement stands as a testament to the power of diplomacy and the importance of international mediation. It is a call to action for all stakeholders in the region to embrace collaboration and work towards a more peaceful and prosperous Horn of Africa. Let us hope that this historic agreement leads to enduring partnerships and a brighter future for all.

The landmark agreement between Ethiopia and Somalia, brokered by Turkey, carries significant long-term implications for regional stability in the Horn of Africa. Of the number of return it is possible to mention some of them. It could for sure strengthen diplomatic relations among the countries of the region. The resolution of the diplomatic rift signifies a shift towards enhanced cooperation between Ethiopia and Somalia. This newfound partnership could serve as a model for resolving other regional disputes, fostering a culture of dialogue and

diplomacy rather than conflict.

Moreover, with Ethiopia gaining access to the sea, there may be increased economic collaboration between the two nations. Improved trade routes and logistical frameworks could promote economic growth, benefitting both countries and potentially leading to a more integrated regional economy.

It also paves the way for reduction of ethnic and political tensions in the region because it unites the people in the two countries as they share many similarities. The agreement can help mitigate underlying ethnic and political tensions, particularly regarding the contentious issue of Somaliland. By addressing these grievances through negotiation rather than military means, there is potential for more stable governance structures and reduced violence in both countries.

The agreement could pave the way for enhanced security collaboration against shared threats, such as terrorism and piracy. A united front could bolster efforts to combat groups like Al-Shabaab, contributing to a more secure regional environment.

Turkey's successful mediation highlights the growing influence of external powers in the Horn of Africa. As countries like Turkey engage more deeply, their role in fostering stability may reshape regional dynamics, prompting other international actors to participate in peace-building efforts.

The agreement may inspire similar initiatives among other neighboring countries, leading to the formation of new alliances or partnerships focused on collective security and economic development. This could contribute to a more stable and cooperative regional framework.

While the agreement is a positive step, underlying challenges remain. Historical grievances, economic disparities, and external influences could threaten the long-term sustainability of this peace. Continued commitment from both nations and support from the international community will be crucial in addressing these challenges.

Despite various challenges surrounding Ethiopia's genuine desire for access to the sea, the agreement between Ethiopia and Somalia offers significant potential for improving regional stability in the Horn of Africa. By fostering diplomatic relations, promoting economic integration, and encouraging security cooperation, this accord could pave the way for a more peaceful and prosperous future. However, ongoing efforts and vigilance will be essential to navigate the region's complexities and ensure that this landmark achievement results in enduring peace.

Following the accord President Teye Atske-Selassie highlighted the significant breakthrough achieved through Turkish-mediated negotiations in Ankara, which resolved misunderstandings between

**The successful negotiations in Ankara indicate a willingness on both sides to prioritize dialogue over discord. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's commitment to transforming a year of tensions into partnership is commendable, and President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's readiness to collaborate is equally encouraging.**

on December 11, 2024. He commended the leaders for their responsible actions and urged them to implement the agreed measures promptly. Mahamat also congratulated President Erdogan for facilitating dialogue and supporting the two nations in their commitment to resolving differences for the betterment of their peoples.

The European Union expressed its support for the declaration, acknowledging its role in de-escalating tensions and underscoring the importance of mutual respect and dialogue. The EU reiterated its commitment to the unity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of both countries, recognizing Türkiye's vital role in achieving this agreement while offering continued support for future mediation efforts.

The United States welcomed the Ankara Declaration, reaffirming each country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The U.S. Department of State encouraged the agreement, which aims to enhance cooperation on shared interests, and lauded Türkiye's leadership in facilitating the dialogue. The statement stressed the importance of ongoing dialogue and cooperation, particularly in addressing mutual security concerns, such as the fight against al-Shabaab.

The United Kingdom also welcomed the agreement, reaffirming its commitment to the sovereignty and unity of both nations. The UK expressed support for efforts promoting cooperation, stability, and development in the Horn of Africa, acknowledging Türkiye's mediation as pivotal in the negotiations.

These endorsements from international stakeholders highlight the Horn of Africa's growing significance to the global community. As Ethiopia continues its historical partnership with Somalia, it is essential to foster peace and cooperation, developing sustainable systems for mutual benefit. Now is the time to cultivate this accord for the common good, ensuring it leads to lasting stability in the region.

The agreement between Ethiopia and Somalia stands as a testament to the power of diplomacy and the importance of international mediation. As the Horn of Africa faces a complex landscape, it is crucial for regional actors to embrace collaboration and work towards a more peaceful future.

Ethiopia, with its long-standing ties to Somalia, must continue championing peace and cooperation, ensuring sustainable development for the benefit of both nations. It is time to cultivate this accord for the common good and strive for enduring partnerships in the region.

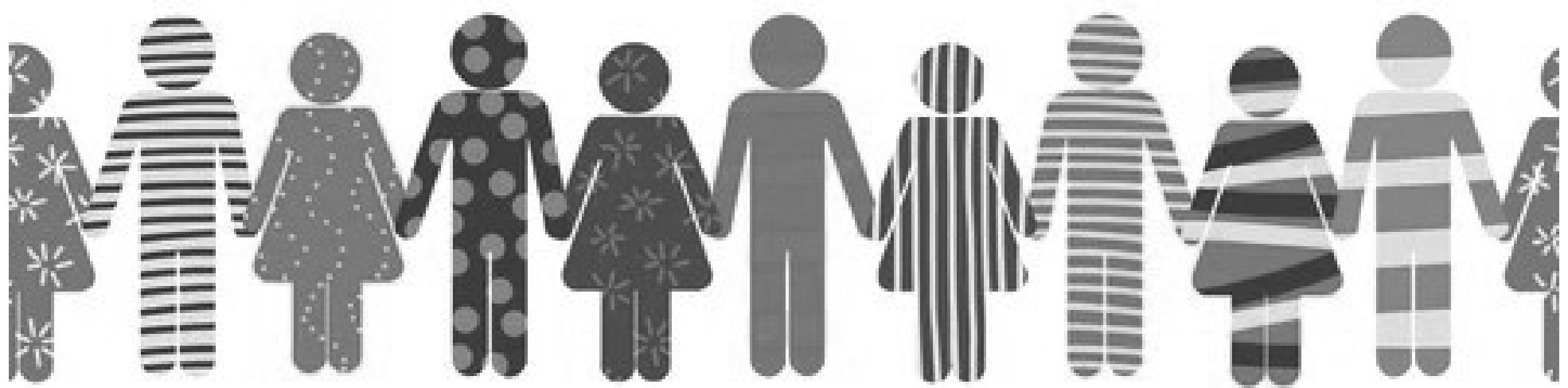
Ethiopia and Somalia. In a social media post, he emphasized that the Ankara Declaration represents a crucial step towards fostering stronger regional cooperation among the peoples of Ethiopia and Somalia, extending its benefits to the greater Horn of Africa and beyond.

The African Union Commission Chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat, on his part has also welcomed the communiqué signed by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud

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



# Society



## Women's participation in community security, social cohesion

BY MENGESHA AMARE

It is well comprehended that the nature of women's social ties is of paramount importance in boosting high self-disclosure, intimacy and fraternity, and communal life. Yes, social support and association is fundamental to well-being which may make social support especially important and beneficial for women, girls, and children. Not only do women seek out social support more often than men but they are also more skilled at providing responsive social support to others and are more sensitive to the absence of strong social ties in general.

Cognizant of this fact, *The Ethiopia Herald* approached Martha Gobena, a sociologist who graduated from Addis Ababa University, to seek a professional point of view along this line.

She said, "Women are definitely more effective at providing social support, further augmenting a number of societal benefits as they have played pivotal roles in resolving conflicts and promoting peace in the country though there are gaps in due course of providing them with the place they deserve."

According to Martha, developing awareness, understanding and shared values contributes more to community cohesion and equipping people to address areas of difference is significantly useful in coming up with a highly assimilated society.

As to her, strong, combined, and positive relationships can result when people move beyond contact and consensus to resolve conflicts and address social injustice. A fairer distribution of resources, capacity, and power is also needed to enable women and faith communities, particularly those from minority backgrounds, to fulfill their potential contributions. A climate of trust can be created through interaction that leads to the development of shared values arising from the resolution of real issues. Such relationships are needed between individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds as well as between social groups and statutory authorities, including the government.

"To reach a new equilibrium in social relations, deeper connections are needed within and between communities, based on the understanding that women and members of faith groups are not only able to contribute to social cohesion but also have the right to expect equity in their relationships and equal

citizenship," she opined.

It is well recognized that women can play a significant role in social cohesion by communicating and addressing queries as they are close to the posterity, who can be potential segments of the society in taking over the nation with its future.

Martha further elucidated that women can improve their communication skills using a variety of media outlets to express themselves, sharing ideas, and they can share their ideas, opinions, and experiences with a new audience, learning media skills as well as they can learn how media can be a tool for social cohesion, working in social causes if they are given ample opportunity in that regard. Because they are natural leaders in social work practice using their soft skills like empathy, resilience, and commitment, women have to be given the greatest place in social cohesion she said adding that they can work for invaluable causes such as education, gender equality, healthcare, and community development, too.

Martha also stated that social cohesion is when people feel like they are part of a community, participate in decision-making, and can be active citizens. It also involves the development of public policies and solidarity mechanisms between individuals, groups, territories, and generations.

According to Martha, some key components of social cohesion that have been run by women include—solidarity, trust, identity and belonging, cooperation, respect for diversity, social networks, citizen participation, and social justice.

"Women have been at the forefront of peace negotiations, advocating for their communities and pushing for diverse perspectives in decision-making. As far as education is concerned, women are often described as having qualities that support and promote peace, such as educating the next generation and passing on important values," she added.

Martha said why it is repeatedly said that women play a decisive role in cementing social glue and women have been playing a role in social cohesion by increasing their communication skills, learning professional presentation skills, and conveying their ideas to a new audience.

"It is important to work for integrating women into policy and decision-making as they can be integrated into policy and decision-

making in the security sector. However, women and girls are disproportionately impacted by gendered notions like gender-based violence, which are often associated with masculinity. Such a damaging tradition needs to be done away with," she remarked.

Women have indeed come to the forefront of peace negotiations, advocating for their communities and pushing for the inclusion of diverse perspectives in decision-making processes.

True, she said, women are often described as having qualities that support and promote peace, such as educating the next generation and passing on important values. Understood based on these attributes, social cohesion must necessarily include gender equality. Inequality between women and men cuts across societies and is manifested in issues such as the feminization of poverty, gender-based violence, lower political participation by women, employment and wage inequality, female illiteracy, and the difficulty women have gaining access to full sexual and reproductive health. As gender inequality is not the product of specific situations but rather is rooted in the social structure itself and in the traditional division of labor and spaces between women and men.

True, women carry the responsibility to nurture their families and teach the next generation of children she said adding that women have shown remarkable resilience and leadership in conflict situations, working tirelessly to bring about peace and stability, even in the face of tremendous adversity. Women in Ethiopia amid challenges are now being given ample opportunities to come to the frontline in due course of nurturing the posterity, taking care of family, and working to bring about a society that is fond of ensuring community security and other related aspects. In so doing, society can be pulled towards a harmonious way of living as the inclusion of diverse perspectives in decision-making processes would be quite fruitful.

She said, "If handled well, women have played pivotal roles in resolving conflicts and promoting peace, ensuring security and instilling tranquility among the society. Obviously, women's role in promoting social cohesion, peace, and conflict resolution is prettily critical everywhere. Their leadership, resilience, and dedication have significantly contributed to promoting peaceful coexistence, harmonious ways of living, and

resolving conflicts. The government, civil society organizations, the public at large, and the international community should invest in promoting women's leadership and participation in conflict resolution and peace-building efforts. Only then can sustainable peace and development be achieved."

Unequivocally, one of the key benefits of human bonds is social support, or the ability to turn to others during positive and negative life events; and receive some form of aid or supportive response. Indeed, humans invest quite heavily into building strong friendships with non-kin, with the hope that should they fall upon bad times or encounter conflict in the future, they will still have someone invested enough in their welfare to provide support. The relationship between social support and well-being is a robust one. Social integration is generally associated with positive well-being outcomes, and in times of stress, social support can serve as a buffer against adverse physical and psychological outcomes. Social support similarly promotes well-being in the face of positive events when women are given a chance to bring about real change, Martha opined.

She further stated that some people may be unwilling to provide support due to low intimacy, lack of reciprocity norms, or the person in need not demonstrating enough active coping mechanisms or support seeking. People also intentionally seek out different relationships for different types of support.

Yes, she said a key value of communal society is preserving harmony and putting others' needs above self-interest. Instead, the type of support considered to be most effective may vary, with those from harmonious cultures benefiting from instrumental, implicit, and unsolicited support, and those from individualist cultures benefiting from emotional, explicit, and solicited support, whereas emotional expression and self-disclosure leading to well-being thereby coming up with direct reliance on social support in the face problems.

In sum, women and social integrity are linked in a number of ways such as well-designed social protection systems as decisive steps that help reduce risks for women and girls via providing access to adequate protections, promoting shared responsibility for care, and booming social cohesion in all circumstances.





# Coffee and tea are bringing...

Continued from page 4

Cases can also be found in agricultural modernization: Chinese agricultural experts come to Ethiopia for 15 consecutive years with advanced expertise. China expands import of coffee, sesame and other agricultural products from Ethiopia. Chinese companies are exploring more possible export goods such as fertilizers to cater to the needs of Ethiopia's agricultural development. China, with similar experience to Ethiopia in agricultural development, is the best partner on our way to agricultural modernization.

Infrastructure is another key area for our bilateral cooperation. Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway and Addis Light Rail are two good examples. After Chinese companies handed over the projects, we have still been helping Ethiopia within our capacity and joining hands to maintain their sustainable operation and make them deliver more benefits to the locals. Going forward, Chinese companies are tentatively conducting feasibility research on getting involved in the construction of the new airport in Bishoftu, another mega project proposed by the Ethiopian Government.

Last but not least, I would like to highlight China and Ethiopia's frequent people-to-people exchanges and cultural communication, since late Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai's visit to Ethiopia in 1964. This reflects vividly the Chinese saying "amity between the people holds the key to sound state-to-state relations". Let me remind you of a heroic story about a cardiovascular expert Mei Gengnian, head of China's first medical team to Ethiopia in 1974. He, who treated over 300 patients and performed 7 operations on his busiest day, sacrificed his life in Jimma, leaving medical legacy for Ethiopia. A road is named after him in the city. Until today, China has sent 25 batches of medical teams to Ethiopia.

By now, Ethiopia takes most opportunities from China in terms of scholarship and short-term training programs. A Chinese university sets up Amharic language major and Ethiopia has two Confucius Institutes for Chinese learning. Luban Workshop and China-Africa-UNIDO Center of Excellence contribute greatly to capacity building. Just to name a few. Education fosters talents for future economic development. Ethiopia, as one of the youngest countries, can better leverage the advantage with China's selfless assistance in this regard.

As two ancient civilizations, China and Ethiopia have every reason to promote cultural communication. The First China-Ethiopia Film and TV Festival will fall on December 20 to 23, 2024. A grand celebration on Chinese Spring Festival will be held on January 12, 2025 at Friendship Square in Addis. All our Ethiopian friends are most welcome to participate and experience Chinese cultures. We believe such cultural activities will gain greater popularity in Ethiopia. Our Embassy is



**C**hina is willing to work with all BRICS countries including Ethiopia to open a new horizon in the high-quality development of greater BRICS cooperation

also working relentlessly to bring Ethiopian culture to China for cultural communication and development.

**How strong is BRICS to counter any external pressure from different corners in terms of trade and relations?**

Ethiopia has become an important member in BRICS family and is playing an important role. China is willing to work with all BRICS countries including Ethiopia to open a new horizon in the high-quality development of greater BRICS cooperation, and join hands with Global South countries in building a community with a shared future for mankind.

China is committed to non-interference in internal affairs of other countries. Meanwhile, China stands ready to play a constructive role in regional peace and stability based on respect for willingness and needs of other countries. Ethiopia has a fine tradition of independent diplomacy since it is the only African country that hasn't been colonized. As developing countries, both China and Ethiopia are jointly opposed to external interference, especially in the world today undergoing major changes unseen in a century.

**What do you make of the last edition of Sino Africa forum where the former pledged one billion USD for the latter, what will be the next step?**

At the Opening Ceremony of the FOCAC Beijing Summit, President Xi proposed 10 partnership actions. To implement the partnership actions, the Chinese Government will provide RMB360 billion Yuan of financial support through the next three years. This breaks down into RMB210

billion Yuan of credit line, RMB80 billion Yuan of assistance in various forms, and at least RMB70 billion Yuan of investment in Africa by Chinese companies.

President Xi, when meeting with Prime Minister Abiy during the Summit, highlighted that China supports Ethiopia in leveraging its advantages as a regional transportation hub, promoting the interconnected development of infrastructure and industries, and building a sea-rail combined transport network in the East Africa region as well as a demonstration zone for high-quality China-Africa Belt and Road cooperation. Going forward, China is ready to work with Ethiopia to implement the important consensus reached by our leaders, promote our all-weather strategic partnership and make greater contributions to Ethiopia's social and economic development.

**Major carbon emitter nations and developed ones have been reluctant to commit to climate agreements and financial supports yet the impact of climate changes worsens particularly in developing nations, what is China's position?**

The Chinese Government upholds the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) principles of equity, common but differentiated responsibilities, and respective capabilities and promotes the full, balanced, and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement. China continues to implement an active national strategy in response to climate change, adopting a series of policies and measures to strive for carbon emissions peaking before 2030 and carbon neutrality before 2060.

Based on this, China is actively collaborating with Ethiopia and Africa as a whole to achieve green and sustainable development for generations to come. Prime Minister Abiy proposed Green Legacy Initiative, which exactly conforms to Xi Jinping's Thought on Ecological Civilization. Both countries are transforming words into deeds, and sparing no efforts to pursue an eco-friendly development model and cushion the climate change impacts.

Chinese investors are also making contributions to the realization of Green Legacy Initiative. For example, Sino Aluminum Manufacturing PLC, located in Tulefa, is turning local plastic waste into fibre, which is used for textile, pillows, quilts, etc. Its annual production reaches thousands of tons. Our Embassy will encourage more Chinese companies to contribute to the Initiative through concrete action.

**Thank you very much for the interview!**

Thank you!



# Verbatim and Caption

## Ankara Declaration proves Ethiopia's firm stance to mutual development

The Ankara Declaration, signed by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) of Ethiopia and President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of Somalia on December 11, 2024 in Ankara, states the agreement of the two nations to peacefully settle their differences.

The agreement brokered by Turkey, demonstrates Ethiopia's commitment to regional integration, mutual development and cooperation with its neighboring countries. The declaration also emphasizes the importance of providing Ethiopia with reliable and secure access to the sea. Regional, continental and international organizations as well as countries have praised the agreement.

### Mutual development, shared growth foundation for Horn stability: *PM Abiy*



As neighbors, Ethiopia and Somalia share centuries of relations. We are not just neighbors but brothers and sisters, bound by blood. Ethiopians and Somalis share a common history, language, and culture, strengthened by the sacrifices of thousands of Ethiopian soldiers who defended Somalia against terrorist threats.

Ours relationship was never meant a case for third-party intervention, it was always intended to be a family dialogue. Ethiopia is committed to regional integration, mutual development and shared growth as the foundation for stability in the Horn of Africa.

*Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said following the agreement in Ankara*

### Somalia's President acknowledges the sacrifices made by Ethiopian soldiers in protecting Somalia



Somalia acknowledges the sacrifices made by Ethiopian troops in safeguarding Somalia from terrorist attacks, especially within the African Union peacekeeping missions. Ethiopian forces have demonstrated their dedication to Somalia's security over the years. Ethiopia and Somalia have more similarities than differences. Our shared history, culture, and values emphasize the interconnectedness of our people. We must capitalize on these commonalities for mutual benefit. The Horn of Africa is a fertile yet volatile region that necessitates cooperation between Ethiopia and Somalia to attain peace and prosperity for our citizens and the region as a whole.

*Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, President of Somalia said at a joint news conference*



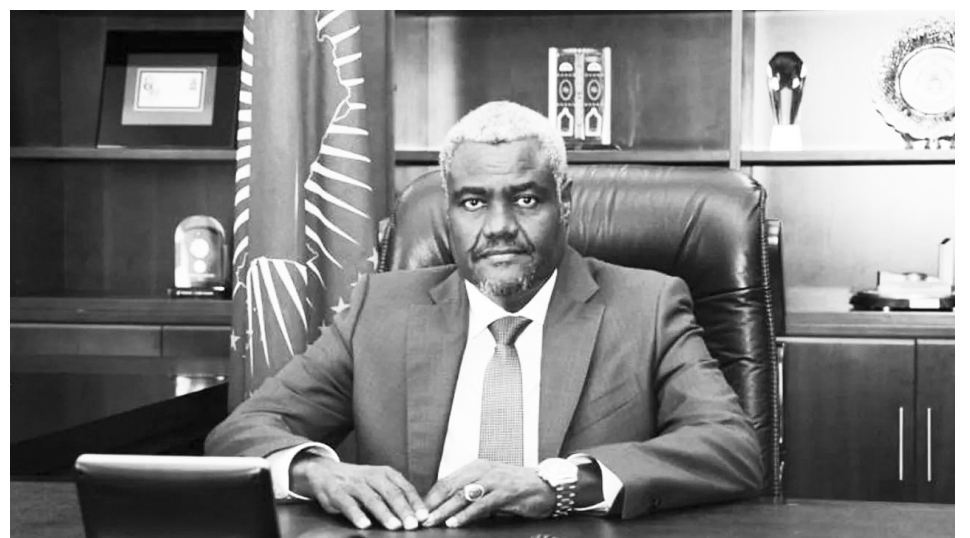
### UN warmly welcomes the Ankara Agreement: *UN Spokesperson*

We warmly welcome the announcement of the Ankara Declaration between Ethiopia and Somalia under the leadership of Turkey. This is a positive step towards fostering friendship and mutual respect between the two countries.

We are eager for the commencement of technical negotiations and are hopeful for a positive outcome. The UN stands ready to provide assistance and support in any way possible.

*Stephane Dujarric, United Nations (UN) spokesman said during a news conference*

### AU strongly encourages implementation of the Ankara Agreement without delay: *Chairperson*



The African Union welcomes the communiqué signed by the leaders of Ethiopia and Somalia to resolve misunderstandings between the two nations. The agreement is an important act of high responsibility on the part of the leaders of Somalia and Ethiopia.

The AU strongly encourages the two nations to implement the relevant measures adopted in the communiqué without delay.

*Moussa Faki Mahamat, African Union Commission Chairperson*

### The Ankara Accord is crucial in strengthening the social fabric between Ethio-Somalia: *IGAD*

IGAD commends the landmark Ankara Agreement reached between the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Federal Republic of Somalia. This significant accord marks a substantial step towards strengthening the long-standing social fabric between the two sisterly nations and demonstrates a commitment to resolving bilateral issues amicably.

IGAD praised the leaders of both countries for their constructive engagement and spirit of cooperation. Such diplomatic efforts are important in addressing shared challenges and fostering stability and prosperity in the Horn of Africa.

IGAD remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting its Member States in their pursuit of sustainable solutions through dialogue, partnership, and mutual



cooperation.

*Workneh Gebeyehu (PhD), Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)*