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Deresse Getachew (PhD)



Abebe Gelaw

T-TPLF allying with Al-Shabaab desperate quest for power: Scholars

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- The recent attacks made by Al-Shabaab in Ethiopia are a clear indication of terrorist TPLF's desire of controlling the central power by using any means necessary, scholars said.

Speaking with local media, New York, Iona College Sociology Associate Professor Deresse Getachew (PhD) stressed that, T-TPLF, as it has been allying with different

forces, it is now associating with the Al-Shabaab to destabilize the nation and weaken the central government.

With terrorist Shene group on one side and Al-Shabaab on the other, the major goal behind all the attack is controlling the central power of the government, according to him.

For his take on the issue, Writer and Journalist Abebe Gelaw noted that, all the

entities that are trying to create chaos in the country are particularly trying to dismember the central government.

He added that, the current situation in Ethiopia has highly contributed in creating enabling environment as well as opening doors to its enemies whose intentions are nothing but destabilizing Ethiopia.

As we know Egypt is historical enemy of

See T-TPLF ... page 3

Ethiopia pledges to expand electricity export

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopian Electric Power (EEP) announced that it is working tirelessly on expanding electricity export to neighboring countries having secured 95.4 million USD selling power to Djibouti and Sudan.

EEP Corporate Communication Director Moges Mekonnen told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that, over the past Ethiopian fiscal year, EEP provided neighboring countries with over 12,300 GW of energy.

He, therefore, said that EEP has generated over 95.4 million USD from energy export to the aforesaid countries and 11 billion Birr from Ethiopian Electric Utility.

He further stated that, during the last fiscal year, EEP provided energy to different sectors via Ethiopian Electric Utility, sectors that use high energy and also to the neighboring countries of Sudan and Djibouti and generated income.

See Ethiopia ... page 3



Gov't, partners deliver 308 MT health supplies to Tigray

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA –Since January, the government in partnership with UN agencies and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) charter and regular flights has delivered medicines and medical supplies worth a total of Birr 71,179,802 to Tigray State, the Ministry of Health stated.

The main supplies sent include anti-

tuberculosis, anti-malaria, cardiac drugs, anesthesia drugs, hemodialysis equipment, vaccines, covid-19 supplies and other essential drugs, according to Ministry of Health.

The Ministry indicated that 135.45 Metric Tons (MT) of health and nutritional food supplies that can serve 1,128,750 individuals

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Ustaz Jemal Beshir
 Photo - Tsehay Nigussie

Activist urges Diaspora to intensify support to homeland

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News

AEPAC advocating re-enlisting Ethiopia into AGOA

- Holds over 24 meetings with elected U.S. officials

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - The American-Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee (AEPAC) said it has talked about re-enlisting Ethiopia into AGOA and accessing humanitarian aid with the U.S. officials.

AEPAC said it has held over 24 meetings with the U.S. elected officials and their teams. It also advocated members from all over the nation get together to advocate for Ethiopian-Americans.

Last week, members of AEPAC met with 24 members, officials, the State Department and the White House. The discussions were constructive. Members talked about re-enlisting Ethiopia into AGOA and making sure humanitarian aid is being shared across Ethiopia and all the impacted areas in the conflict.

And most importantly, they asked the terrorist TPLF and Shene to put down their arms and end the violence. "We want everyone to go towards a place of peace. We think with the U.S. support, we



can get there. There has been progress, but we have so much more to do in this regard."

The committee held over 24 meetings with elected officials and their teams, where it discussed issues that are vital to

the community. AEPAC did a great job advocating for the people, it said.

Hence, AEPAC members have been supporting fundraising events, organizing receptions, meeting and greeting with U.S. officials, it was learnt.

Photojournalist to stage photo exhibition to support IDPs

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA - The renowned U.S.-based photojournalist who formerly lived in Ethiopia to create fundraising exhibition under the title "Tears of Wollega Exhibition Production" which will truly convey the scale of human tragedy in various internally displaced (IDP) camps in the Amhara state.

U.S.-based photojournalist Jemal Countess who formerly lived in Ethiopia has been covering the conflict in Ethiopia for the last 16 months, focusing on the human toll and suffering of civilian populations and those who have been internally displaced and forced to relocate to other states due to war and ethnic cleansing.

He said that, one of the most under-reported and misrepresented aspects of the conflict have been the mass killing of the ethnic Amhara which were peacefully living for years alongside their Oromo neighbors in the district of Wollega in the Oromia state. But for the past years, a proliferation of anti-Amhara extremist propaganda in the state has led to targeted ethnic killings.

Some of the former residents of the Wollega district that managed to escape killing by the terrorist Shene group and its allies have found shelter in various internally displaced (IDP) camps in the Amhara state and facing challenges.

The journalist have traversed both the



Amhara and Afar states, covering the stories of hardship and survival of those living in the camps, but the stories of the internally displaced Amhara from Wollega are the most deeply tragic and horrifying of these situations.

He indicated that "witnessing these conditions and reporting on them have inspired me to create an exhibition that will truly convey the scale of this growing human tragedy. I am seeking donations to go towards producing an exhibition of photos and testimonies I recorded during multiple trips to an IDP camp in Wollo. It is an exhibition that I hope will raise awareness and convey the depths of the horrific conditions internally displaced Amhara are facing in one particular camp

located just outside of the city of Hayk in Wollo Amhara state."

A lot of survivors in this camp have seen the murder of family and community members and other violence, which in turn forced them to flee, some of whom traveled on foot, walking up to 22 days to escape.

"I want to draw attention to this situation not only to raise awareness but inspire sincerely concerned individuals to step up and take action to support these IDPs and call on the appropriate government entities to respond to an end the violence being committed against civilians and there are still people who are, unable to leave and under threat of violence. This work will convey the grave reality of the situation."



State says working on solving water woes

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

GONDAR- Clean drinking water supply should be given priority to tackle the society's social, environmental and health problems in Gondar city, Amhara State said.

Speaking at an event held to discuss a range of ideas between federal and state leaderships and Gondar community to tackle the problems the city is being faced like shortage of clean drinking water supply, Amhara State Chief Administrator Yilkal Kefale (PhD) said clean drinking water projects for the city selected areas like Lake Tana, Megech and Koladeba would be conducted to address the shortage of water supply in the area.

During the discussion, two feasibility studies were presented to answer shortage of clean drinking water projects for the city of Gondar in long term.

Accordingly, shortage of clean water supply in the city would be solved to some extent by digging two deep holes at the outskirts of the city for the time being.

"Proper study, design and long term plan is needed to decrease the problem that has been rampant in the city, he underlined.

Mayor of Gondar City, Zewudu Malede said, the city gets water once in two weeks and the current coverage of city accounts only 18 percent and it is in critical condition.

The coordination effort of all is needed to solve the critical shortage of water supply in sustainable way. "We have tried our best to improve shortage of water supply but the critical problem of water supply is not resolved."

The reason for the demand of water supply increment is city's population rose from 350,000 to 750,000 within the shortest period of time, he said adding that now the city gets 13,000 cubic meter clean drinking water per day, but the current demand is 70,000 cubic meter.

Minister of Water and Energy, Eng. Habtamu Itefa on his part said that, it is better to expand on the existing water dams in the areas until we construct another water projects and use the opportunity what we have in our hands to avoid the shortage being seen in the city.

News

Activist urges Diaspora to intensify support to homeland

BY ABDUREZAK MOHAMMED

ADDIS ABABA – The Diaspora needs to be more involved than ever in the country's affairs to get Ethiopia out of the current predicament, so said Ustaz Jemal Beshir, an advocator of Ethiopia's right on the Abbay (Nile) River.

Speaking to *The Ethiopian Herald*, Ustaz Jemal stated that, the participation of members of the Diaspora community in national affairs of the country should be intensified more than ever as they had been engaging in such a noble act over the past four years.

As to him, members of the Diaspora community are doing a lot of things regarding the current situation of the country. In addition to individual participation, they are also involved through religious and civic associations and working to defend

Ethiopia's national interests.

He further indicated that, the Diaspora's participation was also proved to successful in exposing the false information circulating about Ethiopia internationally regarding the war in the northern part of the country and the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). And, they played a vital role in informing the international community of the reality of Ethiopia.

Members of the Diaspora community have also been making a significant contribution to the country by fighting bodies trying to obstruct Ethiopia's development activities and by supporting the country's activities to protect its sovereignty, Ustaz Jemal also indicated.

The Diaspora has provided financial and material support to citizens affected by drought and war, as well as to the Ethiopian

National Defense Force (ENDF), he said adding, that they have also been raising money for the construction of the GERD.

According to Ustaz Jemal, members of the Diaspora community have been carrying out various activities against undue pressures from Western countries against Ethiopia and by echoing the voice of Ethiopia across the world.

He urged that, members of the Diaspora community should play their part in the country's economic growth investing in homeland and creating more jobs for citizens.

Ustaz Jemal also called on them to play their role in the successful completion of the National Dialogue. He added that the commission needs to involve the Diaspora community as much as possible.

New scheme helps ensure water supply: Ministry

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

GONDAR- Ministry of Water and Energy stated that the new scheme, which is harvesting waters from the roofs and out of flood especially during rainy season, would help save water that is going to be used in dry season to address water shortage.

Launching a 'dam on my yard' concept at Gondar city in five selected schools, Minister of Water and Energy, Eng. Habtamu Itafa said, it is quite important to retain water from rainfall during rainy season in people's respective compounds to easily get drinking clean water, garden watering and sanitation services during dry time.

He said: "Applying 'the dam on my yard' would help solve shortage of water supply in cities as well in rural areas. And the ministry is ready to implement new concept called the 'the dam on my yard' in various areas. This program aims at solving the shortage of water supply in the nation, save millions of money and help to utilize water resources in effective manner. If we implement this concept within five years in nation, we will store water in premises of everyone home as much as GERD dam," he stressed.



The project will change the whole Ethiopia as this way of utilizing water resource will be expanded into other areas and can save over millions of cubic meter water every year in the nation, he noted.

On the other hand, the minister launched the renovation of houses for ten low income families and constructing the toilets in Gondar city and the ministry has allocated over 400,000 Birr for renovation in the city.

"Supporting and caring each other regardless of religion, ethnic and sex helps strengthen our unity, defeat poverty and ensure the peace of the nation and finally leads the development of nation."

The ministry also provided food items such as 5 liter edible oil and 50 kilogram flour for 120 low income families each in Gondar city and school materials such as pen, books for students.

T-TPLF allying with Al-Shabaab...

Ethiopia who has been supporting and is still behind the major negative happenings that have been occurring in Ethiopia. And the terrorist Shene along with T-TPLF is closely working to realize their major objective.

One thing about T-TPLF, as to him, is that it could ally with any entity being it local or international so long as it takes to its destination and gain its political desire. That is why it is still trying to provoke another war while it expresses readiness to engage in peace talk, he added.

Deresse said: "I personally believe that,

the western position with regard to the Ethiopia's situation is not clear yet. It is ambiguous whether they support the T-TPLF, neutral in supporting reconciliation process or want leadership change."

Abebe on his part indicated that, the interest of the western is complex and they have been exerting huge pressure on the Ethiopian government in support of the T-TPLF.

Though they are putting undue pressure on Ethiopia to restore the previous system of administration being practiced by the T-TPLF, the current administration is not

willing to accept that, he noted

Not only they are exerting pressure to restore the old age autocratic rule of the T-TPLF, but they also want to achieve their ill-intended interests, and intervening in the internal affairs of the country including local border issues which is not their concern, Abebe added.

Furthermore, he mentioned that the U.S. wants to protect its hegemony and keep dictating the rest of the world to execute their interest and that is why the U.S. policy is failed in Middle East and other parts of the world.

Ethiopia ...

Likewise, the corporate has provided 9,472GW energy to Ethiopian Electric Utility and provided 90 percent to the customers that use high energy and also 116 percent to Ethio-Djibouti railway which is beyond plan. In the just concluded Ethiopian fiscal year, the corporate provided 611GW for Djibouti and 1093GW energy for Sudan r, he said.

Compared to the 2013 Ethiopian fiscal year, the generated amount of energy is low by 1.9 percent which is mainly due to the conflict in the northern part of the country. Following the conflict, the electric infrastructures had been looted and damaged and that is why the performance of the sector has been declined by 1.9 percent, he indicated.

Even though there are challenges related to conflicts and other factors, EEP has achieved 86.3 percent of its 2014 Ethiopian fiscal year plan. The reconstruction of damaged infrastructures of the electric powers has also been undertaken in the concluded Ethiopian fiscal year and planned to resume electric services next year, he said.

Gov't, partners ...

for 3 months have been sent to Tigray region for essential health services.

During the last two months (June and July) medicines and medical supplies worth more than 25 million Birr have been sent to Tigray state. "The second is the support made through different partner organizations."

The Ministry added that in the last six months, 76 metric tons of medical supplies have been sent to Tigray by partner organizations.

UNICEF, Samaritans Purse, Goal Ethiopia, Save the children, Catholic relief service, CRS, Medical team international, World Vision, UNFPA, UNHCR, IOM, SCI, Plan international, MSF-H participated in it.

Recently, 1.04 MT of anti-tuberculosis drugs to be distributed by the World Health Organization through the Ministry of Health were arranged to be transported to Tigray by an emergency chartered UNHAS flight.

Preparations have been completed to send 55MT of medical supplies and other supplies to Tigray this week.

In the last six months, 96.55 MT of essential medicines, which can serve 804,584 individuals for 3 months, have been acquired from the ICRC.

"In two months, it had been possible to facilitate the transportation of more than 38.45 MT of medicine and medical supplies from the ICRC Stock and Ministry of Health storage centers,"

A total of 308 MT of health supplies were transported from the Ministry of Health and partner organizations in the past six months.

The delivery of essential medicines and supplies will continue to be strengthened to reach the communities in need of these services, Ministry of Health added.

Opinion

Social security systems in developing countries

BY GETACHEW MINAS

In the recent past, attention has been given to the reform of social security systems in developing countries. There is, however, a debate on the type of social security system that is appropriate to a fast changing economic and social order. In the developed countries, most of the people are covered by numerous forms of state or market based social security systems, while in developing countries, including Ethiopia, most of the people are not covered by the system. This implies that people of the developing countries are exposed to risks, including illness, disability, death, and natural disasters. These are only some of the typical risks which lead to unstable incomes that affect the quality of life. In developed countries, on the other hand, people are often protected by state or private insurance schemes. In developing countries, however, insurance schemes are insufficient and inaccessible to most people.

In the developing countries, the institutional development of insurance schemes is

“hindered” by lack of access to social security. Social security lays the foundation for sustainable development and is one of the prerequisites for eradicating poverty. However, not much is known about the risk-reducing effects of social security on investment, specialization, growth and development in the developing countries, including Ethiopia. These factors are of great importance and call for a deeper understanding. The experience in reforming the welfare systems in “developed” countries may offer some insight into how the delivery of social security can be enhanced in developing countries. It calls for the partial withdrawal of government from the provision of insurance and basic social services in order to leave more space for private enterprises.

The challenge which policy-makers are facing is to find the “right mix” between state activity, the market mechanism and civic engagement. They need institutional innovations that help to identify the right mix that facilitate provision of social security. They may need the technical input of experts with capacities and field experience in designing state organized social security systems. In fact, social security is referred to mainly with specific public programs involving social assistance and social insurance based on the experience and situation in developed countries. Social security has to be organized “largely” by the state and public institutions as in Ethiopia. The objective of these institutions is to protect the society from the risk of a fall in the standard of living. There are, however, risks related to specific ecological disasters which are not covered by social insurance.

There is a need to “broaden the concept” of social security in order to cover the self-employed and informal sector workers. Having covered these workers, social security may refer mainly to the protective aspect,

including risk prevention. Risk management allow people to cope with risks, such as illness, accident, disability, old age and death, and collective risks, like drought, bad harvests, natural disasters, riots, etc. Thus, social security deals with both personal and social risks. Social security systems in this context help to mitigate the impacts of these risks. In some countries, social security depends mainly on the government to provide retirement income, health care and social insurance. There is a distinction between a “protective” and a “promotional” aspect of social security. The former aspect focuses on preventing a decline in income and standard of living. The promotional aspect relates to public action to raise low incomes and living standards of people.

In devising a social security system, it is useful to start with institutions providing the service. There is a variety of social systems which exist in different societies such as religious groups, business firms, trade unions, and federal and local authorities. These may create social safety-nets, as in Ethiopia, involving targeted social services and benefits and project-based social funds. In the developing countries, they may involve families, neighbors, and civil societies operating at community level. While state and private systems have only a very low coverage rate, these organizations are the backbone of social security systems in developed countries. Along with the state, the market and the private households, individuals create organizations that provide social security for their members.

The social organizations may include civic societies and self-help groups organized to provide social security at the community level. The major activities of these organizations may encompass the provision of health insurance, access to credit and saving or giving people a “voice” to express their needs and interests. In contrast, the form of cooperation within civic organizations could be intermittent and sporadic or long lasting and intergenerational. In Ethiopian societies, people form Idir or Iqub to address their social and economic needs on a long-term basis. The former assists members in time of death in the family or relatives; the latter one is contribution of funds which would be distributed to members on a periodic basis. Both systems focus on exchange and reciprocity, mediated by rules and institutions.

The main difference between the state, the market and civic organizations lies in their incentive structure for securing cooperation and compliance. The state depends on the rule of law and regulations backed by coercion; the market relies on commercial pressure; and the civic organizations are bound together by self-interest and local affiliation. There is, however, no clear and accepted type of organizations operating between the state and the market. The incentive structure for cooperation in the provision of social security

is largely dependent on a close relationship between the organizations and their members and between the members themselves. Based on this, four broad categories for a social security classification are identified in the developed countries. Briefly, these are the state, the market-based system, member-based system and the private household.

The first is the state, which implements social security programs and social insurance schemes as well as specific policy measures like fund transfers and subsidies; the second is market-based system, in which firms offer social insurance based on contributions; the third is member-based organization, including non-profit organizations, cooperatives, mutual and self-help groups, which provide services to their members voluntarily; and the fourth is the private household in which family members provide social security mainly on the basis of social norms and values. The four organizations identified here are useful to describe what kind of social security systems are actually in place in developing countries. While such a classification system is useful for identification purposes, the boundaries are sometimes fluid and changing. This classification system should not, therefore, be regarded as a static concept, as the contribution of the organizations to the individual varies over time with the development process and the insurance market situations.

The insurance markets in several developing countries are hampered by the low level of infrastructural development. Millions of people in these countries are not covered by any type of social security protection. In these countries, including Ethiopia, social security provided by the state covers most of the workers in the public and industrial sectors. The vast majority of the unorganized rural population and people in the informal urban sector are left out. In addition to low coverage rates, state based systems face serious financing and management problems. In most developing countries only a limited proportion of the labor force is engaged in the modern sector in which employment contracts can be monitored and assessed for the purpose of contributions to social security schemes. The larger the informal sector, the less able is the organized, formal sector to finance social security for it.

The state finances social security through direct and indirect taxes collected from personal and enterprise incomes. But, these are limited as it is difficult to collect direct taxes from informal-sector workers; and indirect taxes are generally insufficient to fund a social security system. In addition the effectiveness and efficiency of the organizations, which are responsible for collecting contributions and paying benefits, are often limited. Moreover, the administration of the social security system is very complex such as keeping the records, ensuring the compliance of employers and employees, and organizing

an effective control of the agencies. The social security regulatory structure, however, demands a well-functioning administrative structure. In many developing countries these arrangements are far from functioning properly.

Looking at the state based social security systems, a changing economic and social environment and the ageing population are heavy burdens which developing countries face. Also, the financial crises in developing countries pressed governments to take measures to alleviate their budgetary difficulties. With the expansion of the informal sector and growth of public debt, the proportion of the population which could be covered by state social security declined. In recent times, however, the “influence” of the ageing of the population due to declining birth rates and rising life expectancy and its impact on social security, especially pension schemes has come up. Numerically, the size of the ageing population is on the rise as in Ethiopia. The rise in ageing population has impacts on the developing countries where the question of supporting the elderly in retirement becomes a serious issue.

The retirement issue may lead to the reconstruction of the whole economy. In this context there may be a choice for a revision of the social security system or a radical shift towards mandatory retirement saving schemes. However, in developing countries, including Ethiopia, saving for retirement is “not mandatory” for all the urban and rural population. But, the tremendous problems of state based social security schemes clearly demonstrate the need to look for alternatives. There will be a need to investigate if market based schemes may address some of the issues raised earlier. Currently, social security systems based on market principles are gaining global importance, but they are still at low level. Studies indicate that state-based social security systems play greater role compared to the private ones.

The reform in social security should focus on privately managed pension schemes. The governments of developing countries have to encourage the formation and expansion of private commercial pension and insurance schemes. These are flexible in addressing the demands of people for social security both in urban and rural areas. The establishment of these schemes should, however, be preceded by the development of economic and social infrastructure, including road, telecom, media, and internet. In Ethiopia, there is an effort to expand and improve these infrastructures which will help facilitate the expansion of social security schemes throughout the country.

Thank you.

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

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The Ethiopian Herald

Editorial

High time for abolishing terrorists for good

So the saying goes, "Truth will triumph in the end," Ethiopia has continued recording victory as it has always shouldered truth and genuinely run undertakings without violating others rights and benefits, too. Centering veracity always pays off, indeed, and helps get enemies ashamed of their own deeds.

Cognizant of the fact that it is difficult to come up with lasting peace in Ethiopia and in the Horn in the presence of terrorists, Ethiopians are taking serious measures against terrorists in a very coordinated manner. Yes, unless the sources of terrorists have dried for good, it is hard to think of stability, development and prosperity across the Horn.

Not well comprehending the very nature of Ethiopia and Ethiopians, a number of internal and external foes have been orchestrating numerous attacks in a bid to weaken the country. However, Al-Shabaab and other terrorist groups in collaboration with internal betrayals T-TPLF and its Trojan horse Shene have attempted to attack Ethiopia infiltrating in the eastern part.

The good thing is coordinated measures have been undertaken with a view to cleaning up the remnants of terrorist Al-Shabaab who were cut off from the group that was destroyed while trying to intrude through Eastern Ethiopia. Obviously, all enemies of Ethiopia attempted to carry out attack in the eastern part of the country, but all their attempts were totally thwarted by the coordinated efforts of security forces.

Encircled with a number of foes equipped with foreign masters and internal duplicities, Ethiopia has been penetrating the ever-terrifying cliff of threat.

The role of Somali Special Forces and the state leadership is worth citing in this regard as they have played great role in appealingly destroying the terrorist group.

During the crackdown, several heavy artilleries and small arms were confiscated from the group including immense machine guns. In so doing, the national defense force and joint security forces have continued being triumphant over terrorists.

Hence, the international community should speak in one voice that Ethiopia is seriously safeguarding the Horn and its sovereignty, and this move is of paramount importance in providing the African continent especially the Horn and Eastern Africa with a sigh of relief.

Bringing about prosperity will be ensured if and only if security, development and human rights are assured. That is why it is recurrently heralded that the present state of anti-terrorism effort has given great assurance to people who are perpetually in fear of insecurity.

Being favored by internal and external fertile grounds, Al-Shabaab has shown a short lived incursion following the well-coordinated steps taken by all Ethiopia's security forces.

The victory Ethiopia has been recording in all aspects has conveyed a clear message to those who would love to destabilize it as Ethiopia will never bow for enemies though there are minor difference among its citizens.

It is highly witnessed these days that the reliance of international community on Ethiopian forces in combating Al-Shabaab and other radicals has boomed since the latter has shown effective operations and fruitful engagement.

The resurgence of political violence by Al-Shabaab and T-TPLF in Ethiopia is well aborted and is about to be buried for good. All the effective steps and victory against these groups has demonstrated the capacity of Ethiopian security forces and their ability to address security concerns at every corner of the nation.

Opinion

Rejuvenating nations of the Horn for withstanding external threat

BY LAKACHEW ATINAFU

Ethiopia is the heart, part and parcel of the Horn of Africa region as it is the habitat of Afro-asiatic linguistics, the gate way to the ocean and sea politics though the then deliberate colonial demarcation.

Recently the region began to be observed tracking footprints of Ethiopia in regional integration and rejuvenating the mighty geopolitics of the region. The administration of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed first envisages the regional integration of the horn countries and astonished the world in settling disputes among east African fraternity.

The International Community has missed several opportunities that could have been effectively seized to change course in the Horn. Now there is a risk that the recently declared indefinite humanitarian truce and the national dialogue initiatives may face a similar fate.

If so, the future will be worse than the past. Maximum caution is required. There is a need to leave emotions and the arrogance aside and constructively engage to make sure that these promising initiatives are not missed once again.

The initiative and inception to integrate the Horn and then whole continent is on the driving signal since the new administration of Ethiopia assumed power.

Countries began to follow the value of integration and unison against all odds. Nonetheless, it is also advisable to be on the alert to with stand formidable struggles waged

by westerns.

Somalia which was named the crying child of East Africa opened its eyes and joined Ethiopia's ambition in integrating the Horn.

Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was on a state visit to Kenya to strengthen relations after recent tensions over trade and a maritime border.

Besides, concurrently three east African countries ink an accord on the harmonization of TVET according to statements of Ministry of Labor and skill.

Assegid Getachew Representative of Federal Government of Ethiopia and the Ministry of Labor and Skills and a State Minister said it requires stronger institutional collaboration and coordination amongst all parties concerned at all levels. "I would like to add my utmost assurance that the Ministry is fully prioritizing and supporting the implementation of EASTRIP".

This project will have quite a lot of benefits, including exploiting economies of scale to lower costs of training for individual countries on specialized and industry certified training programs, facilitating mobility of technology and skilled labor, promoting peer learning among countries and institutions, sharing good policies and practices, and targeting employment toward regional economic corridors such as the Northern and Central Corridor Initiatives and other mega infrastructure projects in the region.

Following our Ministers meeting with the EASTRIP family during the Mid Term

Review of the project earlier this year, the three countries have taken on the assignment of expediting implementation and solving bottle necks.

The complex creation of the Horn can be seen from the perspective of heterogeneity, diverse culture, geopolitics importance, potentiality for agriculture and even can be of great significance to watch over political economy of Africa and the Middle East.

Amid all this, the Horn of Africa countries, in addition to their common language, culture and religion, and their differences in blood, marriage, and climate change, force them to look at each other because of mutualistic differences in climate, natural and economic resources and products.

It is especially important for Eritrea and Ethiopia and Somalia. For years, the three countries' leaders have been skeptical about these alternative means of communication. In fact, it has proved to be of little use to many, and it has cost many dearly.

Amid all this optimistic efforts, TPLF and other devastating forces turned to narrate touching individual stories to continue winning the hearts of the US and its allies.

Yuval Harari in his book titled "21 Lessons for the 21st Century" writes that in a moral dilemma concerning an issue, "Focusing on a touching human story that ostensibly stands for the whole conflict helps to generate false moral certainty. When you try to explain to people the true complexity of the conflict by

means of statistics and precise data, you lose them", but when you tell sad personal stories like amputation, rape, disfigurement; you will win their hearts.

We will see how far such stories, maybe imbued with lies and exaggerations, take the whole conflict saga and harden the influence that the target audiences of these stories exert on Ethiopia. But still, it is sad that civilians are the first victims of such conflict which is started by the very group supposed to advance the interest of the Tigray people. No matter how the magnitude of the harm inflicted on civilians is severe, this warmongering group thinks that it can still form its own nation out of the debris of Ethiopia.

The primary objective of any foreign policy is to maintain the security and national integrity of the country.

For countries like Ethiopia, domestic factors are arguably the most important determinants of foreign policy. Domestic problems increase the country's vulnerability for external interference and decrease its regional and global image and influence. This is exactly what is happening now in Ethiopia; Secondly, for Ethiopia to exert enduring regional influence, it has to achieve the required level of economic development.

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

Business & Economy

Duplicated laws and rules deter the inflow of foreign investment

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Recently the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce held discussion with stake holders and during the meeting participants said that, the extended rules and regulation introduced with regard to business deterred the incoming of foreign investment.

The bureaucratic hurdles created by duplicated rules paved the way for the rampant corruption. It is also said that even though some measures are taken to revoke the rules, there is still regulation which hampers speedy business. According to the participants weak execution capacity on the part of the public offices contributes a lot for misconduct.

Mihreteab Luel is a lawyer who presents study paper during the discussion. As to him, the business activity in Ethiopia is highly vulnerable for unnecessary scrutiny which discourages people to involve.

A foreign business man before open business here it asses what look likes of the business environment.

As to the study conducted by his company, in Ethiopia the market is subjected to heavy supervision as the result, business men faces hardship.

For example, the supervision existing in the finance sector is exceptionally the most complicated.

As to his experience, heavy financial supervision is conducted in Kenya for hunting money laundering utilizes for striking terrorism not to inhibit business activities. Whereas, in Ethiopia everything with regard to business is tightly controlled by unnecessary rules which shy away business men.

As to Mihreteab, when tightly control rules are introduced, getting service from public institutions will be worsen. He believed that there is no politeness in the civil servants and such situation makes laws dysfunctional. There are laws introduced in the public offices but the public is not familiar with and such situation aggravates corruption.

Therefore, to provide speedy service simplifying working activities is vital and the idea was suggested to the government officials long ago.

The duplicated laws unless they are reduced they create enabling environment to corrupted officials to meet their subversive objectives. He also told that the home grown economic reform introduced two years ago has its

The duplicated laws unless they are reduced they create enabling environment to corrupted officials to meet their subversive objectives

own weakness and lag behind the foreign investor's interests. This was proved by his company studies.

The other paper presenter is Professor Fekadu Petros.

As to him, the government in the last five years has tries its level best to improve the laws which hampers business activities and the administrative law introduced two years ago is the outcome of the improvement measures. The new law plays pivotal role in reducing unnecessary supervisions.

On the other hand, the dialogue made between the government and the private sector based on the public private partnership can be mentioned as exemplary.

The other thing mentioned by him is that the implementation of packages in relation with "ease of doing business."

He further said that the administrative law introduced recently explains that all

public offices obliged public offices that whenever they introduce new rules that they should abide by the procedure.

Therefore, whenever governments institutions are introduce rules, they are obliged beforehand to inform to the pertinent bodies. They are also required to send the draft law to the stake holders to be commented. And lastly they are required to send the draft law to the Ministry of Justice for endorsement.

The objective of the new procedure is to enact better law which can accommodate all stakeholders' interests. After the rules are finally ratified they will be posted on the institute website to be observed in a transparent way by all.

However, As to Fikadu, the law is not properly implemented and the recently published study conducted by the Ministry of Justice clearly indicate this.

According to the study the Ministries of Finance, Health, Revenue and the tax commission failed to implement the law. On the other hand, he said that public – private relation must be strengthened because it creates conducive environment to settle problems that the private sector faces but to date only little progress is shown.

As to Fikadu, ease of doing business is one of the best criterions to attract foreign investment recommended by the World Bank which utilizes to compare 189 counties in the world. It also announces the level of the countries in this regard annually. In this criteria Ethiopia is on 150th level and in the last four years to upgrade Ethiopia's status the government has made a lot of efforts.

To up hold the efforts the reform committee comprised the government officials led by the Prime Minister was established. The recently introduced trade law attributed to this effort. The reform enables doing business virtually with no physical contact in addition, other measures improved the business environment and based on the recent evaluation Ethiopia's status on the World Bank criterion in easing doing business was expected to Upgrade to the 100th level but due to the undisclosed reason the World Bank gave up the criterion.

Mihreteab on his part also told that the introduction of new investment code has brought a tremendous impact in ease doing business. The announcement of the

1958 New York convention to be part of Ethiopia's civil code which was delayed for about 25 years has been taken and Ethiopia become signal of it. This shows

the government resoluteness to improve the business environment in accordance with the international standard. Fikadu on his part said that, to reduce the extended laws which hampers speedy business activities, establishing regulatory impact assessment organ by the government is essential. In this regard many countries could resolve their problems through the regulatory body. In the normal circumstance any government body when it introduces laws it discusses the matter with the pertinent institutions but through regulatory impact assessment system any government organ wants to formulate rules it first send the draft to the central government organ. Because the central organ has sufficient human resource including cutting age technology. The other countries experience shows that in the impact assessment organ comprises professionals such as socialists, economist's, historians and lawyers. Countries such as Marshes, Egypt, Kenya, Senegal, Uganda and Kenya introduced regulatory impact assessment. As compared with the Public- Private partnership, regulatory impact assessment initially makes effort to formulate qualified law. In such system each institution which has regulatory body make inventory in common and the pertinent official who has a responsible to explain the new law has an obligation to explain. If he fails the institution will be cancelled from the regulation system and such approach can bring solutions.

The introducing of administrative procedure law is encouraging and exploiting such good opportunity is vital. However, still there are a lot to be done with regard to improving laws.

As to Fikadu, enacting law by itself is crucial and help full for strengthening the private sector. In 2013 EC many anticorruption laws are introduced concerning the private sector. Liberalization of the financial sector is can be said encouraging. Though weakness is witnessed in implementing, the law the government has strong interest in this regard. Even though regulatory program introduced for its effective ness there should be strong civil service reform.

Without strong civil service realizing the objective is unthinkable. Recently the government announced that there are more than 100 thousand employee with fraud educational documents in the civil service and this is by itself is a challenge for the nation wellbeing and unless the situation is reversed to the better whatever the reform implementation is futile.

In the Sphere of Diplomacy

Ethiopia – middle ground between Russia-Africa partnerships

BY YOHANES JEMANEH

As the adage goes “a friend in need is a friend indeed,” countries arguably identify their real partners at the time of difficulties. In this case, the past three years were testing times for Ethiopia that enabled the east African nation to distinguish its cohorts from adversaries.

Unwarranted political and economic pressure and interference was the major problem that challenged Ethiopia in line with the Tigray conflict and the second filling of the Grand Renaissance Dam (GERD).

When some western governments put economic pressure on Ethiopia in the name of humanitarian crisis, when these administrations stand by the side of Egypt in taking the development issue of GERD to be discussed by the UNSC, there were only a few nations that appeared to hold up Ethiopia’s reality. Among these nations that can be counted on the fingers of one hand is found the Russian Federation.

The Ethiopia-Russia relationship is historical and longstanding which withstood the test of time. Ethiopia attributes notable importance to the longstanding historical relations with the Russian Federation and appreciated Russia’s unwavering support to Ethiopia during difficult times of need, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister Demeke Mekonnen said last week after he discussed with his Russian counterpart who was in Addis Ababa for a working visit.

The Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov had arrived in Addis on 26 July 2022 aimed at discussing with high-ranking Ethiopian officials on matters that will strengthen the ties between the two countries.

Lavrov’s visit to Ethiopia was fruitful and involved discussions with President Sahlework Zewde and Demeke Mekonnen on diversifying bilateral cooperation, particularly in trade, technology transfer, and agriculture and energy sectors.

After the meeting, Demeke briefed the press mentioning that the two ministers had a fruitful discussion that reflected the reality in which Ethiopia and the Russian Federation have shared values and interests in various areas. According to Demeke, trade, science and technology are the areas the countries have shown keenness to continue consolidating their relations.

Sergey Lavrov on his part described the Ethiopia-Russia relationships as delightful and effective while noting the need to hold a meeting of the joint commission of the two countries. He said that Russia would continue to work together with Ethiopia on international and regional spheres. He also expressed Russia’s readiness to support Africa’s proposal to hold a permanent seat at the UN Security Council.

Russia has decided to change Ethiopia’s debt owed to the former USSR, with a “Debt for Development package,” to help Ethiopia boost the technical capability of the Melkawakena Power plant and equip Balcha Hospital with modern medical equipment, it was learned.

The two nations agreed to hold a joint Ethiopia-Russia Commission meeting in the upcoming year, and sign new agreements, and to expedite the implementation of the already contracted



Ethiopian and Russian Foreign Ministers discussing amicable relations over a cup of coffee

agreements.

The longstanding bilateral partnership between Ethiopia and Russia needs to be reinforced, said President Sahlework during her consultation with Lavrov. The President and the Minister conversed on other international affairs.

Russia opposes a unipolar world based only on Western interests, Sergey Lavrov stated. He also mentioned the impact of the food crisis on Africa and promised his country’s commitment to work together to find a solution.

For Demeke, the visit of Lavrov was very timely. “We had really fruitful discussions. We talked about national, regional, and global topics. We brought up the present food crisis and associated concerns in order to work together to solve this problem,” he said. It needs to bear in mind that Russia and Ukraine have recently signed an agreement to open the door for food exportation to the global market in which several countries including Ethiopia will import products in demand.

In addition to the aforementioned areas of cooperation, Russia’s partnership with Ethiopia has been developing through time in the spheres of space, medicine and nuclear technology.

By the same token, Lavrov said that Russia values its relationship with Ethiopia, which has a long and rich history. Russia and Ethiopia have traditionally coinciding, and very close positions on key regional and international issues. “This concurrence is based on the strong commitment of both Russia and Ethiopia to international law, especially the principles of the United Nations Charter, in which respect for the sovereign equality of states is central,” Lavrov said.

Russia, which is one of the countries that support Ethiopia’s cause on the international arena, expressed its determination to continue supporting Ethiopia’s move to solve its internal issue on its own. The Russian News Agency (TASS) reported that Russia has reaffirmed support for the efforts

made by the Ethiopian government to stabilize the domestic political situation.

“We confirmed our firm support for the government’s efforts to stabilize the situation and launch an inclusive national dialogue to address key issues on the national agenda,” Lavrov told TASS.

Russia has also confirmed its readiness to implement joint plans with Ethiopian partners in the sphere of military and technical cooperation. “We have good traditions in the sphere of military and technical cooperation. Today, we confirmed our readiness to implement new plans in this sphere, including taking into account the interests of our Ethiopian friends in ensuring their defensive capacity,” the Russian Foreign Minister said.

Lavrov also noted that Russia is ready to develop both bilateral humanitarian and cultural contacts and cooperation in the sphere of education with Ethiopia. “Russia is ready to continue providing assistance to Ethiopia in training its domestic specialists in various spheres,” he added.

Before he came to Ethiopia in his latest visit, the Russian foreign minister had earlier visited Egypt and the Republic of the Congo. His visit to Africa held ahead of the second Russia-Africa Summit that set to take place in 2023 which is expected to open new opportunities for increasing Moscow’s presence on the African continent.

The diplomatic visits and various bilateral summits are taking place between Russia and Africa aimed at strengthening cooperation between the two. In this regard, various platforms have been taking place.

“I am sure that we will develop new ideas by the second Russia-Africa Summit, which is due next year, and it will offer us new opportunities to increase Russian presence in Africa,” Russian Ambassador to Ethiopia Yevgeny Teryokhin told the Rossiya-24 TV channel.

Ethiopia welcomed the start of preparations for the second Russia-Africa summit, scheduled for the middle of next year, and intends to cooperate closely with Russia on this issue.

“Ethiopia will cooperate closely with Russia in preparing the second Russia-Africa summit. We also agreed to continue working on issues of mutual interest and to develop mutually beneficial cooperation in various economic, scientific, cultural and other areas,” Demeke said.

Ethiopia is doing great in consolidating diplomatic ties with strategic international partners. In this case, the cooperation with Russia is commendable since the two nations have political, economic and social collaborations.

In modern history, Ethiopian students traveled to Moscow to pursue their higher education. During the reign of Haileselassie I, several Ethiopian literature scholars were nurtured in Russia. For this reason, Russian political culture and lifestyle have become familiar among Ethiopians since these Ethiopian scholars translated many of the Russian literary works into local languages.

Russia also shows its strong alliance to Ethiopia over the past two-three years when Ethiopia faced undue foreign pressure with regard to the Tigray conflict and the construction of GERD. Similarly, Ethiopia affirmed its support to Russia in various situations and is one of the viable means to Russia’s partnership with Africa as the nation is home to various regional, and continental organizations including AU.

Therefore, this cooperation must be consolidated as the two nations have intertwined political, economic and social interests. In this case, the diplomatic visit and the practical implementation of the signed agreements need to bear fruit. Moreover, the two nations need to work together to explore the upcoming Russia-Africa Summit to consolidate cooperation between Russia and Africa in line with their mutual benefits.

Photo:MOFA

Law & Politics

Ethio-Somaliland fresh dimension: A new trajectory towards achieving a common goal

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

It is pertinent to note that the bilateral relations of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Somaliland in terms of political, economic, and trade ties have been progressing along the right lines more than ever before. As things stand at present, Somaliland is metamorphosing with great success into an important hub of trade on account of its geopolitical location in the Horn of Africa.

Of late, *The Ethiopian Herald* had sat down with Ambassador of Somaliland to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Mohamed Ahmed Mohamoud (Awad), intending to bring to light the existing bilateral relations between the two nations as the Ambassador touched upon many issues revolving around the trade relations of the two nations, such as the Port of Berbera, peace, security, and other things of a similar kind. Ambassador Awad has been in the position for the past eleven months, and earlier, he was the former Minister of Investment and Development in Somaliland.

The Ambassador is committed to taking the relations of the two nations to a higher level in connection with people-to-people, government-to-government, and other areas of cooperation sooner rather than later. In the general run, he emphasized the need to improve the relations between the two nations by any means whatsoever.

Here follows the full interview:

What is your reflection on the relations between Ethiopia and Somaliland?

Somaliland has been moving forward in the right direction by entering into bilateral and multilateral deals with various nations. In consideration of the foregoing, many regional states and the broader international community bear witness to the democratic credential and tranquility unfolding in the country.

On the heels of our commitment and hard work, the relations between Ethiopia and Somaliland have been moving forward along the right lines. As Ethiopia is a strong ally of Somaliland in significant aspects of development, we have been progressing in the right direction to take the two nations in every part of growth to a higher standard.

Amongst other things, it would not be an exaggeration to say Ethiopia is a firm companion of Somaliland in major growth aspects. Needless to say, all Somalilanders irrespective of age and gender, know the reality on the ground like the back of their hand.

Apart from emphasizing living in peace and coexistence with surrounding



Ambassador Mohamed Ahmed Mohamoud (Awad)

countries, we have good working relations and collaboration with a diverse range of nations in the Horn of Africa and beyond. Unlike other nations in the vicinity, there have never been pirates in the sea of Somaliland.

Speaking honestly, what the two nations have been sharing in common cannot be expressed in a few words. They are beyond words. To my knowledge, we are interdependent regarding trade, people-to-people, culture, and other major economic issues. By way of illustration, we have something the government of Ethiopia and the people of Ethiopia needs. Alternatively stated, what Ethiopia possesses is something that we necessitate.

When it comes to trade, scholarship, medicine, and other related issues, the first choice of Somalilanders is, without a second thought to go to Addis Ababa at the earliest possible time. To cut a long story short, the relations between the two nations are rich, deep, and intense. While on the subject, let me make one thing perfectly clear---nobody can set apart Ethiopia and the Port of Berbera by any means whatsoever.

It is rumored that the federal democratic republic of Ethiopia and Somaliland concerning the port of Berbera is in the doldrums. What's your say on this?

As Ethiopia is an overpopulated country and one port is not an adequate amount, it needs more than ten ports beyond the shadow of a doubt. I think Ethiopia is one of the fastest growing economies globally, and its population will reach two hundred million within ten or twenty years.

It is worth mentioning that before the law enforcement operation was put into effect in the northern part of the country, Ethiopia

was experiencing double-digit growth.

Coming back to the point, we have been in the present climate attaining the sought-after goal as per the fact that the Port of Berbera has been developed magnificently. Speaking of which, as it is one of the world-class ports that add extra sea outlet to Ethiopia, it plays a paramount role in mushrooming the import-export business, creating employment chances, and smoothing the progress of the two nations to play a part in balanced trade.

In the present climate, almost 95 percent of the Berbera corridor has been accomplished. It is expected to serve multiple functions and play an indispensable role in boosting regional economic ties. Ethiopian people can go wherever they think is competitive in Somaliland. We are ready to serve Ethiopians in various ways. Our tariff is very competitive. I have invited a lot of Ethiopians to Somaliland, and they are amazed by everything they have seen there.

The soft infrastructure is missing in connection with the Port of Berbera. Still, the hardware part of the infrastructure is almost there. Another point is that agreements between the two nations must be made. As the discussions between the two nations have been pointing in the right direction, it will be finalized at the earliest possible time.

Our people are amiable like that of Ethiopia. I would even go so far as to say there are gaps to be bridged regarding people-to-people relations between the two nations.

How would you describe Somaliland in terms of peace and tranquility?

To start with, Somaliland is a democratic

country. We always have a very decent power transition. I would go further and say we have reached to unattainable level in the context of giving rise to peace and security in every nook and cranny of Somaliland. For example, suppose one goes to Western countries. In that case, everything on the subject of theft and other criminal offenses act is monitored by CCTV cameras. But when one comes to Somaliland, one cannot find CCTV cameras and police officers controlling theft.

Our western brothers have not reached yet to this level. They have to come a long way to achieve this level. They are more developed than us, but when it comes to other principles, they have not reached where we are today. We have something to share with them. I have also seen that kind of quality in Ethiopia. The culture of Ethiopia is also related to our culture.

What should be done to take the relations between the two nations to a higher level?

There can be no doubt that Ethiopia is our neighbor. They are brotherly people. As we are in a good relationship with Ethiopia, we are progressing in the right direction.

In the same way, the two nations have trade, traditional, cultural, historical, and people-to-people relations. I understand that we are Ethiopia's foremost companion in the context of trade and security.

As long as the relations between Ethiopia and Somaliland are robust, we need to lay stress on people-to-people links bringing into play quite a lot of fruitful approaches that can take the two nations to the next level. The people of Somaliland are keen to be part and parcel of Ethiopia's development. Some signals show Ethiopia will grow fast over time, without a doubt.

What are the areas in which Ethiopia and Somaliland can work together for a common cause?

Although the two nations possess a vast number of resources, they are underdeveloped yet, but there are areas in which we can cooperate. For instance, regarding industrial parks, Ethiopia has a lot of experience, but Somaliland does not have that kind of involvement. When it comes to athletics, Ethiopians are good runners who know the nuts and bolts of the discipline that help them achieve the desired goal on the world stage. On the basis thereof, the facts as mentioned above would be some of the areas in which we can cooperate.

The other thing is rather than using only ships all the way, why don't we develop our port? If we sit down and think, we have much to offer to other African countries and beyond. The two nations' leaders can go a long way and beyond to buttress a diversity of common goals.

Photo: Gebabo Gebre

Society

Garnering experiences for productive outcome

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Peace talk is one of effective approaches to achieve peace building. As it plays crucial role in terms of resolving differences and preventing the recurrence of conflicts, strengthening social cohesion among communities, it is key to hold successful peace building activities and achieve sustainable peace.

It is common knowledge that without peace, there can be no development; and it cannot be realized in the absence of peace; and peace without development is a peace that may not last long. The two are the two sides of the same coin.

That is why countries are always struggling to sustain peace not only within their territories; but also even beyond. However, for various reasons it seems that achieving peace is becoming more demanding around the globe and many nations, including Ethiopia, are facing the challenges of peace.

Currently, Ethiopia, to address the underlining causes of conflict, resolve differences, prevent future violence and by doing so to achieve sustainable peace, is working to hold successful peace building activities. As part of this effort, it has established a National Dialogue Commission, and at the first phases, the committee has carried out range of activities—preparation- which can serve



as a pathway; and required to achieving the aspired outcome.

Of late, senior citizens and former diplomats had a discussion session concerning how to manage national dialogue and ways to draw lessons from the experiences of other countries. On the occasion, experts highlighted the significance of scrupulously analyzing and drawing important lessons from well-experienced countries regarding National Dialogue so as to come up with meaningful and viable talks.

Ex-Ethiopian Ambassador to Yemen, Tawfik Abdullahi (PhD) said that Ethiopia has established a National Dialogue Commission with a view to answering the old aged political, economic and other social queries. In the wake of conducting a National Dialogue which is expected to mend centuries of political and other social discords, considering the experience of other countries will have a great importance for successful peace talks.

Quoting the failed National Dialogue of Yemen, he said that Ethiopia needs to draw best experience from such countries leveling

gaps so as to conduct successful dialogue. Yemen's dialogue process failed because it lacks inclusiveness and for the interferences of actors from neighboring and western countries.

However, Ethiopia's National Dialogue Commission is set up and functioning independently; and the dialogue process is inclusive. It encompasses all concerning bodies from all walks of life, civic societies, contending parties and others, he indicated.

"The process needs collective efforts from each individual and we all are likely to discharge our roles for the successfulness of the peace talks' process," he said.

From Ethiopian Scholars Consultative Forum Engineer Getahun Husen on his part indicated that there are some actors who are not happy with the dialogue process and working to thwart it.

On the other hand, some of the western countries are exerting undue pressure on developing countries simply to achieve their wicked objectives. Ethiopia is among the countries that are victims to some international entities; as political, economic and other pressures are being imposed on it, which is a new wave of neocolonialism, he said.

Some weeks ago, President Sahle Work Zewde had also a short stay with the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commissioner,

Prof. Mesfin Araya and members of the Commission. Commissioner Prof. Mesfin made a presentation with regard to the activities the Commission has carried out during the past four months; and briefed about his office's future plans.

As the President stated referring to the experiences of other countries she had witnessed, national dialogue is an important tool for peacebuilding. She stressed that the whole peace talks process should be credible, inclusive, transparent and genuine. Since it is a matter that has gained acceptance at international level, it will not be carried out just for ticking the box. What is more, what Ethiopia needs is a new social contract, she added. She also extended her best wishes to the Commission.

It is remembered that the House of Peoples' Representatives (HoPR), approved the establishment of the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission under the proclamation No.1265/202 on 29 December 2021.

The proclamation establishing the Commission stated the importance of conducting an inclusive national dialogue for bolstering national consensus and restoring social values in Ethiopia. Several other activities have been conducted since then, including the appointment of a list of eleven individuals to serve as commissioners led by Professor Mesfin Araya.



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Importance of ESMS to achieve GEQIP-E through PforR

BY DIRRIBA TESHOME

The Government of Ethiopia has implemented the General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP) with the financial support of World Bank and other Development Partners (DPs), with the objective to improve the quality of general education. Building on the efforts and achievements of GEQIP I and II, GEQIP-E seeks to add greater emphasis on improving internal efficiency, equitable access among regions, gender and social-economic groups, and quality in general education.

The World Bank proposes supporting GEQIP-E with a new Program-for-Results (PforR) financing. The PforR aims at strengthening the government's systems in place and institutional capacity for implementation with a shift from an input to results approach with defined accountability. As part of the preparation and appraisal of GEQIP-E, an environmental and social systems assessment (ESSA) was prepared. The World Bank, in collaboration with the government, has developed GEQIP-E AF in the amount of a 122.5 million USD grant from the Global Partnership for Education

(GPE), as a continuation of the Program for Result (PforR) operation of GEQIP-E AF I in 2021.

The proposed AF will fill financing gaps and scale up support for implementation of the national Education Sector Development Program to accelerate learning and improve equity of basic education. Hence, this GEQIP-E Environmental and Social Systems Assessment (ESSA) has been updated to by the World Bank with an objective to review the systems and procedures followed by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and its regional implementing counterparts, including key stakeholders to address social, environmental safety related issues of the project.

As the proposed AF has additional activities involving land acquisition, the ESSA update includes updating the reviewed existing legal frameworks of GEQIP-E ESSA and identifies the proposed program's potential environmental and social benefits, risks, impacts and opportunities in the education sector. Specifically, the ESSA update was conducted to: (i) identify environmental and social benefits and risks associated

with the Program; (ii) assess the capacity of key implementing agencies of the proposed program, (iii) assess the strengths and weaknesses of the legal and regulatory frameworks of the country; and (iii) recommend mitigation measures or actions to strengthen capacity of implementing agencies to implement the PforR program in an environmentally and socially sustainable manner.

An ESSA was conducted to assess the capacity of implementing agencies and identify the potential environmental and social impacts and risks of the program. The ESSA requires a sound Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) establishment to ensure the application of the required environmental and social management measures. To ensure this, the ESSA recommended the need to develop an Environmental and Social Management Systems Guideline (ESMSG).

The ESMSG is a comprehensive document which clarifies the organizational arrangements and the procedures to be applied during the preparation and implementation of program specific Environmental and Social issues. Its

key purposes are to develop screening procedures and tools (checklists and formats) that will be used for screening potential environmental and social impacts/risks due to the program interventions.

It specifies appropriate roles and responsibilities of various institutions/actors at different levels and outlines reporting procedures and mechanisms for managing and monitoring environmental and social concerns related to the program activities.

It is also used to identify the capacity building activities (including training and technical assistance) for the realization of program objectives in compliance with safeguard standards and establishes methodologies as well as procedures for environmental and social screening and review, approval and implementation of program activities.

Lastly, it outlines environmental and social safeguards implementation arrangements during program activities preparation and implementation to adequately address the national and World Bank environmental and social safeguard issues.

Planet Earth

Lowland bamboo plantation to conserve Blue Nile basin ecosystem

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

Following the launching of the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), the government of Ethiopia has launched environmental protection in the surroundings of Nile Basin including the valleys and tributaries of the Blue Nile River to protect the dam from unnecessary saddle impact and to maintain the sustainability of the ecology of the water sources of the River.

The project was officially started in 2021 by Ethiopian Forestry Development (EFD), Selale University and Debre Marikos Universities jointly. It aims to invest in bamboo development in the Blue Nile water sources and the valleys surrounding the tributaries of the River mainly to conserve the ecology of the area.

Along with the construction of the Dam, protecting the environment and keeping the sustainability of the ecology of the basin is a serious national issue. By mobilizing millions of farmers in the surroundings, Ethiopia has been investing highly in conserving and protecting the area plus recovering degraded and deforested areas of the Blue Nile Basin and valley areas during the past ten years.

In late 2021, The Ethiopian Herald approached Project Management, Environmental Protection and Art Affairs Director with Office of National Council for the Coordination of Public Participation on the Construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), Solomon Teka, with regard to the efforts in conservation and protection of the environment of the Blue Nile basin area.

He said that, to maintain the sustainability of the water flows of the Nile River by conserving the nature and ecology of the water sources and to protect the nation's giant power plant dam, GERD, from unnecessary sand, Ethiopia started reforestation, environmental protection and basin development strategies across the Blue Nile basin and the potential water source areas.

For Solomon, following the commencement of the construction of the GERD, Ethiopia gives attention for the development of this basin especially since 2013. Since the topography of the water sources of the Blue Nile is mountainous, densely populated and suitable for agriculture, the area was degraded, deforested and the water origins are affected which needs recovery mechanisms.

Considering this in mind, the director stated, for the last eight years, annual environmental conservation mechanisms were implemented including huge seedling plantation in the river basin and surroundings. During these years, Solomon said, farmers and pastoralists in three regions, Amhara, Oromia and Benishangul Gumuz, implemented huge land conservation mechanisms during January and February. During these years,



the peoples' in kind contribution in the conservation was over 121 billion birr.

Now, the national attention to conserve, protect, recover and reforest the Blue Nile water sources and valleys attracts the attention of institutions to implement research based projects to support the country's efforts. In this regard, the Lowland Bamboo Development Project, launched by Selale, Debre Markos Universities jointly with Ethiopian Forestry Development targets environmental recovery and reforestation strategy through huge lowland bamboo tree plantation, started in 2021.

During the first year of the project, i.e., the 2021 plantation season, the joint institutions have planted over 250 thousand seedlings of bamboo tree in the area. Similarly, during this year's rainy season, the joint institutions are planting new bamboo seedlings targeting to plant over 200 thousand lowland bamboo trees.

Attending the first round of this season's bamboo seedling plantation in the area, Ethiopian Forestry Development (EFD) Deputy Director-General, Motuma Tolera (PhD), said that the Blue Nile valley lowland bamboo development project is among the major projects of the institution. The first round for this year's lowland bamboo seedling plantation in the project was started in the sidelines of the river basin in North Shewa zone of Oromia State, Girar Jarso district and Eastern Gojam Zone of Amhara State, Dejen district, according to EFD.

Speaking to the media last week, Debre Markos University President, Tafere Melaku (PhD) said that, the university is actively participating in community service to support the people of the area. The Abay (Blue Nile) valley lowland bamboo development project, jointly with Selale University and EFD, is one among the university's community service projects, he added.

For Tafere the area is suitable for bamboo

development and investing in developing bamboo in the area will have double benefits, for environmental conservation and to develop commercial forests. Bamboo is suitable for soil conservation and easily expanding itself, which is helpful to reforest the affected area of the Blue Nile basin and the valleys. In addition, since bamboo is the most important tree for industrial inputs, especially for furniture sector. Hence, he said, by investing on bamboo development, the project aims to increase the forest coverage of the area for environmental protection purpose and to increase commercial trees.

EFD stated that during this year's bamboo seedling plantation in the area, the staff of the three institutions and people of the community were participated. EFD noted that, the project is being implemented by the three institutions with the support of the Government of Sweden and EFD underlines that the Abay valley lowland bamboo development project is among the key national projects under the institution.

According to experts from EFD, the Abay valley bamboo development project was started to conserve the soil from erosion, to conserve the ecology of the area especially in the Abay Bereha area which is more vulnerable for soil erosion and over flood. In addition, the area is losing its forest coverage and the lowland bamboo development project aims to recover the area's forest coverage. According to EFD, the growth of the last year planted bamboo seedling in the area is on good development and the plantation continues this season.

Researcher in Forest sector, Adefris Worku (PhD) told ENA that bamboo is the best plant to protect the ecology of the Abay valley. An expert with EFD, Adugna Admas, also shares Dr. Adefris' idea on the necessity of bamboo to protect the ecology and environmental conservation of the topography of the Abay valley. For the experts of the forest sector, lowland bamboo has the capacity to recover and conserve

a degraded area and protect the ecology within short period of time. For the experts, lowland bamboo grows within three to five years and once fully grown, the plant can duplicate itself with its roots. This makes it preferable to grow the plant for commercial purposes.

Bamboo has the capacity of balancing weather condition; mainly bring coldness, in lowland areas. Not only that, the experts added that, bamboo's nature is suitable for soil conservation and environmental protection. Considering the multidimensional benefits of the plant, the two higher education institutions jointly with EFD designed the Abay valley lowland bamboo development project so as to reforest and recover the affected and degraded area as demonstration. EFD praises the projects progress, though on its initial phase.

Deputy Director of EFD, Motuma Tolera (PhD), underlines that the Abay Valley lowland bamboo development project is among the key national projects of the institution and the project is underway with special follow-up. The project foresees recovering the degraded environment, soil conservation and to make bamboo as income generating plant for the community settled in the area. Motuma noted that, the project is attracting supports which are helpful for the continuity of the project and efforts are underway to make the project a regular task collaborating with the research institutions.

Attending this year's first round bamboo seedling plantation in the area, Selale University President, Eshetu Wondimu and Debre Markos University Community Service Director, Demisachew Shitaw said that, the joint effort of the institutions is both to conserve the area and to benefit the community in the area. They stressed that by realizing the goal of the project, the institutions aim to mobilize the community to plant bamboo and to benefit from it both for conserving its environment and as a means of income generation.