EXECUTIVE RESOLVE

Fuel demand falls as COVID-19 slows down economic activities

Country saves 470 million USD from reduced fuel import

By Kaleyesus Bekele

The demand for petroleum products has declined significantly as the COVID-19 pandemic slows down economic activities in the country.

The amount of gasoline (benzene) and jet fuel import has shown a decline following the outbreak of COVID-19 while diesel consumption remains the same.

Tadesse Hailemariam, CEO of the Ethiopian Petroleum Supply Enterprise, told The Reporter after the WHO declared the COVID-19 as a global pandemic in March, benzene and jet fuel consumption has shown a 20 and 70 percent decline, respectively.

Ethiopia’s daily benzene consumption is 2.2 million liters, diesel nine million liters and jet fuel 2.6 million liters on average. According to Tadesse, due to the lockdown in some regions and slow economic activity observed in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic, daily benzene consumption has declined to two million liters, diesel 8.5 million liters and jet fuel to one million liters.

According to data obtained from the Ethiopian Petroleum Supply Enterprise (EPSE), in March the enterprise planned to import 50 metric tons of benzene but it actually imported 45 metric tons of benzene. In April it planned to import 49 MT but it imported 45 MT, respectively.

By Samuel Getachew

Belachew Yemane, a public relations officer with the Ethiopian Ministry of Culture and Tourism, was to head to China to study for a PhD program, before the plan was put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, he was suddenly killed by what sources say was a holder of a fake police ID, who targeted him on his cell phone.

Robbery gone wrong claims life
Shameful race to the bottom!

A viable nation can neither be built nor destroyed by lies. Whereas ethical values guide visionary citizens when they embark on a nation-building exercise, lies and deceptions are the favored instruments of characters intent on tearing a country apart. For several decades party politics in Ethiopia has served as a cover for a handful of people to get away with countless crimes while the masses were brainwashed into avoiding politics like the plague. These days while some endeavor to practice a civilized brand of politics, there abound forces that mold day and night to use the slightest of differences to dismantle the country. The job of politicians who genuinely seek to take the reins of power through the ballot box is not to exorcize the government no matter what: it’s to contribute its share to deepening the democratization process by, among others, steering it on the right path when it goes off track and mobilizing the public to remove it from office democratically when it fails to mend the errors of its way. Fomenting conflicts and divisions at a time Ethiopia is facing the twin challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and the standoff with Egypt over the filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is deplorable. This shameful race to the bottom is liable to irreparably harm the nation’s interest and earn harsh criticism in the eyes of history.

One of the values which individuals and communities in Ethiopia attach great importance to is according respect to others. It’s a value that has inspired generations of Ethiopians to live in unity and defend their country from foreign aggression. Furthermore, it has played a critical role in the success of centuries-old ingenious dispute resolution mechanisms. Though the vast majority of Ethiopians continue to display respect for one another, nowadays a significant minority are conducting themselves in a manner that deprecates this proud culture. These deviants have no qualms about and in fact consider it a badge of honor to denigrate and hurl detestable insults at stalwarts of the community, respected leaders and even elders. Many are despairing at the reprehensible attack on a value that had held Ethiopians together for eons.

The appalling level of intolerance towards the views of others is discouraging knowledgeable and experienced citizens from sharing their wisdom with the public. Many useful ideas have been prematurely nixed due to the culture of shooting the messenger of an idea taking root as opposed to holding productive discussions on it. The near absence of constructive dialogue on a range of fundamental issues does not only rob the Ethiopian political scene of civility, but is also spawning uncritical and easily incited ethnic or religious conflicts increasingly escalating into violence. Disagreements between ordinary people are increasingly escalating into ethnic or religious conflicts on account of the deliberate erosion of mutual respect. Given individuals and groups that ought to lead by example have espoused mutual respect from their lexicon it should not come as a surprise when the present generation perpetrate iniquities.

In a society bereft of mutual respect such manifestations of moral turpitude as larceny, sexual outrage, mendacity, avarice and rumor-mongering tend to flourish. Mafia-style groups will have the clout to bend the government to their will and buy off the police, prosecutors and judges; they can get away with daylight robbery by terrorizing defenseless citizens; and they will intimidate independent-minded individuals and institutions through politicians, “activists” and media outlets they control and finance. If these criminals are allowed to have a free rein to do whatever they please with impunity the future will be bleak for the country.

While some care more about building, upholding fellow citizens and evincing optimism others tend to sow destruction, pull down anyone who does not toil to sow destruction, pull down anyone who does not subscribe to their world view and dash hopes of a better future. It’s become commonplace to come across hypocrites who have not contributed anything of substance to improving the lot of their compatriots malign citizens diligently serving the nation. There is nothing more exasperating than to witness someone who has never run a family disparage hardworking folks doing their best to help the country stand on its own two feet. Those publishing the proverbs’ efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic while they blatantly disregard precautionary measures have no moral ground to do so. Similarly critics insisting that the launching of a campaign to plant billions of seedlings amid the novel coronavirus outbreak proves that it is possible to conduct the delayed general elections, which were due be held in August, are advancing disingenuous arguments. It’s perplexing why the political class in Ethiopia has to make everything a reason for bitter division and is loath to engage in a constructive discourse marked by respect for differing outlooks and an underpinning of the cultural practices, norms and values Ethiopians have developed over centuries may well turn out to be Ethiopia’s undoing.

Some deniers of the fact that Ethiopians have gone through good times and bad times together go to staggering lengths to peddle a revisionist narrative. They reject the notion that Ethiopians have shared successes and failures. They blame injustices on a certain group in a bid to pit against the alleged victims. They also attempt to portray a people which have co-existed in peace, harmony and mutual respect as estranged neighbors, to stigmatize intermarriage so as to separate intermarried couples. And they resort to insulting, their stock-in-trade, to silence anyone criticing their actions. The persons responsible for this egregious defilement of shared history as part of the strategy to unravel the tie that binds Ethiopians together are, lo and behold, the elite and erudite scholars swallowing in hubs. At a time each and every citizen has a moral obligation to join hands and take Ethiopia to new heights it’s abominable to embark on race to the bottom.
Black Lion decry lack of gov’t attention, protective gear

Dead bodies remain in hospital for up to 5 days for COVID-19 test

Inquiry Board calls for urgent intervention for safety of frontline responders

By Yonas Abiyeh

Officials of the biggest state-owned hospital, Black Lion Hospital (Fikir Abeba), have told the Inquiry Board of the COVID-19 State of Emergency (SoE) that it is receiving less attention from the government preventing it from delivering healthcare services to both regular as well as COVID-19 patients.

On Wednesday, doctors told visiting parliamentarians that it has lent its chief doctors and lead physicians to Eka Kotebe Hospital to attend to patients admitted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, receiving no recognition from the government.

Medical Director of the hospital and president of Addis Ababa University Health Science College, Dawit Wondimagegn (MD), told lawmakers that regarding the appropriate support the hospital deserves from the government, “there are obvious limitations from the side of the government.”

“In addition, the hospital faces acute shortages of health service equipment, protective gear, ambulance vehicles as well as other-related challenges,” he told Inquiry Board members adding, “The hospital has been extensively playing its part in the ongoing efforts of fighting COVID-19 and responding to other diseases, and our specialized doctors are currently deployed at Eka Kotebe and St. Peter’s hospitals where they are discharging their professional responsibilities. However, our hospital is receiving neither any acknowledgement nor any support from the government.”

As part of the nationwide efforts to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, he said “There should be a way to enable the hospital to test and diagnose COVID-19, with amendment to the current SoE.”

Stating several challenges, Dr. Dawit said the hospital’s inability to garner the government’s attention stems from the prevailing communication gaps. He, however, did not give an explanation.

However, he stressed that his hospital has encountered shortages including the lack of isolation space (quarantine center) protective equipment’s, ventilators and laboratory machines.

“For instance, according to the enforcement of the SoE, if a patient dies in our hospital, the body is not released without a test for COVID-19. That means the body can only be discharged from the hospital if it tests negative. Unfortunately, we don’t have permission to conduct COVID-19 test. Hence, a body remains in the hospital for as long as five days. After concluding their visit, member of the Inquiry board, Biruk Lapio (PhD), said that he and his co-members have observed that the number of patients, who are admitted to the hospital with a regular disease but are found to be COVID-19 positive, is increasing every day.

Due to this, the possibility of healthcare workers being exposed to the pandemic is increasing unless shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) is addressed quickly.

“Unless the government steps in with urgency, to provide the PPE, its consequence would be too devastating to cope nationwide,” Biruk warned.

The Vice Chairman of the Inquiry Board, Tesfaye Diba, who shared the concerns raised by his co-members and the hospital officials, on his part said: “A swift and immediate action” will be taken to enable healthcare workers protect themselves first before we let them go to the frontline to battle the epidemic.

Chairman of the Inquiry Board, Petros Woldesenbet, pledged to hospital officials that the Board will discuss with the relevant authority to resolve the pressing concerns echoed by the hospital’s managements.

“At the beginning, we had just a single laboratory that was vital to identify and diagnose the first suspect COVID-19, in the country.” Abiy said.

However, the government has since then intensified its efforts over the past three months to expand testing centers. Now, there are 31 testing laboratories in all Regional States and City Administrations, with the capacity to test 8,000 people per day, he said.

He further said that seven testing laboratories will commence giving services at the end of this week, bringing the total laboratories to 38.

An additional 15 laboratories will also start giving service soon, which will help expand the country’s testing capacity to 14,000 by July. A total of 142, 980 tests have been conducted to date, he said, adding “But in terms of population size, this number is very low.”

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines, infection prevention and control measures include, among other measures: hand hygiene, PPE and waste management materials.

By Yonas Abiyeh

Official of the biggest state-owned hospital, Black Lion Hospital (Fikir Abeba), have told the Inquiry Board of the COVID-19 State of Emergency (SoE) that it is receiving less attention from the government preventing it from delivering healthcare services to both regular as well as COVID-19 patients.

On Wednesday, doctors told visiting parliamentarians that it has lent its chief doctors and lead physicians to Eka Kotebe Hospital to attend to patients admitted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, receiving no recognition from the government.

Medical Director of the hospital and president of Addis Ababa University Health Science College, Dawit Wondimagegn (MD), told lawmakers that regarding the appropriate support the hospital deserves from the government, “there are obvious limitations from the side of the government.”

“In addition, the hospital faces acute shortages of health service equipment, protective gear, ambulance vehicles as well as other-related challenges,” he told Inquiry Board members adding, “The hospital has been extensively playing its part in the ongoing efforts of fighting COVID-19 and responding to other diseases, and our specialized doctors are currently deployed at Eka Kotebe and St. Peter’s hospitals where they are discharging their professional responsibilities. However, our hospital is receiving neither any acknowledgement nor any support from the government.”

As part of the nationwide efforts to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, he said “There should be a way to enable the hospital to test and diagnose COVID-19, with amendment to the current SoE.”

Stating several challenges, Dr. Dawit said the hospital’s inability to garner the government’s attention stems from the prevailing communication gaps. He, however, did not give an explanation.

However, he stressed that his hospital has encountered shortages including the lack of isolation space (quarantine center) protective equipment’s, ventilators and laboratory machines.

“For instance, according to the enforcement of the SoE, if a patient dies in our hospital, the body is not released without a test for COVID-19. That means the body can only be discharged from the hospital if it tests negative. Unfortunately, we don’t have permission to conduct COVID-19 test. Hence, a body remains in the hospital for as long as five days. After concluding their visit, member of the Inquiry board, Biruk Lapio (PhD), said that he and his co-members have observed that the number of patients, who are admitted to the hospital with a regular disease but are found to be COVID-19 positive, is increasing every day.

Due to this, the possibility of healthcare workers being exposed to the pandemic is increasing unless shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) is addressed quickly.

“Unless the government steps in with urgency, to provide the PPE, its consequence would be too devastating to cope nationwide,” Biruk warned.

The Vice Chairman of the Inquiry Board, Tesfaye Diba, who shared the concerns raised by his co-members and the hospital officials, on his part said: “A swift and immediate action” will be taken to enable healthcare workers protect themselves first before we let them go to the frontline to battle the epidemic.

Chairman of the Inquiry Board, Petros Woldesenbet, pledged to hospital officials that the Board will discuss with the relevant authority to resolve the pressing concerns echoed by the hospital’s managements.

“At the beginning, we had just a single laboratory that was vital to identify and diagnose the first suspect COVID-19, in the country.” Abiy said.

However, the government has since then intensified its efforts over the past three months to expand testing centers. Now, there are 31 testing laboratories in all Regional States and City Administrations, with the capacity to test 8,000 people per day, he said.

He further said that seven testing laboratories will commence giving services at the end of this week, bringing the total laboratories to 38.

An additional 15 laboratories will also start giving service soon, which will help expand the country’s testing capacity to 14,000 by July. A total of 142, 980 tests have been conducted to date, he said, adding “But in terms of population size, this number is very low.”

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines, infection prevention and control measures include, among other measures: hand hygiene, PPE and waste management materials.
Senior Accountant, Senior ESG Officer, Senior Actuary and Credit Analyst

The African Trade Insurance Agency ("ATI") is a pan-African multilateral financial institution established in 2001 by African States. ATI was originally launched with the technical and financial support from the World Bank Group and has had more recent support from the African Development Bank. ATI has grown into a market leader for risk mitigation in Africa, establishing itself as Africa’s primary trade and investment insurer and one of Africa’s largest Development Finance Institutions with an outstanding portfolio exceeding US$6bn at year end 2019.

ATI provides political and credit risk insurance to companies, investors and lenders doing business in Africa. For over a decade, ATI has maintained an A rating for Financial Strength and Counterparty Credit by Standard & Poor's, and in 2019 obtained a second A3/Stable rating from Moody’s. ATI’s membership includes African Member States as well as a number of corporate and institutional shareholders. Besides its head office in Nairobi, ATI currently has offices in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

Working at ATI offers unique career opportunities. Candidates are invited to apply for the following open positions:

1. **Senior Accountant**
2. **Senior Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) Officer**
3. **Senior Actuary**
4. **Credit Analyst**

**Role Descriptions**

ATI offers a competitive salary and benefits package and a collegial working environment commensurate with other multilaterals. ATI reserves the right to not make an appointment to the above vacancies, or to make an appointment at a slightly higher or lower grade, or to make an appointment with a modified job description.

The role descriptions and fuller details of the duties are posted on ATI’s website [www.ati-aca.org](http://www.ati-aca.org).

**Qualifications, experience and other Attributes**

The successful candidates must have suitable qualifications, experience and attributes as indicated under the respective job descriptions on ATI’s website. All the roles require excellent communications skills in written and spoken English. Knowledge of French and an ability to work in a multi-cultural environment, will be an added advantage.

**How to Apply:**

i) Please submit an **Application Letter, Personal History Form** (this may be downloaded from the ATI website), **CV**, plus details of your current remuneration package along with details of three referees to [recruitment[at]ati-aca.org](mailto:recruitment[at]ati-aca.org).

ii) For a detailed job description of each role, please visit ATI’s website [http://www.ati-aca.org/about-us/current opportunities/](http://www.ati-aca.org/about-us/current opportunities/).

iii) The closing date for application is **Saturday, 11 July 2020** at Midnight Nairobi time.

iv) ATI will only contact those applicants who are being actively considered for an interview.

---

**SAMKET Engineering and Construction P.L.C**

**VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**

SAMKET Engineering and Construction P.L.C is a General Contractor (GC-1) would like to invite competent & Energetic Candidates for the following positions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Req. no.</th>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Other skill &amp; Training</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Gender Exp.</th>
<th>Specific Exp.</th>
<th>Place of work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Building Project Manager</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>Bsc. Degree in Civil Engineering &amp; Related field</td>
<td>Managerial Skill, AutoCAD, MS Project</td>
<td>8yrs</td>
<td>4 Yrs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Project Out Of Addis Ababa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Auto Electrician</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>Vocational/ Technical School Diploma in Auto Electrician &amp; Related field</td>
<td>4th grade driving license</td>
<td>6 yrs</td>
<td>3 Yrs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Project Out Of AA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Auto Mechanic</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>Vocational/ Technical School Diploma in Auto Mechanic, General Mechanical &amp; Related field</td>
<td>4th grade driving license</td>
<td>6yr</td>
<td>3yr</td>
<td></td>
<td>Project Out Of AA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Assistance Mechanic</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>Diploma in General mechanic, Auto Mechanic Related field</td>
<td>2yr</td>
<td></td>
<td>1yr</td>
<td></td>
<td>Project Out Of AA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Head, Supply &amp; Distribution Division</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>BA Degree in Material Management, Purchasing &amp; Supply Management &amp; Related field</td>
<td>Basic Computer Skill</td>
<td>6 yrs</td>
<td>3 Yrs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Head Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Stock Controller</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>BA Degree/level 3 in Accounting, Material Management Other Related field</td>
<td>Basic Computer Skill</td>
<td>3/5yrs</td>
<td>1/3 Yrs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Head Office &amp; Project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- For all positions experience in Construction Companies is mandatory.
- For all positions Salary: Negotiable & Attractive
- Interested qualified applicants are advised to apply in person by attaching their non-returnable application and CV with all credentials in 10 (Ten) Working days from the date of this announcement. (On Saturdays, our office is open before noon only).

**Address:** SAMKET Engineering & Construction Plc Megenna Gurdoshola road, TSBG Building 4th floor

Tel 0118- 93 15 17 or 0116- 67 67 38/ Addis Ababa/ Ethiopia

www.thereporterethiopia.com
UNDP looks forward to receiving your Proposal and thanks you in advance for your interest in UNDP procurement opportunities.
HoF elects new speaker

By Neamin Ashenafi

The House of Federation (HoF) has elected Aden Farah as its new speaker on Wednesday, replacing Keria Ibrahim, who resigned from the post on Monday, after serving for about two years.

On the same session, the House also elected Eregnet Mengistu as Deputy Speaker of the Federation, replacing Mohammed Reshid, who had also resigned by stating he and the speaker are form the same ethnic group and a chance should be given to other ethnic groups.

It is to be remembered that the former speaker had resigned in a televised statement aired on Tigray TV, stating “I cannot oversee a process as speaker of the Federation, a decision that endangers the constitution.”

Interpreting the constitution is the business of the House of Federation. Under the guise of the Constitutional Inquiry Commission, she said, the government is trying to impose a decision that will lead to an authoritarian government, which she says is “unacceptable to her conscience.”

Following her resignation, the House elected a new speaker and also voted to extend the term of all federal and regional organs of the government. To this effect, the decision effectively extends Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed’s time in Office until the next election.

With the threat COVID-19 passes, the House of People’s Representative (HPR) approved the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia’s (NEBE) decision that Ethiopia’s sixth general election cannot take place in August, as scheduled.

Therefore, the parliament discussed four possible options intending to find a legal solution to what many call is a constitutional crisis. One of them was to seek a constitutional interpretation to constitutionally extend the election and a Constitutional Inquiry Commission (CIC) was tasked to see, if there is a constitutional ground and presented its report to the House, where it voted for the extension of the government’s term.

However, the decision to extend the office term of the incumbent, however, was rejected by the opposition political parties in the country. In this regard, parties such as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC), and Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) issued statements that oppose the term extension of the incumbent.

“Interpreting the constitution endangers the constitution but also endangers the peace and stability of the country.”

Similarly, ONLF expressed its grave concern regarding the process which has resulted in the decision to postpone the 2020 elections and extend the mandate of the government and its institutions, beyond what the constitution allows, according to the statement.

“We believe that any extension of the current governments mandate should have been done through an inclusive and consultative process resulting in a political consensus rather than a unilateral decision by the one-party dominated two-tier parliament,” the statement further reads.

To this effect, OLF and OFC said the decision was illegal and illegitimate. Furthermore, the two parties stated that the decision “not only violates the constitution but also endangers the peace and stability of the country.”

通车

Number of Ethiopians needing emergency aid increases to over 16 mln

The government of Ethiopia and humanitarian partners released this week a revised 2020 humanitarian requirement, outlining additional humanitarian priorities since the release of the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan in January.

The joint government and humanitarian partners’ document is targeting 16.5 million people with emergency food and non-food assistance at a cost of USD 1.65 billion, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said.

The joint government and humanitarian partners’ document released on January 28 targeted seven million people with emergency food and non-food assistance and was estimated to cost USD one billion.

Beneficiaries of the humanitarian support were reduced from the 8.3 million people targeted at the beginning of 2019, which the UN hailed was “a result of better targeting of the most acute needs this year.” The joint document is now revised to USD 1.65 billion targeting 16.5 million people.

“The spike in humanitarian needs is mainly due to COVID-19-related multi-sector impact. USD 506 million of the USD 1.65 billion revised requirement is for COVID-19 impact response.

The remaining funding will be provided by the NEPAD Infrastructure Project Preparation Facility (NEPAD-IPPF) in the form of a USD-2-million grant, and by a contribution of USD 100.000 each from the two countries involved. The financing was approved in January.

The two-year, comprehensive feasibility study will assess the proposed project’s technical, economic, environmental and social viability, as well as alternative financing arrangements, including a public-private partnership (PPP).

AfDB grants USD 1.2 mln for Ethiopia-Sudan railway study

The African Development Bank (AfDB) has approved a USD 1.2 million grant to Ethiopia to finance a feasibility study for construction of a standard-gauge railway link between Ethiopia and Sudan.

The railway line will link Addis Ababa in Ethiopia to Khartoum in Sudan, with an extension to Port Sudan on the Red Sea, according to Logistics Update Africa.

The route, agreed by both governments, stretches 1,522 kilometres between Addis Ababa and Port Sudan.

The grant, from the African Development Fund, the bank’s concessional-rate lending arm, would cover 35 percent of the total estimated USD 3.4 million cost of the study.

The remaining funding will be provided by the NEPAD Infrastructure Project Preparation Facility (NEPAD-IPPF) in the form of a USD-2-million grant, and by a contribution of USD 100.000 each from the two countries involved. The financing was approved in January.

The two-year, comprehensive feasibility study will assess the proposed project’s technical, economic, environmental and social viability, as well as alternative financing arrangements, including a public-private partnership (PPP).

www.therепorterethiopia.com
City administration waives 4.5 bln birr in taxes

By Birhanu Fikade

In order to help businesses withstand the growing impacts of COVID-19, the Addis Ababa City Administration has decided to waive some 4.5 billion birr in interests and penalties on unpaid tax, accumulated since 2005, benefiting some 7,800 taxpayers in the capital, The Reporter has learnt.

According to Shisema Gebreselassie, director of the Addis Ababa Revenues Bureau, not only will the interests and penalties waiver allow 7,800 taxpayers survive the shock the pandemic has caused, but its indirect benefits are also estimated to resonate across 340,000 businesses and individual taxpayers of the city in the form of job protection and the risk to the supply chain.

Although the waiver extends to tax cases between 2005 and 2019, pending files between 2016 and 2019 are the biggest beneficiaries since they will be able to shade back payments amounting to 3.4 billion birr. On the other hand, the waiver for those between 2005 and 2018 is estimated to be around 1.1 billion birr, one-third of the most recent cases.

However, even the principal amounts will be paid on an installment basis, once 25 percent of the overdue is paid upfront. The remainder is set to be paid over a one year period. Accordingly, those businesses that can afford to pay 25 percent of the principal of the unpaid taxes they owe at once will have a 30 percent discount. The decision of the City Cabinet also includes a 50-percent waiver on income taxes for a time period of four months, which they will use to sustain jobs and their business.

Until 2005, some 2,800 taxpayers had been out of business and the city tax authority has overtaken and seized their properties. Out of those, some 600 taxpayers, who have remained in the shadows since they were assessed for taxes, have come out to report that they want to pay the overdue principal as the penalties and interest rate charges have been dropped to ease tax burdens.

During the 10 months of the current fiscal year, some 31 billion birr out of the planned 32.5 billion was collected. The remainder is 3.4 billion birr. According to Wondimu, the newly introduced Export Trade Administration and Contract Regulation that obliges exporters to declare the amount of export items, buyer, estimated price as well as date of export have contributed to the increase in revenue.

“Exporters registered under the ministry are now obliged to sign a contract document that clearly shows date of export, amount of product and estimated price. Based on these information, the ministry will send a letter to the National Bank of Ethiopia as well as to Customs and Revenues Commission in order to have oversight of the transaction,” he stated.

Ethiopia set to produce over 5 mln face masks a day

Ethiopia will start to produce 5.5 million face masks per day to ease the growing demand for face masks as the spread of COVID-19 surges.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry told ENA that some 67 textile factories will soon start production of 5.5 million face masks a day for social care.

Face coverings on public areas and transport has become mandatory in Ethiopia to help stop the transmission of coronavirus as more people got infected with the virus.

Communication Director-General at Ministry, Wondimu Flate said about 67 textile factories in the country have selected to enter into full production of face masks to meet the demand.

Various Industrial Parks have already engaged on production of face masks, he said adding that manufacturing companies at Hawassa Industrial Park are making 10,000 face masks per day with a plan to increase to 50,000 on daily basis.

“We identified textile companies that can produce about 5.5 million masks a day. They already started production and are striving to advance their capacity,” he said.

(ENA)

Nation secures USD 2.4 bln from export in 10 months

Ethiopia has earned USD 2.4 billion from export trade during the past ten months of this Ethiopian budget year, according to Ministry of Trade and Industry.

Ministry Communication Director-General, Wondimu Flate told ENA that the revenue earned has increased by USD 271 million as compared to same period last year.

Coffee, flowers, horticulture, oilseed, textile, gold, and meat are the major items exported to the international market during the stated period.

According to Wondimu, the newly introduced Export Trade Administration and Contract Regulation that obliges exporters to declare the amount of export items, buyer, estimated price as well as date of export have contributed to the increase in revenue.

“Exporters registered under the ministry are now obliged to sign a contract document that clearly shows date of export, amount of product and estimated price. Based on these information, the ministry will send a letter to the National Bank of Ethiopia as well as to Customs and Revenues Commission in order to have oversight of the transaction,” he stated.

(ENA)

www.thereporterethiopia.com
The Reporter, June 13, 2020 Vol. 24 No. 1240

476 bln birr draft budget under standing Committee scrutiny

10.2 percent economic growth set for next ten years

By Yonas Abiye

In trying to cope with the growing need of the economy and the current global pandemic shaking the financial markets around the world, the Government of Ethiopia has presented a 476 billion birr budget proposal to the House of People’s Representatives (HPR) for the upcoming fiscal year of 2020/21.

During the 6th regular session of the House, held on Thursday at the conference Hall of the Office of the Prime Minister, MPs were briefed by the Minister of Finance, Ahmed Shide, on the contents of the draft budget bill, which mainly comprises of Recurrent and Capital Expenditures of some 133.3 and 160.3 billion birr respectively. In addition, out of the total budget, around 176.4 billion birr will be dedicated for regional states subsidy, while some 6 billion birr is proposed to finance Sustainable Development programs.

Defending the budget, the Finance Minister told the House that unlike before, the 2020/21 draft budget bill was prepared keeping in mind maximizing input and outcome correlation and minimizing COVID-19 induced negative effects on the economy. According to the Minister, the latest proposal shows an increase in the amount by about 30.6 billion birr, more than what was presented in the previous year, amounting to an increase by about 7 percent than last years endorsed budget which was around 445.4 billion birr.

According to him, with this budget, the Ethiopian economy is anticipated to expand by 8.5 percent in 2020/21 fiscal year. However, MPs challenged the Finance Minister questioning him on how much the stated growth forecast is realistic while the country is already facing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Responding to the questions, Ahmed told the House that “During the current year, we have achieved a very big feat in our economic performance, amid the unprecedented coronavirus. Hence, since we have succeeded the first year of hardships, we have a strong conviction that there is nothing that could prevent us from achieving at least the 8.3 percent growth by next year.”

Earlier on Monday, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) appearing before the HPR explained that due to the government’s meticulous leadership and commitment for the effective execution of policies and projects, the country’s economy has been performing well during the COVID-19 crisis. The PM, admitting Ethiopia’s predicted annual economic growth has dropped from nine percent to six percent due to the effect of the pandemic, told MPs that a six percent economic progress is “a unique success, keeping in mind that many nations in the world are struggling to register even one percent increase on their economies.”

During Thursday’s session, Ahmed briefed MPs on the detail issues of the draft bill. After a moderate debate on the bill, the House voted in favor of it with no objections. The draft bill was then referred to the Budget, Revenue and Finance Affairs Standing Committee for further revisions.

After going through the revisions, the Standing Committee is expected to bring the draft bill to the floor of the House for a final vote at the end of this month, before the end of the House’s final term. In a related development, on Thursday, the Planning and Development Commission unveiled the government’s new blueprint, which details a 10-year development program, where at least a 10.2 percent average annual economic growth is set to be achieved over the next ten years.

The Commissioner of Planning and Development Commission, Fistum Asfeta made this remarks during a discussion held on the draft 10-year Development Plan in the presence of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and other high ranking government officials, chief administrators of all regional states as well as Mayors of Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa.

According to Fistum, the ten year plan is entitled ‘Ethiopia: An African Beacon of Prosperity’. Developed based on the performance of previous plans, the nation’s vision for 2020, National Policies and Strategies, as well as the various International and Continental agreements.

Though Ethiopia has registered an annual average economic growth of nine percent in the previous Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), it was unable to further sustain the growth, the Commissioner pointed out. However, the new plan is different from the previous national plans, as it is believed to bring about a concrete changes in the living standards of citizens, by maintaining an annual economic growth of 10.2 percent over the next ten years, she said.

According to Fistum, Agriculture, Manufacturing industries, Mining, Tourism, Urban Development, Innovation and Technology are the key development sectors of the ten year plan.

HORN IN BRIEF

South Sudanese soldiers kill civilians in land dispute

South Sudanese security forces killed at least five people in Juba on June 3, 2020 during a violent confrontation over a land dispute. According to a civilian-military transition authority was created to lead political transition. In April 2019, the military deposed long-serving President Omar al-Bashir after using teargas canisters to disperse protesters. Mohammad Fadel, a protester, told Anadolu Agency.

“Our protest aims to show rejection of the UN intervention in Sudan represented by the Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) to support the country’s political transition. The new mission has a mandate to assist the country in its political transition toward democratic governance and in protecting and promoting human rights and sustainable peace.”

Janet Museveni, the president of Uganda, on Wednesday against the creation of a new UN peace mission in the country.

Last week, the UN Security Council decided to set up a United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) to support the country’s political transition. The new mission has a mandate to assist the country in its political transition toward democratic governance and in protecting and promoting human rights and sustainable peace.

Waving the Sudanese flag, protesters carried banners reading “No to foreign colonization of Sudan”, according to an Anadolu Agency reporter on the ground. “Our protest aims to show rejection of the UN intervention in Sudan represented in the mission that was requested by the [Sudanese] transitional government,” Mohammad Fadel, a protester, told Anadolu Agency.

Video footage circulated by activists on social media showed Sudanese police using teargas canisters to disperse protesters. In April 2019, the military deposed long-serving President Omar al-Bashir after mass protests against his rule. A civilian-military transition authority was created to lead political transition for a three year-period.
ActionAid Ethiopia (AAE) is a Gender justice and poverty eradication organisation in Ethiopia. ActionAid works to challenge gender inequalities and the structural causes of poverty through empowering communities to create a critical mass of communities especially Women and Girls living in poverty and exclusion.

ActionAid Ethiopia believes that gender justice and poverty eradication are achieved through purposeful individual and collective action to bring socio-economic changes at household level to local, national and international levels. Empowerment of people living in poverty plus women’s leadership with the support of their allies is crucial to drive through the changes that will ensure equality and eradication of poverty.

ActionAid Ethiopia is currently looking for a vibrant, energetic, ambitious, knowledgeable, experienced, highly capable and motivated professional to lead AAE’s Humanitarian Response work, strategic planning and management processes. If you are looking for an exciting opportunity to work in a new context and be part of a team working to bring about social justice, then look no further.

**Position:** Humanitarian Programme Manager

**Reports to:** Country Director

**Duty base:** Addis Ababa, with frequent in country travel

**Salary:** Very attractive and negotiable based on the experience of the successful candidate

**Duration:** One year, with possibility of extension based on performance and availability of funding

**Job Summary:**

The Humanitarian Programme Manager (HPM) leads ActionAid Ethiopia in humanitarian resource mobilisation at national and international level including representing the organisation in key donor relationship platforms. The position holder will provide strategic guidance, leadership and management of AAE Ethiopia humanitarian programme, with specific emphasis on building AAE humanitarian portfolio, establishing AAE as a strong humanitarian response player and securing funds for humanitarian operations. The HPM is responsible for identifying resources and elaborating programmatic, operational and leadership recommendations for the emergency response in line with ActionAid national and global priorities. The postholder will play a leading role in the scale-up and management of AA emergency programme to increase impact and enable positive change for affected communities. The HPM will also work in collaboration with the Fundraising team to support achieving the organisational strategy.

**Key responsibilities**

1. Humanitarian Programme Management and Quality
   - Develop an overall response strategy to ensure a coordinated and integrated approach to proposal development and management.
   - Ensure timely, efficient, effective and accountable humanitarian response, with local partners, to survivors of natural and/or man-made disasters.
   - Initiate and manage emergency operations when there is no existing AA presence or capacity within Ethiopia, including immediate response to avoid onset emergencies.
   - The postholder will ensure that humanitarian programmes delivered are to the appropriate scale, scope, quality and accountability expected, and incorporate a Gender focus lens.
   - Ensure up to date and quality documentation of hazard and conflict mapping linked with contingency and activity plans to reduce impact and increase capacity of AAE partners to respond to the different crisis.
   - Ensure timely project development that reflects the scale of needs/crisis.
   - Plan and manage human, logistic and financial resources in consultation and cooperation with relevant support teams.
   - Assess needs for and support the development of robust systems in order to manage funding as part of the emergency response.
   - Monitor humanitarian needs, trends and gaps in Ethiopia and design emergency intervention aligned with AAE strategy and scope of work.
   - Ensure AA humanitarian signature is applied throughout all humanitarian programmes.

2. Programme development and fundraising
   - Work with the Country Director to plan and implement long-term institutional donor relationship cultivation and fundraising plans.
   - Work with the Country Director ensure proper compliance to relevant policies, guidelines and agreements of Government, multilateral and bilateral agencies and donors.

3. External relations
   - Experience of senior level representation
   - Experience of commercial bidding and contracting is desirable as lead or sub.

4. Team Management and Capacity Building
   - Lead the humanitarian team. Including team building and development of team capacity, with particular focus on developing skills, knowledge and capacity relevant to attaining the Ethiopia Country Programmes humanitarian objectives.
   - Develop the capacity of the Country Programme’s Humanitarian and Support teams to.

**Required Education**

- University degree, preferably a master’s degree in Humanitarian aid/ action, Social Sciences, Development, Agriculture, or another relevant field.

**Experience and Competencies**

**Essential**

- Minimum 10 years’ experience of which three years must be in the field leading humanitarian and/or preparedness programmes.
- Proven programme & project cycle management skills - proposal and report writing skills; monitoring and evaluation skills and experience.
- Strong understanding of the international humanitarian system, humanitarian principles and standards and how it is applied in emergency contexts.
- Experience in developing and negotiating successful partnerships with institutional donors.
- Proven experience securing funds from key institutional donors, specifically ECHO, DFID and UN agencies.
- Experience in alliance building and networking with ability to link with other players in the development arena and make ActionAid Ethiopia visible in the sector.
- Ability to work on own initiative and ability to work under pressure, prioritise effectively and working within tight time frames.
- Commitment to and thorough understanding of humanitarian standards including Core Humanitarian Standards, and able to train staff in and support humanitarian emergency programming.
- Proven experience of building and leading teams and evidence of strong people management skills.
- Ability to work with others to develop vision into strategy and communicating and influencing this to a wider audience.
- Ability to work under pressure, prioritise well and meet deadlines.
- Commitment to the feminist aims and principles of ActionAid.
- Willingness to travel extensively, especially to remote areas.
- The capacity and willingness to be extremely flexible and accommodating in difficult and sometimes insecure working circumstances.

**Desirable**

- Experience of commercial bidding and contracting is desirable as lead or sub.
- Strong understanding and experience of monitoring and evaluation in humanitarian context with an emphasis on the changes for women and girls.
- Experience of senior level representation.
- Knowledge and experience of emergency and development issues; deep understanding of causes of emergencies, emergency programming and links with policy.

Qualified and interested applicants should submit cover letter addressing how you meet each of the essential criteria for the positions you apply, along with recent CV no later than June 30, 2020 to ActionAid Ethiopia email to hrod.ethiopia@actionaid.org. Please mention the Title of Position you apply for in the subject of your email.

“ActionAid will be conducting safeguarding reference checks on the successful candidate” Only short-listed applicants will be contacted.
Recalling that Ethiopia did not have the capacity to diagnose a COVID-19 case when first coronavirus case was reported on March 13; the PM said Ethiopia’s current effort centers mainly on expanding testing efforts.
Ethiopian Airlines has now about 90 flights per week to transport Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) from China to the rest of the world, he said, adding, China has kept on providing financial support to Ethiopian, for showcasing solidarity during its hard times.

It has successfully reduced the 59 percent external debt to GDP ratio, which had put the country at high risk bringing the state to insolvency, to 25 percent. Prime Minister Abiy said the viable reform measures that have been taken place during the past two years and his government’s successful diplomatic engagements at bilateral and multilateral platforms are the reasons behind such a success.

“Whilst many countries in the world are on lockdown and unable to produce due to COVID-19, Ethiopia has utilized different strategies to bring agricultural commodities to the global market,” the PM said.

Abiy pointed out that Ethiopia’s expenditure for petroleum products has reduced followed by the partial lockdown, availing the opportunity for the country to save hundreds of millions in USD. On the other hand, the purchase of other strategic imports such as medicines and fertilizers has increased since the outbreak.

Furthermore, Abiy said Sheraton and Entoto Park projects, if successfully completed, has international organizations convinced, that Ethiopia would become among the top visited countries in the world post COVID-19. However, despite the aforementioned successes, COVID-19 remains a serious challenge as the service sector is battered and the country’s revenue from remittance has fallen sharply, the PM remarked.

Flying at a time of a pandemic "With words full of praise, Abiy commended Ethiopian Airlines for its active role in combating COVID-19 across Africa, and “its excellent worldwide cargo services that has significantly helped the landlocked Ethiopia become a hub for the continent.”

“These days, many airlines lay-off thousands of workers and demand financial support to survive, but, our flag carrier is doing its business as usual, apart from playing a pivotal role in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.” Abiy said, adding, various leaders are expressing their gratitude to the carrier for its indispensable role in cargo and flight services, during this difficult period of the world.

Ethiopian Airlines has now about 90 flights per week to transport Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) from China to the rest of the world, he said, adding, China has kept on providing financial support to Ethiopian, for showcasing solidarity during its hard times. Moreover, this has enabled the nation to be chosen as a hub for humanitarian aid from Addis to...
As the seat of the headquarters of the Africa Union (AU) and many international and continental organizations, Addis Ababa is considered by many as the “Diplomatic Capital” of Africa. The ever-expanding city is home to many important institutions. Samuel Getachew of The Reporter sat down with Abraham Asrat, The Public and International Relations Director at the Office of the Mayor of Addis Ababa to explore the city’s international relations especially with its various sister cities across the globe and their impact on the development of the capital. Excerpts:

DETERMINED TO CREATE THE MOST SUITABLE CITY

The Reporter: As the public and international relation’s director at the Office of the Mayor, what are some of your responsibilities?
Abraham Asrat: My major responsibilities include overseeing international relations of the city with all foreign delegations in the city including embassies, international organizations and other diplomatic missions found in Addis Ababa under the direct supervision of the Mayor. One of the many fold mandates of the Office of the Mayor is to communicate and work closely with embassies and diplomatic missions throughout the city for various purposes. In addition, I also...
manage international relations with the different sister cities that Addis Ababa has across the globe.

What is the Office of the Mayor relationship with the many embassies and international organizations situated in Addis Ababa?

As one of the largest diplomatic cities in the world, Addis Ababa is not only home to its residents but also to a vast number of embassies and diplomats. They come from many countries who have done our city their homes, whether it is for short or long period of time. Addis is known for its overwhelming hospitality.

Our ultimate objective is to make Addis Ababa the most suitable city to live in. In order to accomplish this vision and maintain the hospitable reputation of our city, we have to make sure we facilitate all the necessary infrastructures to the various diplomatic missions in the city as they are mainly responsible for bringing in these opportunities. These International organizations have various needs that require the attention of the city administration. One of the mandates of the international relations directorate of the Office of the Mayor is to attentively respond to the various infrastructural, social, security and several other needs of these delegations.

We should also bear in mind that there are many development partners and non-profit organizations who are partnering with the government of Ethiopia to play their part in the growth and development of Ethiopia. The city impartially provides all development of Ethiopia. The government of Ethiopia to play their part in the growth and development of Ethiopia.

How many sister cities does Addis Ababa have and what are some of the practical benefits of establishing these relationships?

A city can have more than one sister city. Addis has 21 sister cities all around the world including in Europe, Asia, and North America. We are currently working to establish sister city partnerships with different countries in Africa, and Kigali is in the pipeline and we are finalizing the formation of this relationship with Addis Ababa and Kigali.

A lot of people think establishing this sister city partnership or alliance is a simple diplomatic gesture but it has various practical and mutual benefits to both partnering cities. Sister city partnership could be established on the basis of political, social and economic cooperation. It is a broad-based, long-term partnership between two cities. Many of the pacts between sister cities cut across various spheres such as; political, social, cultural, economic development, tourism, public health, governance, green initiatives and others depending on the geographic and other similarities of the cities.

Over the past couple of years, we have worked tirelessly to establish and maintain mutually beneficial sister city partnerships with different cities across the globe. To give you a recent example, even though Addis Ababa had signed a sister city agreement with Washington DC back 2013, we are recently rejuvenating the practical aspect of our relationship under the leadership of Takele Uma (Eng.).

In order to cement this partnership, the Addis Ababa City Administration named a new roundabout “Washington DC roundabout” in the heart of the city connecting the Bole Africa Avenue road and the AU headquarters. If you look at the strategic similarities between these two great cities, you will notice that they are both national and diplomatic capitals. They host various embassies and multilateral organizations. This enables us to learn a lot from each other on issues ranging from tourism, urban planning, solid waste management, traffic management and green initiatives.

Imagine the importance of this fact to enable our city to learn from one of the great metropolitan cities in the world. More importantly, Washington DC is home to one of the largest well-established Ethiopian communities. This relationship will ensure various forms of protection to the community there.

To mention another specific example of support and collaboration, our sister city in Germany, Leipzig, trained some of our finest firefighters from Addis Ababa and they came back well equipped with several lifesaving emergency response drills. They have similar railway system as we do and the team has learned practically how to respond to fire emergencies in areas such as that.

As you can see, there are several practical and mutual benefits of forming sister city partnerships, and the Office of the Mayor of Addis Ababa will continue to nurture these pacts.

You mentioned earlier that one of the ambitions of the Office of the Mayor is not only to make Addis Ababa the best city for its residents and guests but also to make the city a preferred destination for conference tourism, what do you say are the role of the diplomatic community to make this happen?

As you can see, Addis Ababa is going through a massive face lift and transformation. The Office of the Mayor is determined more than ever to create the most suitable city to live in and to visit. I believe the diplomatic community has a huge role to play in promoting the country’s city’s tourism potentials. The Office of the Mayor will continue to work closely with embassies, development partners, continental and international organizations to promote Addis Ababa in their respective countries as the most suitable destination for meetings, incentives, conferences, exhibitions and also leisure tourism.

As you also know, many travelers transit through Addis Ababa to go to different parts of the world, when the economy fully opens up after the pandemic, the International Relations Directorate of the Office of the Mayor will work hand in hand with the diplomatic community to continue to promote the free transit tour of Addis Ababa for global passengers. I believe utilizing the websites and social platforms of all embassies will have a significant impact on promoting this as citizens are more likely to visit the website of their respective countries before and while making travel plans.

What is the role of the diplomatic community in the Addis Ababa chapter of the Green Legacy campaign?

I would like to thank everyone of the diplomatic community that have taken part massively in last year’s green legacy campaign. Various missions, embassies and international organizations planted seedlings in their respective compounds and in different parts of Addis Ababa and the surrounding region. As one integral part of the Addis Ababa community, on behalf of Engineer Takele Uma, I would like to extend my call to all my colleagues in the diplomatic and international community to take part in this historic campaign ones again.

Finally, how is it like to work under the leadership of Engineer Takele Uma?

Throughout my career as an educator, journalist and various other freelance consulting jobs, I have had the opportunity to work under different line managers, but for me working with Engineer Takele Uma has been a truly unique experience. His passion and experience to drastically transform the city and vision to make Addis Ababa the best place to live in for its citizens is truly inspiring and encouraging. He makes the job look so easy.

For example, rolling out a city-wide student feeding program, the first of its kind in the history of the city is logistically a very complex process, yet, he launched it in a very short period of time but he makes it happen. He gets things done. As a leader, he always makes us feel empowered and motivated. I look forward to continue to serve under him and learn from him.
TRYING TO GET BY AMID COVID-19
By Samuel Getachew

Some are street kids trying to survive on the streets of the capital, but many are laid-off hotel and other workers who have hit a wall in the midst of the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic that has devastated the local economy. Making the once well-groomed and trained hotel workers that are the face of the once booming local tourism sector vulnerable with little social safety net and lots of worries.

“I have been a banquet server at a local hotel and I have been gainfully employed for four years and because of the new reality, the pandemic that has become our reality, I have been laid off for several months and there is nothing in sight that normality will return and that I will go back to work and gainfully employed,” a 23 year old said as he collected takeout food from a food station put together by Chaka Cafe and Restaurant, a local eatery which partnered with Bole Sub City administration to help a community in need for a month.

With the rise of the need for such a service, the plan was extended to three feeding stations and the hiring of laid-off people to help cook and serve and to a still undetermined future. “We started thinking we would fill a need temporarily but it was extended as the impact of the pandemic only increased and its consequences felt by all of us,” Begashaw Meteke, the General Manager of Chaka told The Reporter. “Many of the people we are now working with to execute our mission and the recipients are, for the most part our colleagues who worked with us in the service and hospitality sector and we cannot help but assist them, gives them a hand up at their time of need”.

The food is prepared in a spacious area next to the first Chaka branch near the area known as Chechnya, one of three Chaka branches in the capital, near 22 area with a combination of meat stew and vegetarian dishes. Almaz Arega, 53, is one of the cooks, among half a dozen. She is hired and is content that she can earn money, a living, while serving her community.

“Cooking is my passion and that is what I have done all my life and raised seven children from the income I earned. When I was laid off, I was suddenly jobless and I felt abandoned and defeated and was overwhelmed with much need at home with no income. This program has been a relief, an almost my safety net for my family, and me” she said as she made the last of injera, hundreds she estimates just before noon.

At the 22 feeding locations where The Reporter visited, there were hundreds of people lined up showing the magnitude of the issue at hand and a system that is overburdened with the challenges ahead for the Ethiopian society.

All who came to this station were fed and others that came unexpectedly were also serviced, including those who normally are afforded the leftovers of restaurants and hotels that most seat empty with little business to even sustain themselves but became challenged by the challenges of the time.

A 43 years old man, who refused to give his name, told The Reporter that he feels defeated and humiliated that he has now become dependent of hand-outs after he was suddenly told his service wasn’t needed earlier this year at his place of employment. Like many, the unmarried man worked as a server at a hotel.

“While I have always been self-sufficient most of my life, I feel ashamed yet I feel like I have no choice. The burden of not feeding yourself, to have to line up for food is painful,” he said. The plan for Chaka and partners is to continue the generosity that has been the hallmark of the pandemic where governments cannot do much but need entrepreneurs to be involved and continue to donate and come up with such initiatives to sustain a population in need.

They also abide by the principle they can do charity by also demonstrating the need to wash hands, keep normal distance to help stop the virus from spreading fast at all of their feeding stations. “To us, we are fortunate to help and to contribute and we plan to do this during the challenges of the moment. If we as citizens cannot do it,” said Begashaw, “there will be more suffering and most of the people we are helping will ultimately stand up on their own and I am sure, they will help others in the future. That is our ultimate goal,” he said.

As the need for such feeding stations are fast rising, there are now thousands of vulnerable young people suddenly deported to Ethiopia from Gulf nations, especially from Lebanon and Saudi Arabia needing such temporary support.

With little resources and most not paid fully for services rendered as Lebanon’s economy takes a nosedive and having paid a hefty sum believed to be USD 1,400, there is to be little roadmap so accommodate them in Ethiopia and they are certain to make their way here.

Likely, there continues to be a growing interest from the public to want to help them and others across Ethiopia. In the coming weeks, The Reporter will showcase such initiatives.
(Un)constitutionality of the Tigray Regional States’ stance to hold election

By Belachew Girma

It has been almost a quarter of a century since the Ethiopian Constitution was enacted. For much of these years, the Constitution remained packed away in a drawer with a paper value and ignored by the government at times. Most constitutional and political issues used to be solved by informal political negotiations and manipulation, instead of the formal institutions and procedures. The past two years have been remarkable for the constitutional development of the country as challenging puzzles began to occur from the avalanche of quests for regional states, administrative regions, and quasi-regional states challenging constitutionality of a law enacted by the federal parliament, and now postponement of the sixth election. These all could be seen as a good start to the path of constitutional democracy and constitutionalism while at the same time would lead to dysfunctional system if not properly addressed.

The Tigray Regional State has insisted that the sixth national and regional elections should not be canceled and it will hold the election despite the Federal Government’s stance to postpone it. This uneasy between the two levels of government has created frustration and confusion as to what constitutional and political solutions could it solve. This piece proofs to throw light by exploring the issue from comparative experiences and principles imbedded in the idea of federalism.

Federalism and democracy

There are varying views explaining the relationship between federalism and democracy even if both concepts are subject to varying views of different authors. Some view that both have similar values such as contrary of consent, devolution of power, due representation to work on common objectives, checks and balances, separation of powers, rule of law for the protection of essential liberties, etc. where both are considered as reinforcing role of the people. Both are considered as ‘constantly seeking to accommodate the varying needs of different collectivities within a viable political framework’.

Others view that there is tense relationship between federalism and democracy by depicting that the over-representation of less populous territories in the upper chamber goes against the democratic principle of equality of votes. They also raise the adjudication dispute between the two levels of the government by an impartial umpiring body, usually supreme courts, erodes democracy as it allows unelected judge to quash laws enacted by a legislature. Despite such tensions, the cardinal values of federalism and democracy illustrated above bind them together.

Either way, election is crucial in federal democracies. Some features of federalism make it stand as inherently democratic whereas for federalism to succeed, democracy, various elements are considered prerequisites. It may be far to conclude, as one writes rights puts, that the relationship between federalism and democracy is a by-product of the dialectical interdependence of operational, structural and conceptual variables, all converging to the same desirable state of affairs: a just and stable polity reconciling authority and legitimacy, efficiency and accountability, autonomy and control. In other words, the manner that the two concepts are intertwined conceptually, in the Constitution and practical dynamics shapes the relationship between the two, both having similarities.

The Current Ethiopian constitutional puzzle

The COVID-19 pandemic has become a global crisis compelling government and business to cease or reduce movements. In Ethiopia, the House of People’s Representatives (HPR) declared a state of emergency (SoE) with a view to halt the spread of the pandemic. Accordingly, the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) issued its preparation activities to the electorates on the ground that the restrictions imposed by the SoE have made its operations impossible. The NEBE then submitted a recommendation to the HPR stating that it cannot hold the election scheduled for August 2020. This was followed by the HPR regarding constitutional interpretation from the House of Federation (HoF).

This decision of the federal government faced unending resistance from the Tigray Regional State which insisted that the election should be held before the expiry of the term limits of the incumbent. It alleges that the federal government has manipulated the pandemic to cancel the election and to stay in power longer than its term limits arguing that it is unconstitutional. Several questions might follow from this: how is it possible for the regional governments to organise election by themselves? How much are the arguments to hold the election constitutionally valid?

Whose Constitutionalmandate: it is the time to hold election?

The NEBE is mandated by the Constitution to conduct in an impartial and true form elections in Federal and State levels. The (Un)constitutionality of the Tigray Regional States’ stance to hold election

COVID-19 and China-Africa partnership: the need for more cooperation

By Teshome Toga Chanaka

Africa forged cooperation and partnership with major economies like the US, China, Japan, France, Germany, other EU member states, Russia, the Arab League, India, Turkey, South America, and Korea, among others. No other partnership has attracted as much attention and as much scrutiny as the China-Africa one.

One can be curious and eager to understand the interest behind such attention. It, however, is not my intention to delve much into it now. No doubt, it would be worthwhile to have evidence based analysis as to why this partnership has received much attention compared to others. Partnership and cooperation are undertaken on the political will of both sides to promote mutual benefits of both participants from the synergy it creates. It is on that premise, I intend to briefly look at China-Africa cooperation through the prism of the current challenges posed by the pandemic and well beyond.

Let me give the matter the proper context it deserves.

To begin with, this is an intergovernmental process and as such it is assumed that both sides articulated not only the purposes and objectives but also defined goals as to what they both desire to achieve from the cooperation. And a successful cooperation is best when there is strong political commitment. An organisational framework and well defined areas of cooperation further enable both sides to make an optimal use of their cooperation. China and Africa enjoy long standing and historical relations which were elevated to Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership couple of years ago. The formation of Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) two decades ago enhanced the existing relations between China and Africa to a new height. The institutionalization of the cooperation framed not only areas of cooperation but it also made it predictable and transparent.

The narrative

Many analysts, policy and newsmakers have been preoccupied in narrating their perceptions and views on this particular partnership. Some tend to sound ideologically driven, while others dwell short of evidence and some are even gravitated to be based on perceptions. As a result, many lacked balance, objectivity and suffer from some elements of prejudice. To the astonishment of many, much of such dominant narratives about China-Africa are set not by those who own the partnership but by outsiders. I am not in any way implying that others cannot hold or share their opinions on the matter. However, all of us are entitled to air our notions and we should respect the diversity of opinions as well.

Some two decades ago, The Economist magazine came out with a headline, ‘Africa – a hopeless continent’. That is when FOCAC came into existence. The time is very interesting to note China-Africa Cooperation magazine in a matter of 10 years later wrote another headline, ‘Africa rising’. It is how narratives are set about Africa. Africa is so huge and diverse for anyone to make such a hasty generalization. The recent narrative that China is ‘re-colonising Africa’ economically is strongly refuted by African leaders and apparently not corroborated by evidence. To talk about re-colonisation in the 21st century in whatever form or shape, is just mind boggling.

Africans are mature enough not to allow re-colonisation by China or any other power for that matter. Nor, does China have any intention of the sort. It is also a puzzling paradox for many observers that those who criticise Africa for its engagement with China and those who gratify such a prejudice against the partnership do by far more businesses with China than Africa.

The essence of China-Africa partnership

“If you want to go fast, go alone and if you want to go far, go together,” is an African maxim of expressing the imperative of unity and solidarity, I believe China-Africa Cooperation is a choice to go together and to go far. Many global geopolitical threats today are driven by the current global situation is volatile, complex and uncertain. No country big or small, developed or developing, south or north or east or west, can address the enormous challenges facing human kind in its own.
Eritrea, Djibouti, and Somalia altogether, are still living in that situation with that of the others. Our need is only one – to clean water. That is almost 50 million do not have access to clean water. This day, Ethiopian mothers are still carrying firewood. Meeting the fuel demand falls . . .

Fuel demand falls . . .

The prime minister said.

Finance Minister Tadesse said; however, according to the initial plan, the PM did not order for any shipment,” Tadesse said. “We have been using the jet fuel of the Sudanese but managed to import only 42 MT. EPSP’s import from Sudan in the past two months added up to 32 MT and in May it planned to import 227 MT but managed to import only 195 MT.

The PM was requested to give a clear directive to the Ministry to finance Minister Tadesse said. Ethiopia’s 12 depots have a total storage capacity of 420,000 m.cu of fuel. The main depot is located in Addis Ababa. “We have limited storage, we could not capitalize on the advantage, especially on Jet fuel,” he said.

The price of the fuel in the global oil market has been declining. A barrel of Brent is priced at USD 73. In April, the price of a barrel of jet fuel was USD 15. As we lack storage, we could not capitalize on the advantage, especially on Jet fuel,” he said.

The use of UN Women’s name and logo without UN Women consent is inappropriate. UN Women strongly recommends that people who receive solicitations to apply for positions exercised caution to endure authenticity. UN Women advises the public that:

- UN Women does not charge a fee at any stage of its recruitment processes.
- All information related to these processes is published on the national or global websites.
- UN Women does not request any information.
- UN Women does not offer gifts, words, funds, certificates, scholarships or conduct lotteries through telephone, email, mail or fax.

The use of UN Women’s name and logo without UN Women consent is inappropriate. UN Women strongly recommends that people who receive solicitations to apply for positions exercised caution to endure authenticity. UN Women advises the public that:

- UN Women does not charge a fee at any stage of its recruitment processes.
- All information related to these processes is published on the national or global websites.
- UN Women does not request any information.
- UN Women does not offer gifts, words, funds, certificates, scholarships or conduct lotteries through telephone, email, mail or fax.
Oregon-based artist Kerilynn Wilson was always fascinated by insects, but didn’t know how to collect them without harming them. So she started to create gorgeous hand-painted paper sculptures of butterflies and beetles. These incredibly realistic paper insects convey a sense of delicate movements as the sculptures seem to land or fly away.

For the artist, these paper sculptures are a side project apart from her job as an illustrator and author. The project helps Wilson to relax after painting and drawing for the whole day, which sometimes can be draining. The artist says that painting beetles and butterflies allows her brain to rest.

“I draw and paint all day, which I love, but oftentimes in the evenings I would draw for fun too, which is very draining. I was looking for a way to be creatively fulfilled while allowing my brain to rest. Plus I save all my paper scraps from old jobs, which is what I use for my insects. And that’s how it began!” the artist told Bored Panda.

“My insect sculptures came about for a couple different reasons. The primary being my love of real insects. I have always loved them and collected ones that I found already dead, but I was looking for a way to collect amazing insects without harming them.”

On the right are some of her works.

---

Google’s Duo video calling platform now has invite links on mobile, making it even more of a viable competitor to Zoom and other videoconferencing apps, according to Android Police.

Unlike Google Meet, the company’s more fully-featured platform designed for businesses, Duo is a more mobile-friendly and consumer-focused app. Yet given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, more people than ever before are using video conferencing for casual hangouts at scales much larger than your standard video call. That’s led Google to plan and launch more robust features to all of its various chat apps, Duo included.

The app recently gained a bump in call quality thanks to Google supporting the new AV1 codec, and Duo also now supports up to 12 people on a call. Google also made Meet calls available for free to consumers at the end of April in the event you need a more powerful, web-based option for videoconferencing on desktop or a laptop (though in the future, your meetings may be restricted to 60 minutes).

The invite links were first announced last month as part of a broader feature rollout that including planned web support, which is still on the way, and an already-live family mode for onscreen doodling and Snapchat-style masks effects. The invite links were said to be coming soon.
Signal can now transfer your chat history to a new iPhone

Encrypted messaging app Signal now lets you transfer your account data, including your conversation history, to a new iPhone or iPad from your existing iOS device. The feature, first spotted by The eBook Reader, is available in software update version 3.9.1, although it was not mentioned in the release notes.

Library management has long been an issue for voracious Kindle users. Libraries can quickly grow unwieldy, especially when using a Kindle to read news articles sent from a myriad of read-later services like Instapaper or Pocket. That leads to dozens or even hundreds of items cluttering the layout that can only be removed using Amazon’s rudimentary web interface or iOS and Android apps. Books can also be deleted directly from your Kindle, but if you want to read them again, they will have to be repurchased.

It works, but users have found the new feature to be a bit buggy, perhaps due to Amazon Whispersync delays. Sometimes requests to delete docs never prompted users with the confirmation dialog box; other times, users was repeatedly prompted to confirm that they wanted to permanently delete docs from my library. There’s still no bulk-delete option, but even baby steps with Kindle library management can be celebrated. Amazon is a multinational conglomerate technology company based in Seattle that focuses on e-commerce, cloud computing, digital streaming, and artificial intelligence.

#CityLife

Jolly Bar at Arat Kilo in the 1960s.

On June 10, 1942, in one of the most infamous single acts of World War II in Europe, all 172 men and boys over age 16 in the Czech village of Lidice were shot by Nazis in reprisal for the assassination of SS leader Reinhard Heydrich. The women were deported to Ravensbrück concentration camp where most died. Ninety young children were sent to the concentration camp at Gross-Rosen, with some later taken to Nazi orphanages if they were German looking. The village was then completely leveled until not a trace remained. Pictured are SS officers alighting through the rubble of Lidice.

#ThisWeekInHistory

(06/10/1942) In one of the most infamous acts of World War II in Europe, all 172 men and boys over age 16 in the Czech village of Lidice were shot by Nazis in reprisal for the assassination of SS leader Reinhard Heydrich. The women were deported to Ravensbrück concentration camp where most died. Ninety young children were sent to the concentration camp at Gross-Rosen, with some later taken to Nazi orphanages if they were German looking. The village was then completely leveled until not a trace remained. Pictured are SS officers alighting through the rubble of Lidice.

#REPORTERBOOK

Kindle update lets you delete docs directly from the device

Amazon now supports permanent document and book deletion from personal libraries directly from newer Kindle e-readers. The feature, first spotted by The eBook Reader, is available in software update version 5.12.5, although it was not mentioned in the release notes.

Library management has long been an issue for voracious Kindle users. Libraries can quickly grow unwieldy, especially when using a Kindle to read news articles sent from a myriad of read-later services like Instapaper or Pocket. That leads to dozens or even hundreds of items cluttering the layout that can only be removed using Amazon’s rudimentary web interface or iOS and Android apps. Books can also be deleted directly from your Kindle, but if you want to read them again, they will have to be repurchased.

It works, but users have found the new feature to be a bit buggy, perhaps due to Amazon Whispersync delays. Sometimes requests to delete docs never prompted users with the confirmation dialog box; other times, users was repeatedly prompted to confirm that they wanted to permanently delete docs from my library. There’s still no bulk-delete option, but even baby steps with Kindle library management can be celebrated. Amazon is a multinational conglomerate technology company based in Seattle that focuses on e-commerce, cloud computing, digital streaming, and artificial intelligence.

(06/10/1942) In one of the most infamous acts of World War II in Europe, all 172 men and boys over age 16 in the Czech village of Lidice were shot by Nazis in reprisal for the assassination of SS leader Reinhard Heydrich. The women were deported to Ravensbrück concentration camp where most died. Ninety young children were sent to the concentration camp at Gross-Rosen, with some later taken to Nazi orphanages if they were German looking. The village was then completely leveled until not a trace remained. Pictured are SS officers alighting through the rubble of Lidice.

(06/10/1942) In one of the most infamous acts of World War II in Europe, all 172 men and boys over age 16 in the Czech village of Lidice were shot by Nazis in reprisal for the assassination of SS leader Reinhard Heydrich. The women were deported to Ravensbrück concentration camp where most died. Ninety young children were sent to the concentration camp at Gross-Rosen, with some later taken to Nazi orphanages if they were German looking. The village was then completely leveled until not a trace remained. Pictured are SS officers alighting through the rubble of Lidice.
Food security in Africa during COVID-19

By Lidya Kebele

Food insecurity is one of the major concerns throughout the continent. According to the latest FAO report, 256 million people are hungry in Africa, an increase by 11 million since February 2020. Of the total undernourished population in 2018, 17 million are in Northern Africa and 239 million in sub-Saharan Africa. There are 399 million people who are moderately food insecure in sub-Saharan Africa, i.e. they do not have regular access to nutritious and sufficient food, even if they were not necessarily suffering from hunger. According to WHO, in Africa it is estimated that one in five people is undernourished, and that 30 percent of children under five are hungry as well.

Even long before the COVID-19 pandemic these severe food insecurity facts which are driven by climate change, economic shocks, conflict and war. In areas such as Sahel region, the Horn of Africa, and Southern Africa, which is very affected by the climate change as a result most people are suffering in a serious food insecurity that lasts long. In East Africa, inter-ethnic violence and armed conflicts is causing instability and tension in the region, especially in south Sudan, which resulted in the migration of a large refugee population to other countries like Uganda and Ethiopia. In West Africa, particularly in Nigeria, the continent’s most populous country, the number of underprivileged is approximately more than five million in 2018 - up by 180 percent over the past ten years. In the year 2020 locust outbreak that takes place in the Horn of Africa could result in USD 8.5 billion in crop and livestock damage, resulting in reduced harvests which increase the food shortage in the region. Besides, the region is facing an adverse climate change. Moreover, the refugees and displaced people are among the most vulnerable people and are affected the most. The current COVID-19 pandemic enhances the risks and vulnerability of these people.

The supply chain in the region is affected by lockdowns, border closures and curfews. The pandemic makes hard for markets to keep well stocked, and farmers lack the necessary agricultural inputs like seeds, feeds and fertilizers. This has a real impact on the African Economy, where farming accounts for about 60 percent of total employment. Besides the pandemic, Africa is highly dependent on the imported food from overseas, for instance the continent imported more than 40 million tons of cereals in 2018. In the light of COVID-19 the continent imported more than the national food stock up than exporting to the overseas. This results in supply disruptions and minimizing food system disruptions and ensuring food security and nutrition for all their citizens – especially the poorest and most vulnerable during and after the pandemic due to COVID-19 pandemic. In their statement, the ministers urged governments to “view food and agriculture system as an essential service” and “recognize that all types of food systems – modern and traditional – open markets, small stores and informal (street vendors) – play critical roles in serving different markets.”

On April 16, 2020, in Rome, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the African Union (AU), and international partners jointly declared on supporting access to food and nutrition for Africa’s most vulnerable part of society, providing African countries with social protection, minimizing disruptions to the movement and transport of essential people, and to the transport and marketing of agricultural products, and keeping borders open on the continent for food and agriculture products’ trade. This agreement has been adopted by the AU and FAO and endorsed by all 55 AU member states were represented - 45 at ministerial level. This debate was moderated by Josefa Sacko, Director of the Rural Economy and Agriculture.

In the meantime it’s essential for African leaders and policymakers to step up and respond to food emergencies by distributing seeds for the upcoming harvest season for farmers that will be highly affected due to COVID-19. Besides, mitigation strategies like enhancing food reserve of the country to supply in the case of future food emergencies is a wise move. Moreover, some AU member states should loosen strict border closure rules which link food supplies in countries, especially in countries that are highly dependent on imports and keeping the inter-regional food supply chains.

The challenges of demography and democracy in Ethiopia

By Aynalem Adugna

Do not ask me why former President Lemma Megersa’s trip to Bahir Dar and his declaration of an addiction became the launching pad – a limpet – for my near compulsive tracking of the travails of Ethiopian politics. I couldn’t tell you for sure but my training in demography might have something to do with it. Along the way though, my (not virtual) rendevous relaid the rollercoaster ride of bursting adrenaline rush interspersed by moments of apparent calm.

I say ‘not always virtual’ because I did make a sojourn back home to attend a conference. Political moves by activist leaders provided the backdrop for the aforementioned ride as well as much needed respite points. I consider it years later that the former president’s remarks were not a stoppage along a new road paved first by a visit to Bahir Dar of Oromo youths – the largest demographic block in the country) who sought to declare formal recognition of the ownership of Lake Tana (“Tuma Ajirgan” in Oromiffa). The youth group’s visit was an apparent overture to Bahir Dar of Oromo youths – Amhara youths – who had earlier stood by their Oromo compatriots in the struggle to bring down a brutal repressive system. Demography appears to also have had a hand in the eventual rise to power of the youngest African leader who had barely breathed his 4th decade in age – Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD). The whirlwind ride could give one a whiplash except for the calm manners and call for unity – Mebrero – espoused by the new leader who may have subconsciously discovered the built-up wave of demographic momentum in the country and its capacity to wipe away everything in its path until managed with care and due diligence.

That is precisely what the PM appears to be doing, lest he be swept away himself by the built-up wave of demographic momentum in the country and its capacity to wipe away everything in its path until managed with care and due diligence. What’s more, leaders that rode the demographic wave of the youthful Oromo rights that toppled TPLF/EPRDF’s tight grip on power, to seize opportunities that are available to them now. This includes once-in-a lifetime prospects provided by the PM’s open invitations for political rivals to join forces and help break the cycle of volatility and work, instead, toward achieving and securing long-lasting stable democracy. The key word here is stable.

At this juncture, a moment has arrived for me to lay out my thoughts on the so-called “Political reform” premise: that, despite the able leadership of PM Abiy Ahmed (Adugna’s view)structural change in Ethiopia is unlikely to be decisively permanent unless demographic patterns shift. Unfortunately, however, the shift I have in mind has decades to take shape or reshape.

Here, I am recalling what I referred to during the December
Harnessing the disruptive power of digital to build the bank of the future

By Tesfagiorgis Alazar

In a data centric and mobile first world, the banking industry in a constant flux of innovation driven by disruptive business model and dynamism where failing to provide a seamless experience to customers is no longer an option. The race to catch up with evolving customer needs and pace of technology has become a decisive battle where winner takes all. Though most of the famous bank’s images like “Bank is safe”, “Bank is truthfull” and “Bank is experienced” to take care of my financial assets is not clean as used to be; and banks are at much better position than their new digital competitor, FinTech companies, to exploit an opportunity provided and tranced themselves to the new level if they have a willingness and capabilities to harness the disruptive power of digital technology. In spite of difficult challenges ahead for traditional Banking, there are also abundant opportunities with more excitement presented in the future than ever for only those who have the willingness to transform.

At this technology dominating age, banking is beyond mere money transaction and centric. It is more of having a seamless experience for the customer with diversified products and services. The future of Banking is about the ecosystem and a place for innovation where investors, customers, business and technology come together to build new products that satisfies unarticulated customer needs by harnessing the power of Data Analytics and Digital Technology.

As Data is the new diamond and crown jewel that fuels the Digital Economy, it imperative for modern Banks to formulate and recraft their Data strategy so as to build analytical capabilities which delivers a sustained impact. Having a sound Data strategy, technology and skilled manpower will provide Banks an opportunity to use their internal data and as well as data from third parties and help transform Data to a more valuable asset. Strategizing data capabilities will strengthen the Banks’ capabilities in solving problems, identifying new opportunities and more importantly improves the decision-making capacity of a boardroom to be more productive and relevant.

There is no industry as like Banking which is hugely driven by Information Technology. A study by PWC-a world-renowned consulting service estimated that 81 percent of Banking CEOs are considering the impact of digitalization on financial sector.

Digital environment within which Bank operates are drastically changing thereby availing abundant market opportunities. Winning and harnessing this advantage requires a well-talented and dynamic leadership, organisational culture change, moving from individual centered knowledge to organizational knowledge Base, alignment of Information Technology with Business strategy, application of big data and so on.

Ethiopia Banking industry is more than a century old. Bank of Abyssinia (The first Bank) was established on Feb. 15, 1906 by Emperor Menelik II. Since then, Banking industry didn’t have its own flavor defined by free market policy; rather it was/is still subjected to take a political stance of each and every ruling parties in power. Due to this fact, I dare to say our Banking Industry has been serving a political interest of ruling classes rather than the interest of the market. This is one of the major factors why there is no real transformative efforts have been made in the Banking industry as compared to our neighbors - Kenya. In addition, generally speaking our Banking lack skills, manpower, matured process and tool to exploit opportunities provided by digital technologies. In the following section I have highlighted some of the critical issues that we need to work on collectively, in order to fit and enable our Digital Economy. This demand adopting a Digital and forward-looking mindset from the Boardroom to the Mail room and embrace it.

Harnessing and managing the power of digital disruption

The advancement of technology is changing every aspect of way of lives. The Banking industry is among the top sectors which is being impacted by effects of the digital dynamism, digital disruption. A number of businesses have been disrupted by the wave of technological advancement due to failure to transform themselves adequately or in a fast pace at which digital technology is transforming customers’ expectations.

Kodak and Nokia are typical examples of companies who failed to foresee and harness the advantage of Digital world:

Kodak

Kodak used to be a pioneer in Photographic film industry for a number of decades. This company is often characterized for being unable to adapt to the fast changing innovation or slow in innovation. The reality is far from this. Kodak was the place where the world’s first digital camera was invented and tested. However, the big problem of Kodak was that it couldn’t harness the power of digital disruption towards its own advantage. Top leadership failed to look ahead and anticipate the new look of upcoming digital ecosystem and as well as the challenge this digital disruption would bring into the Photographic film manufacturing sector. Earlier, entry barriers in to film making sector were too high and it was not smooth for a new comer to come-in and compete. This
Some time has passed now since life, as we know it, has been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Moments like this call for a much-needed flexibility in our minds and actions as individuals. Longings can no longer go on as planned. Those of us who always keep a plan B or C aside for emergency and much unexpected situations are the lucky ones when such situations should happen. However, who would have thought that the COVID-19 pandemic would strike and halt life, as we know it?

Take the national elections for instance. Who would have thought that the elections, which already took a long time before a final date was fixed, would need to be postponed as a result of the pandemic? Now, there are political groups who insist that the constitution should be respected no matter what. They have agreed and to wrote the constitution. And people can and should be able to work around it if the need arises. But at the end of the day, this document is created for the wellbeing of people and not the other way around. Plus, people are weak creatures. Nothing can be planned or prepared for when drafting the law. I personally question the real motives of those who insist that the constitution should be respected and obligated to hold an election which meets the aspirations of the Constitution. People are not entitled to organize an election.

Thirdly, the idea of federal supremacy contains states to obey federal laws on matters identified as concurrent. The example of the United States is apparent in this regard where the federal government leaves the area to be regulated by the states and intervenes only in some areas it is identified as important. The argument emanates from the fact that electoral issues should be matters of common importance and hence, should be identified as concurrent powers. Even according to this argument, the federal government has no right to make federal laws prevalent over states.

All these arguments lead us to the conclusion that the NEBE, as the organ constitutionally mandated to conduct election throughout the country, monopolizes this power and no election could be taken without it being involved. An important question that is raised by some scholars is who has the power to determine if the NEBE defied its own rule of making federal laws prevalent over states. Is it the Supreme Court?

Validity of alternative arguments

The arguments made by the Tigray Regional State rests on the idea that federal government has defined the Federal Constitution in failing to hold the election within the time frame. And it stands the defendant of the Constitution and insists to hold the election amid the pandemic and Self. The Central Committee of the TPLF, in its latest press release, reflected that the regional autonomy and self-determination rights recognize the Constitution vests the power to hold the election by itself. They also relate this stand of the regional state to take a more protective measures to human rights recognizing human rights provisions under the Federal Constitution as minimum standards. Most of all, an argument that shows the possibility of holding a federal election amid the pandemic and the state of emergency is made so far by the regional state.

However, these arguments fail to take in account several ideas inherent in federalism and the totality of the effect of holding election on human rights. The ultimate goal of federalism is to create or maintain a larger political organization while keeping regional autonomies in a way solving the problems of scale and diversity, and not to create or maintain a larger political entity.

Additionally, the lack of a federal law and political community implied in the Constitution, it is crucial to see the constitutional leeway for others. Likewise, regional states should not be seen in isolation from the federal government and regional and constitutional frameworks. States are supposed to obey federal laws on matters identified as concurrent. But political communities are supposed to create or maintain a larger political organization while keeping regional autonomies.

Implications to the federation

In the preceding paragraphs, attempts have been made to unpack the constitutional questions and implications of the insistence of the Tigray Regional State to hold the election amid the spreading pandemic and state of emergency. While federalism and decentralization are not inherently having tense relationship, and rather have common ends with federalism, reinforcing rule by the people, it is crucial to make them clear of the political operational realities. It is especially critical and important to pull these concepts to the ground and attempt to solve the current constitutional puzzle.

The current constitutional puzzle in Ethiopia should be approached from this perspective. It may be said on the one hand that regional state should hold the election with the purpose of giving citizens more protection than the federal government and as part of their right to self-determination. On the other hand, it may also be argued that the federal government should hold the election amid COVID-19 is in line with its constitutional duty to protect rights of citizens to health, the right to a fair, and the right to vote.

Both arguments may pick selective aspects of federalism and democracy to justify their positions. However, as both ideas of federalism and democracy are embraced in a single Constitution, it is crucial to see the bigger picture that the Constitution aspires to achieve.

Federalism and democracy, as explained above, reinforce rule by the people through the political organization and structures. And hence, election should not be seen in isolation from the political organization. If so, freedom, but rather total effects of it if so otherwise, federalism and regional autonomies should not be assessed separate from powers of the general government and regional autonomies. Rather, federalism and regional and democratic systems are supposed to give citizens the opportunity to choose their government, balance of power, centrality of consent, etc.

Additionally, there should be a mutual respect among the two levels of governments and principled intergovernmental relations within the constitutional framework. Both levels should be left to solve the current constitutional crisis and fragmentation.

Ed.’s Note: Belachew Girma (LL.B, LL.M) is Consultant and Attorney at Law, Addis Ababa University School of Law. He can be reached at girma.belachew@yahoo.com.
COVID-19 and...  

Cont'd from page 16

Hence, to navigate through uncertain global situations, the need for partnership and strategic positioning cannot be overemphasized.

Therefore, the China-Africa partnership should also be in this context, as a levelling platform and a constructive action to forge a concerted intercontinental approach for management of the pandemic, and responses. And judging from the recognition of multifaceted areas of interactions and convergences of interests, China and Africa are not only important to it, they are absolutely necessary. Let me explain. Africa, a continent of 56 nations, with a population of 1.2 billion, of which majority are young and productive, a continent endowed with natural resources, to partner with China, a country of 1.4 billion, largest economy, largest manufacturing and exporter, and richest and most important inter alia, is unmistakably unimportant.

Principles governing the cooperation

The partnership between Africa and China is based on core principles of equality, mutual respect and self-interest. Both sides uphold the rights of sovereign nations to determine their own development and governance models and policies. Unlike the liberal world order that prescribed one set of development and governance models and policies contrived by “one-size-fits-all”, without taking into account the unique sociopolitical, cultural, and historical characteristics of each country, the China-Africa Cooperation respects policy independence for each country, and its success stories and best practices.

While the Chinese enterprises found market and investment opportunities in Africa, Africans emerged as critical partners in manufacturing, infrastructure development, trade, tourism, technology and more, and worst of all, resources development, making the engagement a win-win one. The Chinese enterprises in Africa have proved to us that China firmly at the wheel of the discourse of development cooperation in Africa.

Institutionalizing the Cooperation

To bring and shape the ever growing interactions between China and Africa, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) has been institutionalized for China-Africa partnership since the year 2000. FOCAC is not a mere concept that defines one country as the only actor or who is left out, or who is left in the process. In fact, it clearly implies a common journey of both African countries and China which takes its domestic and international resolutions channeled towards a shared destiny with an incremental form of strategic cooperation. Under FOCAC, African countries are accessing to China’s accumulated industrial, technological and production capacity and financial resources. China plays a pivotal role in enhancing connectivity, infrastructure development and industrialization in African countries. Its immense investments are creating employment opportunities and contributing significantly to Africa’s economic growth and also transfer knowledge, technology and more. However, it must also be noted that as much as Africa needs China, China also needs Africa, hence there is convergence of interests for both sides to cooperate and partner on issues of common interest.

Go Global, Go Africa

China under the leadership of what can be described as a phenomenal fast social and economic transformation after the 1978 years that marked a successful policy shift and opening up. During this period, China lifted up a billion plus citizens out of abject poverty, unparalleled in a recent history of the world. China declared to make poverty the thing of the past in 2020. Whether this will be achieved under the current circumstances of COVID-19 is to be seen. Inspired by the profound social and economic success of China, Ethiopia, and other African and developing countries, including Ethiopia, have attracted the global economy’s progressive and moved efforts to adapt to some of the best practices to their own settings. This is a very sensible and constructive reaction as China stands out as a lodestar for impressive structural transformation to be achieved anywhere in the world. The long standing relations between the two created a fertile ground for the “Go Global” Chinese policy that encouraged Chinese enterprises to engage in outbound investment. Africa, considered as one of the new frontiers for China’s outbound investment, was one of their destinations. In this case, China is partnering with African countries in sharing experiences and experiences of its success stories and best practices.

The Chinese enterprises found market and investment opportunities in Africa, Africans emerged as critical partners in manufacturing, infrastructure development, trade, tourism, technology and more, and worst of all, resources development, making the engagement a win-win one. The Chinese enterprises in Africa have proved to us that China firmly at the wheel of the discourse of development cooperation in Africa.

China and Africa, was given impetus by a pledge of USD 60 billion by President Xi Jinping at the beginning of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in 2018. Another USD 60 billion was earmarked for the Belt and Road Initiative of cooperation; industrial production and infrastructure construction, trade facilitation, given development, capacity building and so on. For people and peace and political commitment of the Chinese leadership to the mutually beneficial partnership for Africa, China has created a new relationship of historical opportunity in pursuing win-win and sustainable partnership.

The goals set forth in various dialogues and forums for Africa and hence reflect mutual interest. What is in progress is the realization of the pledges made at the summit.

To that effect, action plans are being put in place at the coordinating meetings in June 2020. The focus is on active interest in peace and security programs and missions in Africa and some agreements have been signed to realize peaceful, prosperous and improved landscapes which are the key pillars of the 263 African Agenda. FOCAC is waying a platform for dialogue, consultation and coordination of the policies of China and African countries, and it has become a model of South-South cooperation. So far, in nearly two decades, China has become its biggest economic partner in trade, investment, infrastructure development, financing and development assistance. Currently, there is no other country with such depth and breadth of engagement in Africa as China is. As illustrated in many concrete results of cooperation on the ground, the Chinese speak volumes for Africa.

Another milestone in China Africa relations is that will complement FOCAC is the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Given this initiative’s own vision and aims, it is a coordinated political arena, financial institutions and resources, and it will not simply account for FOCAC achievements, but will reinforce and expand the scope and depth of cooperation. For African Belt and Road Initiative participating countries, it means that resources in addition to their domestic resources become available under the Initiative. But perhaps more importantly, it also means additional investment opportunities; areas that are being promoted under BRI are industrialisation as such infrastructure development and infrastructure will receive even stronger support from China, which may help fast track the implementation of projects in those areas. As BRI is not limited to bilateral relations between China and African countries, but aims to connect Asia, Europe and Africa. The Belt and Road Initiative can bring new connections and exchange with countries along the Maritime Silk Road, South Asia and South East Asia.

Let me be very clear here. Like any partnership, the China-Africa partnership was never spared from criticism, cooperation, and often times suffer from gross generalization and lack of evidence based approach. One should always bear in mind that when talking about successes of such partnerships, micro level analysis is important. Africa, however, continues to suffer from being treated as one single entity and generalization of the diverse and huge continent is bound to be misleading. Apart from that, it also add that there is no country or region or continent that can be isolated avoiding China or Africa. As indicated above, it is obvious that Africa also has had some challenges with multiple countries and unions.

But why is there too much of a deafening noise surrounding China-Africa relations? Are we leonians expressing their strong love for it or are we lacking balance and objectivity? I believe, it has come to treat Africans as grownups who, can differentiate what is good and bad for themselves. The patronizing attitude by some who see narratives about the partnership does not seem to be in good faith. Do not get me wrong, I am not only pointing on short term partnerships. No partnering is perfect. Not even China-Africa partnership. The capacity to transform processes, infrastructure, technological capability, issues related to good governance, corruption, health, imbalances, value addition, debt stress et cetera are challenges that are being faced by the continent. And there is no immediate health concern due to the pandemic. Joint efforts in projects implementation in Africa, will not account for the China-Africa economic recovery plans.

The issue of debt relief and suspension within the agreed framework will not be well under consideration. However, although as Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed wrote in a recent piece he contributed to The New York Times, no means sufficient to save the fragile African economies from the current predicament. The need for post-COVID19 recovery and reconstruction plan is clearly evident. I also believe that it is time to adjust and prioritize some of the ongoing FOCAC programs in consideration of the new situation dictated by the pandemic. China has investments in Africa. While China is supporting Africa’s needs for health, investment, financial, support and economic cooperation. Many private and public sector enterprises which offer solutions that Africa need. If not, chances are that these solutions will be negatively impacted and both sides will incur losses. And for sure, we are on the right track on both sides. That is why there is a need for more cooperation and engagement.

In conclusion, the China-Africa partnership is a mutually beneficial endeavor. It is a work in progress and with strong commitment and determination. I have no doubt that it will be a model of success for South-South Cooperation. It is a Chinese slogan, nor is it an empty talk as we can see in the project delivering results and changing the living conditions of Africans. Instead, it is a challenge, more cooperation and not less is the solution.

Ed’s Note: Tesehum Tega is the Ethiopia Regional Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the People’s Republic of China. The article is an abridged version of an article on his personal capacity. The opinions or views expressed in this article are the author’s own and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Embassy of Ethiopia. The author is a member of an organization that he represents and The Reporter.
The challenges of . . .

CONT FROM PAGE 20

2019 conference as “Age Structure Transformation” or AST. Such transformations present an opportunity to enjoy the fruits of what demographers call, the “Demographic Dividend”. If leaders only seek to address or advance the political demands of the generation of youth they represent, which often includes taking up or sharing power, the stabilizing actions now taking shape under PM Abiy will continually be challenged.

Ethiopian demography and the illusive demographic dividend

A country is said to be reaping the benefits of a demographic dividend when the age structure has shifted enough for a large segment of the population to be in the tax-paying post-college, pre-retirement age range. This is marked by a significant increase in the middle (not the bottom) of the age pyramid. Since Ethiopia’s median age is 19 (half of the county’s population is 19 years old or younger), the bulge is firmly at the bottom, not the middle (Figure 1). That is why I called it “bottom-heavy” during my interview with Financial Television. Researchers attention to demography and its sustained impacts on democracy building or the creation of solid sociopolitical paradigms is growing. This includes a more in-depth understanding of how the demographic dividend happens, how long it lasts, and its sustained impacts on democracy building.

However, while the confluence of economic factors with demographic tendencies is widely recognized, demography’s impact on democracy and political stability, i.e., what it foretells about future revolts, youth uprisings, revolutions, or reforms (as in the case of Ethiopia), etc. are not fully understood. That said, the demographic-democracy interface which is in rapid advance and can equip us all with new insights on future developments, especially when considered in combination with economic, political, and sociopolitical paradigms.

Ethiopia and Sudan: democracy and the road to democracy

Professor Abbink refers to Ethiopia’s and Sudan’s age structures as “not mature” because it is skewed towards a high proportion of young and economically dependent populations. Such age structures are shown by research not to be favorable for democracy building or long-term political stability, but instead for recurrent political contention and violent uprisings and uprisings. In other words, considering Ethiopia and Sudan that have low median age rates (49.9% below age 15 and 21.6% below age 5) and high annual growth rates which lead to high dependency ratios (often cited at 65% or more), the width of the population between ages 15 and 64, which is nearly double the size of the population between age 0-14 and the age group 65 and over will have clear implications for both the political economy and the political configuration and organization of power.

In Ethiopia, however even as the premise of democracy offered by PM Abiy was being well received by the masses, grumblings among those in the minority to stress of past grievances and group-think, started to advance the demands of their so-called constituencies. Hence fragmentation along ethnic-regional lines soon began triggering the PM’s call for unity. As an example, an article in Addis Standard titled “Dangerous Intergroup: The anatomy of Ethiopia’s Mismanaged Transition” sought to highlight the author’s conviction that the reform movement was being mismanaged by the PM.

I respectfully disagree even as I fully sympathise with the author going back to high school years (family feud?), or economic reasons, political flame-throwing losses sight of the disruptive potentials of a youth uprise, lack of societal structure and its capacity to breed endless generations of reproving youths. It also loses sight of the specter of 27 years of ethnic groupthink and politicking anchored in old grievances against generations of perceived offendoers who are no longer alive but enshrined in quarter century inertias by TPLF’s twisted twist in the so-called constitutional feudalism or regional self-determination.

What about Sudan?

According to Professor Jan Abink, two series of urban-centered youth uprisals while Ethiopia’s revolts were mainly local and male youth with focal points in rural or peri-urban counties. Other differences include the fact that in Sudan, a protestor’s ethnicity did not have a prominent role as it did in Ethiopia (or was mentioned in a single article), i.e., perhaps the most significant and possibly most consequential difference is the role of professional organizations in Sudan, specifically that of the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA) a non-ethnic civil society groups in existence since the 1960s, and d) while the narrative of national unity and joint destiny re-emerged in Sudan, accounts of ethnicized grievances pushed by the political elite came to dominate the arena, shifting from cheap phrase fueling ethno-regional agendas with unclear civic rights goals and economic expediency and vested interests rather than principled engagements.

According to Professor Abbink, the cities have an influence with potentials to embed elements in regional stable social order with possible subversive actions (as the TPLF is). In Tigrai has been suspected of doing) or mischievous acts by elements in armed forces (this happened in the Amhara region). By hierarchical institutions, the professor is alluding to what is currently being referred to as ‘deep state’ across the political geography of the United Arab Emirates. In addition, the political conflict in Sudan that has been ongoing since the 1993-1994 War has left the nation remains pinned on the face of the prevailing COVID-19 threat. Remarkably, many failed to tune into the national discourse (unaware or by design), or heed persistent calls for unity that PM Abiy Ahmed had powerfully aligned with.

Unless political contests calibrate their views and actions with the prime minister’s message of unity and stability, the country will most likely continue to face youth contestations along with conditions of significant unemployment and economic uncertainty. The article also showed differences and similarities between two uprisals and reformist governments’ agendas in Sudan and Ethiopia as well as the key pressure points for the two countries.

Further, it reviewed the ten of Professor Abbink’s keynotes which suggested first and foremost that, in Sudan, ethnicity and its demographies did not play a divisive role, but that it did so in Ethiopia, even as groups such as Oromo youths voiced support for Abiy’s government as vice versa in the early months that set the stage for the rise to power of PM Abiy Ahmed.

Secondly, it showed that, in Sudan, women were much more influential in the demonstrations and in the media whereas in Ethiopia they were a clear minority, partly due to Ethiopia’s protests occurring primarily in small town and rural setting, not in the capital or other large cities.

Thirdly, unlike the influencers in Ethiopia who had their roots in ethnic constituencies, professional organizations and non-ethnic civil society groups led the protests in the Sudan. But last not least, the discourse of national unity and joint destiny re-surface in Sudan, but only hatingly in Ethiopia, where feelings of historical grievances against a generation of persons who are no longer alive (mainly long-gone heads of different governments who are now Amhara) seemed to dominate.

Ethnized regional elites are the most likely elements to advance regional agendas even in the face of the prevailing COVID-19 threat. Remarkably, many failed to tune into the national discourse (unaware or by design), or heed persistent calls for unity that PM Abiy Ahmed had powerfully aligned with.

And in this way, the fate of the nation remains pinned to this generation of political leaders’ success (or not) in understanding the undercurrent of demographic forces and the balancing act it requires to achieve political liberalization and a stable democratic future for Ethiopia. Ethiopianness does not have to remain an addiction for this to happen. Just a principled acceptance coming from somewhere deep in out emotions.

Ed’s Note: Aynalem Adugna (PhD) works at the California Department of Social Services, and adjunct faculty at Addis Ababa University. The views expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views of The Reporter. He can be reached at AynalemA202@gmail.com.
led the leadership of Kodak to enjoy the status quo and to not anticipate the digital world wouldn’t have a such high barriers due to fact that a general purpose semiconductor chip for digital imaging has a broad applicability and has its own scale and learning curve which made the sector to be with far fewer entry barriers compared to previous one. This and other contributing factors such as its conservative organizational culture which suppress the power of innovators, have made Kodak’s business platform obsolete, vulnerable to ‘threats’ coming from new entrants and prevented the company from actuating taking decisive action to combat the inevitable challenges when it should have done ago. As a result, Kodak became a victim of digital disruption.

Nokia

Nokia was a leader in revolutionizing a mobile phone industry. It had managed to establish the most recognizable and valuable brands in the world in a short span of time. Back in the years, before Apple and Samsung revolutionizing a mobile handset market, Nokia was the only roaming cell phone brand in the market. In 2006, the Global market share of Nokia mobile was beyond 40% in the world. During this period Nokia was leading the market in profit and as well as in sales. Today, that is no longer the case. Now, the world is a very different planet for the company used to be at the top and leading the global mobile phone market. The market share for Nokia smartphone has completely been wiped-out and its leader position was taken away by Apple, Samsung, Huawei and others new entrants who didn’t have any previous experience in the space. The culmination of Nokia mobile came to its soft death by being sold out to Microsoft in 2013. Nokia grew quickly to become one of the most recognizable and leading brands in the mobile world and its collapse was equally so.

Why Nokia failed? not because Nokia wasn’t an innovative company. Indeed, there was a lot of success history of innovation to be told which could have been taken as advantages. With Nokia mobile phone, millions of novice mobile phone users were acquainted themselves with a basic mobile phone’s features and its early innovation success enlightened the mobile world. The main cause of Nokia was that their innovations were sustaining only. As Albert Einstein said, “The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again but expecting different results”. Decide back the top leadership of Nokia couldn’t anticipate mobile phone would revolutionize every aspect of our lives; in commerce, finance, health, education and entertainment and etc. This kind of leadership failure made the company to not to prefer a sustaining innovation over disruptive innovation. Sustaining innovation is routine and happens on an incremental basis. I.e. a tendency of producing a product they way market expected you to do with a little improvement in technology or without creating new value or market. As opposed to sustaining innovation, Disruptive innovation is about significantly altering and improving a product or service in ways that the market did not expect to do. The principles of “Sustaining Innovation” and “Disruptive Innovation” had kept Nokia in an “innovator’s dilemma”, the choice that many companies usually face. Nokia had two choices: either cling to the existing market by doing the same thing again and again, yet slightly better (sustaining innovation), or capturing new markets by embracing new theories and technologies and adopting new business models (disruptive innovation). Sadly, the choice Nokia was sustaining innovation which became a key reason for its failure.

In other dimension, Nokia’s leadership had a wrong assumption about its their company such as; they used to believe that the market was completely under their control and the company is “too big to fail”. They even saw themselves as partners or even competitors who determine where should the market would go next. This made Nokia to be a victim of its success. It is good to very fast, but without having a good strategy to address the potential uncertainty in future this can be a death sentence. The market flooded because it refused to play by market value. They Overestimated their Strengths in the area of innovativeness, market share, brand reputation and etc. It mainly focused its major business activities and success and sustaining those, by having little space to focus on new ideas, values and breakthrough technologies to grow and retain their leadership in the market. Lastly, those and the uncorrelated problems pushed the used to be giant company in mobile market to become a victim of its own success.

Safaricom (M-Pesa)

M-Pesa, is the first African company to provide Banking services to millions of unbanked and underbanked Kenyans without having a single branch office on which a conventional bank relies to provide most of their banking services. It can be said as a prime example of success as a disruptive force in the financial industry of Africa. M-Pesa mobile banking app were designed and developed by Safaricom 12 years ago to cater for Kenyans without access to the formal banking network. M-Pesa has revolutionized Kenyans’ access to banking services and has been proved to be a model of success in mobile money business across the world. Only 14 percent of the Kenyan population had bank accounts in 2006; this figure rose by 34.4 percent in 2014. Based on a survey conducted by the central bank of Kenya and PDS Kenya, a campaigner for financial inclusion in Kenya, 41 percent of the Kenyan population had an account. Most of the rise in access to Banking services had been driven by mobile phones. This put Kenya as 3rd Ranked nation, next to South Africa and Seychelles in terms of access to financial services. Currently, M-Pesa with more than 53.5 Million active users, it is leading the mobile banking industry in Kenya. Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) data shows that mobile money transactions stood at Shs.98 trillion (US$3.85 billion) in year 2018; this was 10 percent from the preceeding year. This means an average value of USD 108 Million money was transacted per day from a branchless banks (mobile banking). M-Pesa, as the Disruptive force, the way of Doing Business in East Africa. It positively impacted lives of so many people who didn’t have any access to Banking services as well as a big player in the overall Kenyan GDP.

Ethiopian digital banking: United Bank

The highly regulated Banking and financial sector of Ethiopian market is witnessing a constant metamorphosis. A few Banks came to understand that the old business model can no longer serve the current and as well as the future market needs. This is due to the mere fact that Digital disruptor is transforming the way financial sector operates such as; Internet Banking, ATM, Mobile Banking, Debit Card, E-Check, Electronic Bill Payments and more. Thus, to these, Ethiopian banks are being forced to either partner with FinTech companies to develop their own solutions. However, due to lack of skilled manpower and less emphasis on innovation, our Banks couldn’t be successful in their own solution or product. This means, either they have to acquire technology or partner with FinTech companies. In spite of all of our major revenues in the area, we managed to get a few glimpses of Hope from few Banks like United Bank. For the last more than 15 years, the Bank has taken bold steps in transforming the Bank and preparing it for the digital economy. The following two success stories of the Bank can be seen as major milestones in Ethiopian Banking Industry:

Major success - story one

By relying on its internal staff, United Bank had managed to build some of the E-Banking solutions like Text Banking, BLMT (Broadband Local Money Transfer) 15 years ago. The introduction of BLMT, a application which uses a broadband connection, was a quiet departure from the old way of doing money transfer-service at the traditional banks. By leveraging the then Broad Band technology as opposed to telephone line, the Bank made it possible to transfer or send money from one location to another in real time. As first entrant or intruder of the technology, the Bank benefited a lot from this technology in terms of customer satisfaction, additional revenues and cost saving (elimination of telephone expense). At that time, this was marked as a breakthrough for the Banking sector.

The second breakthrough success story

In the other milestone achievement, United Bank had managed to deploy (customize and configure) its Core Banking application by relying on its own internal staff. This Bank the only one to successfully deploy big application like Core Banking that requires massive customization and human capital development and etc. Technology acquisition alone cannot define the future of Banking and it’s the presence and collaboration of Technology with new Business model, human capital and etc. They made it happen. It is my firm belief that with the current leadership the Bank will do more to become more competitive in the digital world.

What should define our digital bank as a “Future Bank”?

The Ethiopian financial sector is no more in a closed state. It is being opened for others to come in and compete. This shows that the future challenges might be list. Other than that, our financial sector is much more competitive in the digital world. As we can see, most of the E-Banking technologies like Mobile Banking, Internet Banking, ATM, POS etc. are being operated by our Banks and not serving customer satisfactorily. Our Banks’ ATMs are usually down or out of service for a very simple problem, power failure, insufficient fund or operating system (software-related problem. Based on the data I gathered, it is almost impossible to find a single ATM which managed to get 60 percent or more ATMs operational at any given point. The same is true for other E-Banking technologies like POS, Mobile Banking and etc. One can walk into the nearby super market and check bitter fact of this. There are a number of occasions when it is not easy to find a single ATM. POS out of dozens of different POSs stuck under the table of a counter and etc. This is no more in a closed state. A big startup failure which is easily removable. Banks have been investing a lot on new technologies, yet customer satisfaction is very low or not yielding a benefit what Banks anticipated. Most of the recurring problems in our Bank industry are attributable to absence of matched process and skilled manpower to leverage on technologies; the business as usual mindset which is defined to drive the old business model at the center of core business operation; understanding role technology in transforming Banking business and digital IT misalignment in the habit of thinking the traditional retail Banking service as the major revenue generating section when that is no longer the case in digital Banking. The lack focus to digital processing and human capital development and etc. Technology acquisition alone cannot define the future of Banking and it’s the presence and collaboration of Technology with new Business model, human capital and etc. They made it happen. It is my firm belief that with the current leadership the Bank will do more to become more competitive in the digital world.
SUPPORT FOR THE DISPLACED

Adama General Hospital in Collaboration with DCT Entertainment has donated over 5 million Birr for communities displaced from the Somali Regional State. The beneficiaries settled around town of Sululta, numbered 3000, were supported in terms of general healthcare services and COVID-19 related protection material.
Harnessing the... CONT'D FROM PAGE 25

strategic digital banking and making strategic investments for the future, our Banks can build a foundation to drive future innovation and remain competitive. It is these following mentioned points as essential elements to build a future Bank and help our Banks stay competitive in digital banking industry.

Going beyond the ecosystems of traditional core banking businesses...

In Digital world, a competitive advantage is achieved when our Banks innovate to meet consumers' need. Unprecedented disruption is going across the Banking industry due to advancements in technology field. The power of disruption is eroding/obsoleting the very core of Banking Business model thereby stretching the traditional Banks’ IT system in to their limit. The potential risk which our Banks sector currently faces is more exacerbated by the wave of new competitors called FinTech joining the financial market. FinTech companies best known for leveraging new technologies, new business model, ability to rapidly respond to the increasingly changing consumer environment, low or no-cost operation, and new opportunities offered by the new play-participants in financial market. The advantages FinTech companies have in the mentioned areas are enabling them to capture more the banking value chain, providing different service like payments, checking and saving even which could significantly erode revenues of Banks in a very near future. The major challenge for our Banks is no more core Banking service for future Banking industry. Our Banks have to go beyond the ecosystem of traditional core Banking service whose profit contribution is declining continuously. I say more focus must be provided to innovative customer experience such as in how to increase values to customers by personalizing interaction, promoting and introducing a simplified access to Banking service through technology.

Becoming a data-centered bank...

The main feature of digital Bank is being at the center of consumers’ or customers’ life: how much do we know about our customers? and how much data of our customers are converted into meaningful business value? These are keys in driving Banks to develop organizational capabilities such as; relevant skills, process, and technologies, which enables to top customers’ data. In a digital market, having a data at the center will enable to have a more complete view of customers’ need and understand the value this can drive for customers. Banks are gettingparticularly in seeing what its clients are willing to pay and their respective customer partners as compare to social media which has a very limited insight only into what can attract our attention. Accessing and utilizing this Big Data must be a top and urgent priority of Banks to have more understanding about their customers’ needs, tastes and so on to accordingly deliver a better Banking service. To become a Data-centered Banks, our Banks need to give more emphasis to the following areas:

- Training and organizing skilled manpower (team) in the field of data analytics and partnering them with the Bank’s Business team.
- Developing the right process and technology to exploit customers’ data (from internal & external sources). This might include deployment of a platform where data analyzed and monitored end-to-end using different technology such as AI (Artificial Intelligence).
- Data Governance: Previously, data governance is more of protection, authenticity, timely delivery and quality of data in process, in transit and at rest stored. As data getting into the center of core of business operation, having a strong data governance that encompasses the exploitation of more data (both internal and external) in a more appropriate way is becoming a priority. Having a principle of “more data has more opportunity” in mind, Banks have to exploit data at their premises and outside in ethical way.
- Improving employees’ digital maturity.

Our Banking industry lacks a digital matured human capital. This indicates more effort and investment in developing the right human-capital is a paramount to generate more expertise than it has today. The advancement of technology and broader trends are hugely redefining Bank’s work-force need. In near future, Banks might have substantially very few employees with different set of skills as compare what they currently hired. When it comes to the work force of future Bank, the following are very critical: identifying Bank’s sets of skills and experiences needed to stay competitive (and to catch up with anticipated customers’ expectation and technology change); developing a strategy in how these sets of skills and experiences can be acquired or developed; developing a mechanism in how these capabilities are used; and finding the right leaders who promote innovation and manage change which must be a top priority agenda of Banks. As digital technology changes so employer’s role does. A future digital Bank needs more innovators, not IT operators who spend most of their time in debugging and fixing error. In this direction Banks have to quadruple their effort in training and reskilling employees continuously to catch up with the unprecedented change. Having a capable digitally matured employee will enable Banks to keep up with their customers expectation and rapid advancement in digital age. Employees’ and Bank’s digitally maturity must be aligned or catch up with innovation of the ecosystem if our Banks have to succeed.

Boardroom and technology...

The biggest challenge for our Banking industry is not customers, but Boardroom. Our Boardroom cannot push every technology related role to CIO, CTO or IT director anymore. It is very critical to maintain the right technological DNA to get the full board involved in technological decisions process. Most Banks’ boardroom looks a traditional boardroom where conventional or traditional core banking services like loan and saving are frequently discussed. In ecosystem where digital Banking is taking momentum where technology leads and influences business strategies corporate cannot be competitive when its boardroom fails to realize the importance of technology and as well as the disruptive power of technology. Bridging the boardroom’s technology gap is a crucial thing that all Banks should do quickly. Banks’ top executive management should acknowledge that technology topics are among the top agenda which frequently discussed in the boardroom. It is also imperative and new roles for Bank’s Board member to understand these disruptive changes and to go beyond the usual and traditional IT conversation like about “acquisition of computer servers and Routers”. Due to lack of technological/digital Banking know-how most of our Bank’s board directors find difficulties to engage in strategic dialogue related to technology whenever related agenda frequently appears inside the boardroom. This is one of the biggest challenges that should be overcome. Thus, our Banks need to overcome this kind of challenges by providing a regular trainings and awareness workshop for their board members.

Business and technology alignment...

“Business Technology alignment is a process in which a business organization uses information technology (IT) to achieve Business objectives - typically to improve financial performance or marketplace competitiveness. Some definitions focus more on outcomes (the ability of IT to produce business value) than means (the harmony between IT and business decision makers or the organizations)”. Today, Business strategy is becoming more of technology strategy and is being influenced by it. A perfect marriage or alignment between technology and business which can realize profitability, sustainable growth and high ROI (Return on Investment) is mandatory.

To have A perfect marriage between Technology and Business, our Bank have to take the following course of actions:

- Understanding and acknowledging technology as instrument to transform the business.
- Translating business objectives into measurable IT services.
- Technology unit must understand the business ecosystem, identify every critical resources of the business and make sure that all required infrastructures are designed and built-up to provide the expected (minimum required) service at optimal level.
- Technology unit of Banks must consider itself as a point-of-contact. It has to manage all Banking digital services based on pre-defined business priorities so that the anticipated business objective will be achieved.
- Measuring key performance area is very crucial. This helps to make sure that the values are being derived from the introduced technology. It also helps to keep a clear relationship between the measured parameter and business goals.

Striving to achieve operational agility and excellence through the adoption of international standard, best practices, simplification and modernization.

Ed.‘s Note: Tesfa Giorgis Alazar is a technology consultant, CISP, CISM, CISA, CRISC, ISO-27001 lead implementer. The views expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views of The Reporter. He can be reached at tesfa.vtech@gmail.com or tesfagiorgisa@vtech-solution.com.
By Eman Abolalw - Heydar Aliyev is the leader who founded modern Azerbaijan, becoming a true legend of his time. The history remembers him as unique personality, powerful head of state, dedicated man and legendary figure able to take on his shoulders difficult historical burden of state building. His invaluable contribution and service to Nation enabled the young state to stand on feet and to enter into the 21st century as strong and sustainable independent country. A part of history of Azerbaijan, covering the period from the late 1950s to the beginning of the 21st century is associated with the name of Heydar Aliyev.

Even though official independence of Azerbaijan was declared in 1991, until mid-June 1993 the situation in the country was very volatile indeed. In May-June 1993 the country was at the verge of collapse, civil war and loss of independence. 20% of internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan were occupied by Armenia and more than one million of Azerbaijanis expelled from their native lands.

Heydar Aliyev’s return to politics following insistent public urge was instrumental in restoring domestic stability and initiating Azerbaijan’s further development. At this crucial period of country’s history the most of the Azerbaijani people Heydar Aliyev returned and on 10th of June 1993 was elected as the Chairman of the Parliament of Azerbaijan. Heydar Aliyev, who could not stand indifferent towards misfortune of his nation accepted the persistent invitation of his people. In October of the same year Heydar Aliyev was elected President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

**HEYDAR ALIEV – FOUNDER OF THE MODERN AZERBAIJAN**

Heydar Aliyev was born on 10 May 1923 in Nakhichevan, Republic of Azerbaijan. During his political career he held high level official positions in former USSR (Soviet). Since 1965 he held the post of deputy chairman, and since 1967 – chairman of the Committee of State Security under the Cabinet of Ministers of Azerbaijan, he had rank of lieutenant general.

In July 1969 he was elected First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan. In December 1982, Heydar Aliyev was elected as member of Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Soviet Union, and appointed at the post of the First Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of the USSR and become one of the leaders of the USSR.

Inbound with the tragedy, committed on 20 January 1990 in Baku, by the Soviet troops, Heydar Aliyev arrived the next day with his family members to the Representation of Azerbaijan in Moscow, called the brutal invasion and killings by soviet troops as crime against his people and demanded to punish the organizers and executors of the crime. As a sign of protest against the hypocritical policy of the leadership of the USSR and discrimination against his people in July 1991, he left the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Being an outstanding politician and statesman, indisputable leader of the nation, he was a legend, and therefore the Heydar Aliyev phenomenon always attracted attention and the admiration of millions.

By his competent and decisive actions as the head of state, Heydar Aliyev was able to eliminate social tensions and to prevent civil war in Azerbaijan. He began the process of building strong and independent state in accordance with international norms and principles, created conditions for comprehensive development. Heydar Aliyev’s return to the power was a real salvation for Azerbaijan. Successive measures were taken to eliminate the problems that arose during the ignominous leadership of the former government. Thus, June 15 entered the history of the country as the National Salvation Day. From this moment, the country’s rapid development both economically and politically began. Despite of all obstacles, public-political stability has been restored in the country. Restoration and strengthening of the statehood traditions of Azerbaijan in late XX century, strengthening of independence of Azerbaijan and making it eternal and firm, assurance of the country’s dynamic economic development, rapid growth of its international prestige was guaranteed thanks to the fruitful activity and great vision of Heydar Aliyev.

Besides achieving a political stability in Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev laid the foundation for the economic independence of the country, Heydar Aliyev’s multi-vector pragmatic and balanced foreign policy led to constructive relations with global powers and international community as a whole. Heydar Aliyev’s philosophy of Azerbaijaniism, after gaining independence, provided a strong ideological ground for the statehood and national unity.

“Contract of the Century” signed with the major international oil companies in Baku on September 20, 1994 was of vital importance for Azerbaijan. Later Azerbaijan implemented many regional and international megaprojects such as Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan oil pipeline, Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan gas pipeline, Baku–Tbilisi–Kars railroad, Southern Gas Corridor (TANAP and TAP projects) and others which had great significance for the region and international community in general.

Thanks to his leadership and his great vision, Azerbaijan has earned a respectable and influential position in the international arena in a very short period of time. The name of Great Leader became symbol of devotion to Native Land, love for homeland and dedication for the future of the Nation.

Today, the People of Azerbaijan are proud of the Great Son of this Land, who devoted all his life to faithfully serving the people and motherland in the most difficult period of the history. The bright memory of Heydar Aliyev, the national leader of the Azerbaijani people, wise leader and great personality lives in the hearts of millions.
Kuncho Komments

Your Zodiacs

Aries
You can't hold on to any business that doesn't already have
an interaction with others. Don't be afraid to get tired
when you wake up at work. Your work will be a contribution
to your bright future. As for the middle of the month,
there will be some minor interruptions.

Taurus
Today you may be in the epicenter of important events
such as a turbulent social life, in which the role of
the ideological mastermind will be assigned. If you are
not ready to take on too much responsibility, then
you can concentrate on something else. Perhaps your
attention will be needed for your own personal life and
profession. However, this is now not a time to open
new fronts.

Gemini
On this day, you will be annoyed by the behavior of
someone close. Perhaps, in a big way, a colleague or
a business partner will fail you. It is also possible
that someone who promised you something will
change their plans with you at the last second. Either
way, during the day you will have to look for another
way to get rid of your troubles.

Cancer
You can trust your intuition today. Valuable advice
today will be obtained in professional matters. There
is a chance that today will be a breakthrough in
your career or personal business development. However,
pleasing moments in your own destiny are not excluded from today. If you seek attention from someone,
you will be given a chance for apprehension.

Leo
On this day, you are not insured against surprises.
They will likely occur while you are at work. There
is even a chance that you will get news giving
hope for promotion. The evening, however, will
consist of endless meetings and telephone calls. It
makes sense to visit senior relatives and share
with them your victory.

Virgo
This is recommended for you to devote from
previously set goals or objectives. Having shown
moderated weaknesses, there will be a risk of losing
the support of reputable people or losing faith
in your own abilities forever. Act contrary to the
circumstances.

Libra
Today you will make a deal with your own conscience.
There is a high probability that this will be preceded by a poignant situation at work. Trying to
steal someone else's success will bring forth fraught.
Perhaps the right thing to do is to be content with
what you have, focus on your personal affairs, there
is a risk that the person with whom you wanted to
start a relationship with will be cold and indifferent.

Scorpio
Today you will want to show everyone your sharp
ring. Someone will deliberately provoke your anger
and you will have to deal with this situation in a
responsible way. Your confidence is high and having
a partner in front of you is important. The right thing
to do is to not respond to provocations. Focus
on the quality of the planned work. If necessary, you
can ask for help from those you trust.

Sagittarius
On this day, you will have inherent excession free-
thinking. Be careful of your words. There is a risk
that one cautious phrase from you will predict a loss
in your future. It is better to keep to yourself, working
only on your tasks that are included in your daily list
of duties. There is a chance that your evening will be
filled with a lot of pleasant emotions.

Capricorn
Today you risk showinganden hauts in business.
This is dangerous, especially for those who are
working on something responsible and serious.
If you are busy working with people, then you
should make every word spoken, as there is a risk of being
made targets for people who don't know you.

Aquarius
Today you will show perfectionism. However,
always striving for excellence in everything risks
causing a nervous breakdown. It may be better to look
at the world around you and learn to find pleasure in
the current moment. Today it is recommended that
any leisure taken is in the company of loved ones.

Pisces
Today you can take the plunge. Perhaps reforms
will begin in your personal duties. Many will be
surprised that you cut ties on your romance that
didn't bring you any satisfaction. Today you may even
decide to change your professional role, causing
shock to colleagues and senior management.

Everything that happens during the day will have
the character of a small revolution.
During the stay at home orders implemented by countries to battle the Coronavirus pandemic in recent months, the world has fallen in love with running, according to a new and ongoing research study by ASICS whose initial findings has been released. More importantly the research shows that nearly three-quarters of runners around the world plan to stick with their new exercise routines.

To help the world maintain and continue its newfound love of running, ASICS has launched its #RunToFeel initiative aimed at helping the world’s runners stay active and connected.

The study, which ASICS is conducting to better understand and support the changing needs of runners, surveyed 14,000 people across 12 countries, who exercise regularly.

It found that more than a third (38 percent globally) are more active now than they were before the COVID-19 pandemic began, despite most sports being brought to a standstill by social distancing measures. Meanwhile, figures from the fitness-tracking app, Runkeeper™, showed that runners of every level are tallying up more strides, more often.

In April 2020, the app saw a 32 percent rise in registrations globally, and a 44 percent increase in monthly active users compared to the same period last year. It also reported a 62 percent spike globally in people heading out for a weekly run. Put in context, in the days around Global Running Day last week, there was a +7.3 percent increase globally in people running, compared to last year.

The study also revealed that for the majority of people, the driving force of this surge in activity is not only to improve their physical health. Two-thirds of those surveyed say exercise helps them cope better mentally, when they face challenging situations like the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, 81 percent say running is playing a key role in helping them clear their mind, while nearly two-thirds insist that the mental benefits of running outweigh any other form of physical exercise.

Running past COVID-19

Furthermore, runners across the board say they are keen to continue their active habits once the crisis is over. Nearly three-quarters of those surveyed say they want to continue running as much as they are now after the COVID-19 pandemic comes to an end, while seven in ten who exercise regularly are determined to maintain the important role sport and movement is currently playing in their lives. Most encouraging is that nearly two-thirds of those who took up running after the COVID-19 crisis began, say they will continue running.

“For most of us, life is full of anxieties, uncertainties and restrictions at the moment,” said Yasuhiro Hirota, the President & Chief Operating Officer of ASICS. “As our study’s initial findings prove, a run has therefore become much more than just a run. It’s a way for people to put aside the extraordinary mental challenges of this pandemic. And importantly, it’s something which they want to maintain as lockdowns ease across the globe.”

Kelly McGonigal, a health psychologist and lecturer at Stanford University said: “Nine in 10 runners told us they feel best when their mind and body are connected - and never has that balance been more important than it is now,” Hirota said.

“The #RunToFeel initiative aims to engage runners of all levels in several ways. These includes, calling on runners of all levels to share their stories of how running makes them feel and continue to reach out to runners of all levels, to better inform upcoming ASICS innovations and initiatives, including a new virtual running format in September.”

Furthermore, the initiative also includes offers of free access to the ASICS Studio, an at-home workout app, through the end of August 2020 and host virtual races powered by Race Roster and Runkeeper to motivate runners and allow them to compete together safely with new challenges being added each month. Furthermore, it allows a 90 day complimentary training plans and all premium features of the ASICS Runkeeper™ app as a benefit of OneASICS membership.

“Nine in 10 runners told us they feel best when their mind and body are connected - and never has that balance been more important than it is now,” Hirota said.

“ASICS was founded on the belief that movement can help anyone achieve a sound mind through a sound body. Through our products and services, and by constantly deepening our understanding of their changing needs, we want to help runners of every level go further, perform better and protect themselves against injury - both during this pandemic and beyond.”

(World Athletics)