

EDITORIAL**Contributing Factors to Accelerate the Progress of Ethiopia**

By Tesfaye Gebeyehu

Ethiopia, which is the second-most populous country in Sub-Saharan Africa and one of the world's poorest countries, has a population of 96.5 million. For decades, its name has been associated to famine. To change its image, the Federal Government of Ethiopia aspires to reach middle income status over the next decade, and it is working hard to materialize its aspiration. According to The World Bank (2015), Ethiopia's economy "has experienced strong and broad based growth over the past decade, averaging 10.8% per year in [from] 2003/04 - 2013/14 compared to the regional average of 4.8%".

Continuing and accelerating the progress made in recent years toward the MDGs and addressing the underlying factors of poverty among its population require Ethiopia to endure internal and external challenges. One challenge that Ethiopia needs to tackle internally is ineffective use of budget by regional governments. One strategy to address these types of challenges is decentralization: transferring of responsibilities of the state to lower tiers of government (Tegegne, 1998). Decentralization is one of the manifestations of good governance, and when properly applied, it contributes a lot towards regional economic development (see Lee, n.d.). It empowers National/Regional Governments to plan social and economic development. According to The World Bank (2015), allocating budget to regions is not enough; using budget effectively will require Ethiopia to improve governance, to empower local authorities, and to become more accountable to its citizens.

However, materializing such decentralization is not an easy endeavor. "In many respects, Ethiopia's decentralization process faces a unique set of challenges, balancing reform, representation and growth goals within a framework of national reconstruction" (Gulyani et al., 2001). In this Issue (Vol 2. No. 2), Ermias Admasu has presented the status of Fiscal decentralization in two woredas of Jimma Zone, its prospects and challenges (pages 25-43).

To accelerate the progress made in recent years, it is also important to endure external challenges such as terrorism and the 'curse of bad neighbors'. In this regard, Ethiopia needs to follow good foreign policy: maintaining good relationship with neighboring countries in particular and the world in general. Obviously, the country's strategic position for fighting global terrorism and the "curse of natural resource" can evidently affect its development and relationship with neighboring countries especially Egypt. This Issue has presented "The role Ethiopia plays in the regional security

complex of the Horn of Africa”, which is critically reviewed by professor Kłosowicz from Jagiellonian University, Kraków (pages 85-99).

The pre 1991 Ethiopia’s foreign policy was shaped dominantly by external factors. The external factors that significantly influenced the then policy, the reason why Ethiopia abolished slavery, joined the socialist camp and became the member of The League of Nations and UN are critically reviewed by Befekadu Bogale (pages 100-104).

Internal conflicts, for example, conflicts that may happen between or among regional people and the government could accelerate down the progress made in recent years. To resolve such conflicts, regions issue regional constitutions and other laws. In addition to that, however, it is important to explore time tested traditional conflict resolution mechanisms that will help to build an inclusive future by addressing the successes and failures of past efforts (Morrow, 2016). Among these strategies, *Jigaa* Institution, the surviving *Gadaa* Court among the Jimma Oromo, takes attention. How is this institution, which resisted predator ‘monarchical rule and Islamization’ over the area, is being practiced to date? And with what out come? The study of Megersa Regassa and Dr. Dejene Gemechu— ‘*Jigaa* Institution...’—answers these questions (pages 3-24).

Strong families (marriages) and healthy citizens also contribute to the acceleration of the progress of the country. On the other hand, divorce and HIV/AIDS could slow down this anticipated growth. ‘The influence of parental divorce on the personality and social adjustment of adolescent’ (by Fistum Berhane, pages 44-61) and ‘condom negotiation strategies undergraduates use’ (by Dr. Tesfaye Gebeyehu and Dr. Hailom Bantierra, pages 62-84) are interesting manuscripts to be read in this issue. The editorial board members of the Journal appreciate the authors in this Issue for their scholarly contribution, and they invite you not only to read these articles but also to contribute manuscripts for possible publication.

The board would like to notify the readers that, when preparing this issue for print publication, it has made a few adjustments on the online publications without affecting the original content. Bon reading appétit!

References

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