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Photo: Samuel Tesfaye

Gov't renews commitment to implementing CoHA

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA- Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) has expressed the government's commitment and readiness to implement the peace accord that was inked with TPLF in a bid to bring lasting peace and stability in Ethiopia.

For the sake of peace and prosperity, the government made ending the conflict its first choice, the Premier told members of the House of Peoples' Representatives yesterday. The government is fully committed to implement the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) and all relevant stakeholders should join these endeavors that not only aim to end conflict, but also to ensure the rule of law.

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Ethiopia reaffirms readiness to settle differences on round table

BY MENGESHA AMARE

ADDIS ABABA- Capitalizing on the government's commitment to get a stable nation, those groups that have been engaging in disrupting the peace of the country should desist provocations and come to the round table, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said.

Addressing the queries of members of the House of Peoples' Representatives at the 2nd Term 4th Regular Session yesterday, Premier Abiy stated that the government is ready more than ever to ensure the peace and democratization of the country.

Some groups that are engaging in killing civilians, destroying properties and hindering Ethiopia's progress should come

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Economy to grow at 7.5 percent in this year: Premier

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- Translating policies and strategies into massive infrastructure and human development and with the commitment of various stakeholders, Ethiopia plans to register a 7.5 percent economic growth this year, according to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD).

Briefing MPs yesterday, Abiy stated that the agriculture sector, aided by the historic-high wheat production, remains the leading force in keeping Ethiopia's economic growth and dynamism. In line with the 6.1 percent growth registered in the sector, Ethiopia has also obtained promising results in rice production. Allocating this year's rice production for import substitution purpose, the country sets a plan to export the crop to the global market.

PM Abiy further highlighted that the maize production has also seen remarkable results;

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Ethiopia's truce ushers in new era for fellow citizens: ENDF

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA-Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) said that the peace deal signed between the government of Ethiopia and TPLF is new hope for peace and development in Ethiopia.

The above remark came at a press conference that was organized yesterday for diplomats, military attachés of several countries based in Addis Ababa.

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The nation cannot afford to continue vacillating in war: Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed

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News



ECCSA lauds AU-brokered accord

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- Having appreciated the peace agreement between the Ethiopian government and TPLF, Ethiopia Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations (ECCSA) said that the deal has a vital role to revival trade and investment sectors.

According to the ECCSA 's press release sent to The Ethiopian Herald , because of the conflict that happened in Ethiopia, organizations are becoming less energetic and less connected, and the hope that they look beyond has been lost.

The peace deal would help to adjust the pressure in economic, diplomatic and other sectors caused by the conflict, the release stated adding that the two parties' peace agreement would play an important role in encouraging foreign investment, boosting the economy by expanding the reach of export products to the world market and increasing the flow of tourism to fuel the economy.

As to ECCSA, the longer the efforts to resolve political problems, conflicts and instabilities in the country, there would be more threats on the basic security of citizens. It would also cause a slowdown in the overall national economic growth, attracting foreign investment and private sector participation.

ECCSA ,Therefore, reiterated that searching resolution to the conflict that has been going on for the last two years in Ethiopia would play an crucial role in the required all round national development.

ECCSA thanked to all parties who have made the agreement to be succeeded and it is ready to contribute its part in the efforts of implementing the deal.

Pulses, oilseeds subsector crucial to boost export earnings

BY TEWODROS KASSA

ADDISABABA- The pulses, Oil seeds and Spices sub-sector contribute a paramount role towards increasing Ethiopia's foreign earnings and meaningfully supporting the national economy, President Sahelwork Zewde said.

The 11th International conference on pulses, Oil seeds and Spices kicked off yesterday here with an attendance of worldwide sector actors.

On the occasion, President Sahlework said that Ethiopia is naturally endowed with a variety flavor of pulses, oilseeds and spices products.

The Ethiopian government has given due priority to the agriculture sector to generate substantial income from the sector and create numerous jobs to youths.

As to her, various incentive packages are available to promote pulses, oil seeds and spices sub-sector investments.

"The last three years has shown a promising harvest and encouraging increment in the



agricultural production and productivity. Over 181 million tons of pulses, oil seeds and spices have been harvested during the past fiscal year and the sub-sector contributed 11 percent of the country's total export revenue," she said.

On his part, Minister of Trade and Regional Integration Gebremeskel Challa said that the country's agro-ecology and climatic conditions are potential opportunities towards harvesting more pulses, oil seeds and spices.

Ethiopia has already ratified the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) towards enhancing regional integration and boost transaction between member states, he added.

Accordingly, organizing such international conference on the pulses, oil seeds and spices sector contributes a lot to create and strengthen business partnership among different companies throughout the world.

Ethiopian pulses, Oil seeds and Spices Processors - Exporters Association (EPOSPEA) President Sisay Asmare stated that the conference is an ideal platform towards promoting global partnership in the sector.

Moreover, it immensely helps to open close market relations, bring new technologies, and find niche' market for local processors.

Accordingly, various experts and multinational investors from various countries are participating in the conference that would continue for two days.



Ethiopia taking part in SMEX Algeria 2022

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- Five Ethiopian Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in coffee, leather and handicrafts are participating in the Arab International SMEs Conference and Expo (SMEX Algeria) 2022, Ambassador of Ethiopia to Algeria disclosed.

The event is organized by the Arab Union for Industrial Exports Development (AUIED) and the Algerian Fairs and

Exportation Company (SAFEX).

Ambassador Nebiat Getachew tweeted that the occasion aimed building a platform of "display, trade, exchange and cooperation" for SMEs home and abroad to increase understanding, strengthen cooperation, business to business contacts, expand exchanges, and strike common development for Arab's SMEs and their foreign counterparts.

The criteria used to select the companies to participate includes Suitability of a

company's products or services to the target markets; Company's potential for business in the market as well as consistency of the applicant company's goals and objectives with the stated scope of the event, it was learnt from Capital News of Kenya.

The SMEX Algeria is tailored to specifically benefit small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) serving as a networking and product presentation platform while also opening and expanding new market frontiers in today's competitive world.

News

War-ravaged power lines' restoration underway: EEP

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA- The restoration of power lines that pass through Humera, Welkait and Shiraro are underway, Ethiopian Electric Power (EEP) disclosed.

EEP Communication Director Moges Mekonnen told Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the war-ravaged power lines that used to transmit high and low voltage are being repaired in a bid to restore power soon.

"Around 200 EEP workers are now deployed to fix the power interruption via exerting



utmost efforts in Humera and Shiraro."

As Welkait's high voltage generator or distributor is one of the highly damaged

lines, EEP workers are right now doing their level best to regain the services.

Moges indicated that every necessary preparation has been made to complete the restoration in shortest time possible.

The local community is also active in the maintaining of the restoration works, it was learnt.

He also thanked various institutions, the experts, the security personnel and the people that are working hand in glove with EEP to restore electric service in various areas.

Gov't renews...

In his current affairs briefings to MPs, Abiy stressed that any peace talks to ensure law and order would make any country advantageous. "An individual or group that does not want a peace agreement is a conflict actor. We signed an agreement and now we must keep our word and make our promise a reality. We must also work tirelessly to avoid problems during the implementation of CoHA."

Now, the government is highly engaged in delivering humanitarian services, restoring damaged infrastructure and returning displaced citizens to their homes

in war affected areas. Electricity, telecom, banking and other essential services have also greatly restored in those areas.

About Ethiopia's diplomacy, he indicated that the activity relies on three pillars such as independence, equality, and justice. Ethiopia has a firm belief in the principle of African solutions to African problems and values a win-win approach in international relations. Accordingly, over the last three months, Ethiopia has witnessed cordial relations and improved diplomatic ties with neighboring countries including Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya,

Eritrea, Sudan and South Sudan.

The premier expressed gratitude for those countries that supported Ethiopia in times of diplomatic pressures and helped the latter to reach peace agreement. Kenya, South Africa, the U.S and EU among other parties have made considerable efforts to broker the federal government and TPLF. "Public diplomacy is something worth consideration by Ethiopian Diasporas and they have made every effort to participate in the politics of the countries they are living in for the benefit of their home nation."

Ethiopia's truce...

During the occasion, ENDF Foreign Relations and Military Cooperation Director General Maj. Gen. Teshome Gemechu stated that the deal has ushered in a new era for the people of Ethiopia as it is going to ensure lasting peace.

Peace and stability is fundamental element for the wellbeing of the citizens and the two year conflict has harmed the opportunity of Ethiopian people, he said.

As to Maj.Gen, ENDF highly recognizes the necessity of harmonizing the provision of Pretoria agreement and Nairobi declaration which are basic to the settlement within the mandate of constitution.

He also expressed his gratitude for the parties for coming up together on the modality for the implementation of the agreement for lasting peace through permanent cessation of hostilities.

Talking about the effective implementation of the agreement, Maj.Gen Teshome reaffirmed that the delegates led by the senior commanders of both parties have agreed on the modalities of the implementation of permanent cessation of hostility, disarmament of Tigray armed combatants, protection of civilians, delivery of humanitarian aid, and others.

"We strongly believe that the peace process highly benefits our people and we strive with all our capacity in the implementation



of the agreement. Our defense force will continue safeguarding the sovereignty of the nation and ensure rebuilding process."

He commended the attachés for their unreserved support and advice for the peace and stability of Ethiopia apart from urging international community to strengthen their effort of supporting peace process.

ENDF Foreign Relations and Military Cooperation Main Department Senior Advisor Mekonnen Abebe (PhD) said that the government is committed to peace and stability in the country and exerting

maximum effort. Following the peace agreement ENDF has been continued its usual activity of supporting community by collecting harvest, supporting people in need and others.

Australian Assistant Defence Attaché Maj. Anthony Sulicich praised the recent AU-brokered peace agreement between the federal government of Ethiopia and TPLF as classic example of solving African issues by Africans.

The agreement is fantastic opportunity for the people of Ethiopia and beyond, he added.

Economy to ...

adding the production has gone beyond the demand. Given the nation's potential for fruits, better results have been witnessed in a short period.

Similarly, excluding the amount registered in the Green Legacy Project, over the past four years, about 4.7 billion coffee seedlings were planted which is expected to exceed last year's coffee production by 20 percent.

Meanwhile, the Premier disclosed that Ethiopia's economy has reached 126.7 billion USD at the end of 2021/22 fiscal year while the per capita income went up to 1,212 USD. The World Bank indicated in its report that Ethiopia's economy has become the largest in East Africa and the third largest in Sub-Saharan Africa.

"Given the fact that the report failed to include the informal economy, which would have made a huge difference in the result, we do not fully accept the report."

The growth in the agriculture sector, the mainstay of Ethiopia, is a result of sound economic policies and meticulous leadership and puts the country in better condition ensuring food self-sufficiency and modernizing the sector. "The comprehensive reason for Ethiopia's economic growth is the government's success in galvanizing agriculture, which embraces the great majority of the population."

Amidst pressing challenges that the nation has passed through including COVID-19 pandemic, drought and the northern conflict, Ethiopia has witnessed macroeconomic stability and the trajectory is expected to grow, Abiy remarked.

Ethiopia...

to the right track and accept the government's initiative to resolve differences through negotiation and in a peaceful manner, Abiy stressed.

"If we work in a coordinated and well responsible manner, ensuring peace and stability in Ethiopia would be a very simple task and differences could be easily and amicably addressed. Peace is the prerequisite for development and those groups that want to pour fuel to fire should refrain from doing so."

He noted; however, that if these elements continue trekking on destructive activities, the government is fully capable of maintaining order and reversing the danger posed to the safety of the public. The unrest that has caused loss of lives and destruction and looting on public and private properties by those groups is unacceptable and is far from the normal way of expressing discontent.

"Some militants have utilized the lives of innocent citizens' to serve the interest of their foreign masters. Every step towards peace is lucrative, productive and Ethiopia has profited out of it. That is why we are always trying to resolve disagreements through peaceful means."

"Although some have told us that we are negotiating with terrorists, Ethiopia can gain out of every ounce of truce as there is no good war and bad peace at all," Prime Minister Abiy emphasized.

Opinion

As the 8 billionth person is born, here's how Africa will shape the future of the planet's population

BY STAFF REPORTER

In mid-November 2022 the eight billionth person will be born, according to the United Nations. In its analysis of this milestone, the UN makes two key observations. The first is that the global population has been expanding at its slowest rate since 1950. The growth rate dropped below 1 per cent in 2020, a trend that is likely to continue. The second is that the growth in population has been due to the gradual increase in human lifespan owing to improvements in public health, nutrition, personal hygiene and medicine. It's also the result of high and persistent levels of fertility in some countries. According to the UN, just eight countries are expected to be behind 50 per cent of the population growth over the next 30 years. Five are in Africa: the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Tanzania. Demographers Akanni Akinyemi, Jacques Emina and Esther Dungumaro unpack these dynamics.

What's the significance of the eight billionth birth?

It raises concerns – scientists estimate that Earth's maximum carrying capacity is between nine billion and 10 billion people.

Appreciating these numbers requires an understanding of the distribution and demographic structure of the population. Where are these people across regions, countries, and rural and urban geographies?

There is a potential upside to growing populations. It's known as a demographic dividend. Population growth can be a blessing, spurring economic growth from shifts in a population's age structure. This is a prospect if working-age people have good health, quality education, decent employment and a lower proportion of young dependants.

Our mission is to share knowledge and inform decisions.

But realising this dividend depends on a host of things. It includes the structure of the population by age, level of education and skills, and living conditions, as well as the distribution of available resources.

The consequences of population growth are socioeconomic, political and environmental. Some of them can be negative. How these unfold is determined by the characteristics of the population and its distribution.

Why are birth rates so high in five African countries?

The major factors driving population growth in these countries include low contraceptive use, high adolescent fertility rates and a prevalence of polygamous marriages. There's also the low education status of women, low to poor investment in children's education, and factors related to religion and ideas.

The use of modern contraceptives is generally low across sub-Saharan Africa. The overall prevalence is 22 per cent. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, however,

the uptake of short-acting contraceptives is at 8.1 per cent. In Nigeria, it is at 10.5 per cent. The uptake in Ethiopia is 25 per cent, in Tanzania it's 27.1 per cent and in Egypt 43 per cent.



Government policies and programmes need to take into account population growth and align interventions with sustainable use and access to resources

For long-acting family planning methods, apart from Egypt with over 20 per cent uptake, the other four countries driving population growth in the region recorded very poor uptake. This low uptake will logically lead to a population explosion.

Some of the factors associated with high contraceptive use in Africa are women's education, exposure to news and mass media, good economic status and urban residency.

The adolescent fertility rate in sub-Saharan Africa – while showing a downward trend – is still relatively high. The adolescent fertility rate captures the number of births per 1,000 girls aged 15 to 19. In sub-Saharan Africa, it stands at an average of 98 births per 1,000 girls.

There is a wide variation in this rate across the five countries: from 52 in Egypt and 62 in Ethiopia to 102 in Nigeria, 114 in Tanzania and 119 in the DRC.

Outside the continent, the adolescent fertility rate is 21 in Asia and the Pacific, and 26 in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. In the US, it's at 15, five in France and 42 globally.

The adolescent fertility rate has huge implications for population growth because of the number of years between the start of childbearing and the end of a woman's reproductive age. A high fertility rate in this age group also has a negative influence on the health, economic and educational potential of women and their children.

Another factor driving population growth in these five African countries is polygamous marriage. Women in polygamous unions living in rural areas with low socioeconomic status are likely to have higher fertility rates than women in other areas.

Polygamy is illegal in the DRC. Nevertheless, it's common. About 36 per cent of married women in Nigeria, one-quarter of married women in rural Tanzania and 11 per cent of those in Ethiopia are in polygamous marriages.

Finally, a woman's education status has a significant impact on fertility. For instance, in Tanzania, women with no formal education have as many as 3.3 more children than women with secondary or tertiary education.

Is rising populations a cause for major concern in these countries?

Yes.

One of the biggest concerns is the scale of these countries' development.

The World Bank classifies the DRC among the five poorest nations in the world, with nearly 64 per cent of the population living on less than US\$2.15 a day. One in six of sub-Saharan Africa's poorest people are found in the DRC.

In Nigeria, about 40 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line. The west African nation also faces issues

of insecurity, poor infrastructure and high unemployment.

Steady population growth in these five countries will exert further stress on already inadequate infrastructure and services.

Also, the age structure of the populations of these five countries reflects high levels of dependency. The population of young people who aren't in the labour force and that of older people is far higher than of those in their prime ages (18 to 64) who are gainfully employed.

There is also a potential shortage of working-age people with high skills compared with the population of those who depend on them for survival in these five countries.

This is because these countries have a very youthful population. The median age ranges from 17 in the DRC to 17.7 in Tanzania and 18.8 in Nigeria. There is also the prospect of many young people living in unfavourable socioeconomic realities and poverty.

In most countries, population growth is the slowest since 1950. Why?

Most countries, particularly in America, Asia, Europe, Oceania and North Africa, have completed the fertility transition. In other words, they are experiencing below-replacement fertility levels – fewer than two children are being born per woman.

The main drivers of low fertility include the increased use of modern contraceptives, increased age at first marriage and higher numbers of educated women.

What should the next steps be for African countries with high fertility rates?

Government policies and programmes need to take into account population growth and align interventions with sustainable use and access to resources.

Governments at regional, national and sub-national levels also need to invest in infrastructure and education. They need to create employment if they are to benefit from a growing population. There is also need to continue investing in family planning.

The age structure of the population is also of concern. The expected growth in population numbers is likely to increase the concentration of young people and those of prime ages. With limited socio-economic opportunities for young people, countries are more likely to be subject to the forces of international migration.

The proportion of older people is also likely to increase in the five countries in focus. This increases the need for investment in social security, infrastructure and innovative support for older people. Unfortunately, issues around older people have not gained prominence on the continent.

Source: *The Conversation*

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

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Editorial

Prevailing peace unleashes full dev't potential

“The war must be avoided in order to maintain peace and prosperity. If it continues, it yields no good; except impoverishment.”

The above remark was given by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (Ph.D) who attended the 2nd Year 4th Ordinary Session of the House of Peoples Representatives (HPR) yesterday to elaborate on a motion that President SahleWork Zewde presented at the opening of the joint session of the HPR and the House of Federation (HoF).

Among the questions raised by members of the House of People's Representatives were the recent peace agreement signed between the government of Ethiopia and the TPLF, its implementation process, efforts being made to restore and rehabilitate war-torn areas, the performance of the agricultural, industrial and service sectors, the ever increasing cost of living, the challenges related to good governance, were just a few of them.

The premier explained the government's activities while addressing the MPs questions.

Engrossing in the quagmire of conflict and yearning to achieve sustainable development is unmanageable. The reason that we should end the war is for the sake of peace and prosperity. There is no such a thing as ‘a good war; and a bad peace’. In this regard, the agreement has a wide range of benefits in terms of stopping the conflict, ensuring the peace and security of the people; speeding up nation's growth; in the end to realize Ethiopia's overall development endeavors and prosperity.

“However, when an incident that challenges Ethiopia's existence, sovereignty, and unity faces us, we will be compelled to fight. If there is a room to secure these things, negotiation is not bad. We will go wherever it is for the sake of Ethiopia's peace, unity and prosperity,” he elucidated.

The Prime Minister called for persistent works for the successful implementation of the peace agreement, reaffirming government's commitment to ensure sustainable peace in the country.

Regarding the nation's economic growth, the Premier said that in the past few years, especially, the concluded year was a time that the country tested with manmade and natural challenges including

COVID-19 pandemic, conflict in the northern part of the country, drought, and Russia-Ukraine conflict among others. However, the economy withstanding the demanding conditions and proving Ethiopia's economic resilience has shown a remarkable growth. The agriculture sector has witnessed a 6.1-percent growth, he said citing wheat productivity. At the end of the 2014 Ethiopian budget year, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the nation witnessed a 6.4-percent growth. At the current budget year, a target is set to register a 7.5-percent growth, he added.

Pertaining to the service sector, the Premier also clearly elucidated the encouraging achievements registered in the service sector at the concluded budget year; despite all the challenges.

Taking the Ethiopian Airlines, Ethio-telecom and the finance sectors as showcases for their successive contribution to the growth; the Premier said: “The service sector has registered a 7.6-percent growth. Ethiopian Airlines, Ethio Telecom, and the financial sectors have significantly contributed for the service sector and the nation's economy in general,” he remarked.

For instance, Ethio telecom is one of the service sectors that show remarkable progress. Following the reform, it is able to reach 68.9 million subscribers and currently, 25.5 million people are using Tele-birr mobile banking service. A transaction of some 134 billion Birr has been undertaken through Tele-birr with in short period of time.

Regarding the banking sector, its total asset has reached 2.3 trillion Birr with over 80 million customers. The total amount of bank deposits has now reached to 1.6 trillion Birr, as to the PM.

Prime Minister Abiy also affirmed his government's commitment to rehabilitate the areas affected by the war. Building peace and the rehabilitation activities of war-torn areas will be further strengthened and sustained.

He also urged all Ethiopians to support the ongoing inclusive national dialogue process to bring sustainable peace and national consensus in the country.

Opinion

Why global action is needed to decarbonize industries everywhere

BY STAFF REPORTER

Ahead of this year's COP27 in Egypt, industry and government representatives from 15 developing countries across Asia, Latin America and Africa met in a series of consultations about the challenges and opportunities they face in decarbonizing some of their most energy intensive industries like steel, cement and concrete.

During these meetings, it was evident that the pace of progress so far is too slow and that puts us at real risk of not meeting global climate commitments. It simply won't be sufficient for industrialized countries to lower emissions within their boundaries and enforce restrictions for products entering their markets. This must happen everywhere.

Global action and new forms of inter-sectoral cooperation are urgently needed to address critical questions including: what are the opportunities for emissions reductions, and what is needed to deliver these reductions in the fastest and most economical way?

How do we speed up the development and implementation of new carbon-cutting technologies – and ensure that they are widely accessible and affordable, including to small and medium sized enterprises?

Currently, many developing country governments do not have reliable and up-to-date data on the emissions of their different industries and how they compare internationally. Relatively little has been

established so far in the way of infrastructure to facilitate the widespread introduction of new and emerging technologies for industrial decarbonization.

Access to and know-how about low-carbon technologies is largely concentrated within industrialized countries and large multinational companies.

This must change. For industrial decarbonization efforts to succeed, we need to see significantly increased investments in research and development into new technologies – but we also need to scale up the deployment of technologies that exist but are not yet widely available, including those for carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS).

We also need to much more widely implement strategies and technologies that are already available and affordable – including on energy efficiency, which lowers the demand for energy including from renewable sources.

This likely requires new funding for technical assistance to help make markets in developing countries ready and able to implement low-carbon technologies. It's not just about funding individual projects, but about really coming up with more meaningful ways to partner around spreading technology our planet urgently needs. Industrialized countries cannot leave developing ones to ‘do this on their own’.

Some of the steel and cement (which is also

used to make concrete) businesses working in developing countries are multinational companies which are bringing decarbonizing technologies into their operations from abroad. This is a good thing.

But there are also local companies – including within the supply chains of these multinationals – which need to be involved in order to make decarbonization succeed.

In many cases, these local companies will likely be unaware of the need to actually change their practices to move towards something that's low-carbon – let alone how to do this and what technology options exist to help them. The speed of change needed means that the world cannot wait for them to do this alone.

Governments everywhere have a role to play here, in ensuring that their policy frameworks drive decarbonization, promote the right technologies and prevent the proliferation of production processes that aren't low-carbon.

Imagine: If construction products are in demand in a developing country and they're not already or sufficiently available on the market, a company or investor may see an opportunity to set up a new business – and if stringent regulations aren't in place, they might do this using outdated technology with higher emissions.

Decarbonization is not the mandate of small steel and cement manufacturers, as participants noted in the pre-COP27 Asia

consultation, or their area of expertise.

It is an area that requires collaboration across different sectors – including to get better and more detailed data, and measurement, reporting and verification frameworks on emissions that can help guide government, and industry, decision-making.

Steel and cement companies might often be seen by some of the public as ‘bad guys’. Globally, these sectors do currently contribute about 50% of industrial greenhouse gas emissions.

But they produce essential materials to build our houses, schools and cities and are needed for our growing communities. The demand should not be to stop production today, but to make it low-carbon today.

Without more meaningful global partnerships on industrial decarbonization, there's a big risk that we won't be able to deliver on our climate commitments. We cannot afford this.

Countries and industries globally need to move all together towards the same climate goals at the same time. Cooperation – including on policy, infrastructure development, and technology – will be key to doing this.

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

Business & Economy

A technology symposium promoting country's minerals

BY BACHA ZEWDIE

The mining sector is one of the five main sectors that the government has identified as the pillars of Ethiopia's economy in its ten-year perspective plan for homegrown economic reforms. Following this, favorable conditions have been created for researches to be conducted to solve operational, policy, guidelines and related problems that have been bottlenecks in the sector.

This will be of great benefit in order to use the country's mineral resources' potential, especially for investors to work in the sector on a wider scale and to be more efficient; to capacitate small scale producers, to improve and change the traditional minerals production etc. The same is happening in marketing.

The government has been carrying out various activities to revive the mining development and marketing, which has been stagnant due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been a global threat and security breaches. Various symposiums and recognition programs were conducted in the Regions.

The International Symposium on Mining and Technology, which was held for three days in Addis, will also be of great benefit in promoting the country's potential, attracting investors, etc. It has created an opportunity for domestic and foreign companies engaged in mineral development, business and technology to meet. It is a demonstration of the efforts being made to achieve the country's goal of replacing imported mineral products in the country by creating capacity for mineral development.

In addition to local and foreign companies engaged in the sector, participation of senior government officials and invited guests on the symposium, which aims to promote mineral resources for construction and industrial inputs, including precious metals for jewelry to the rest of the world and attract investment, is another indication of the attention given to the sector. The Ministry of Mines, which leads the sector, plays a major role in making such efforts.

According to Engineer Takele Uma, Minister of Mines, the sector is one of the identified economic pillars. The mining sector is mentioned among the homegrown economic reform measures taken by the government.

The minister said that since the national reform, the government has carried out large-scale activities to revive the sector in the last four years. He pointed out that among the primary reform measures taken; he mentioned the issuing of policies and proclamation. Thus, the government has created a favorable environment for attracting investment and enabling the investor work. Pointing out internal security problems the country faced is being resolved, he said that holding an international symposium was the right time to bring the activities started in the sector to a better level.

According to the minister, there are mineral resources in Ethiopia that have been identified by studies by the Geological



More effort to better benefit from the promising mining sector

Institute of Ethiopia and other bodies and can be used for various purposes for the development of the country's economy.

However, he pointed out that because of developing the mineral resources is not supported by policies and guidelines that attract investors, the benefits from the sector are not at a level that will boost the economy. Due to this, inputs used for industry and construction sector have been imported at high foreign exchange costs.

He said that it is necessary to improve and change procedures to increase economic capacity in order to use own resources and provide them to the foreign market. "We are promoting our mineral wealth at the symposium; selling what we have produced; giving local companies in the sector the opportunity to gain experience from those with better technology and create opportunities for them to work in partnership to create better mining development in our country," he said.

Mentioning that manufacturing industries from small to high level presented their products and services at the symposium, he also pointed out that there were construction and industrial products offered at factory prices.

In developing countries like Ethiopia, finding skillful experts and seeing technology-assisted work are among the challenges of the mining sector, the minister mentioned. As a result, in Ethiopia's experience so far, even minerals such as gold are sent outside for laboratory testing and a lot of money is paid for it.

According to him; capacity building is needed to avoid the cost via doing things independently and the government is moving in this regard. In order to strengthen the efforts in this regard, good experiences can be obtained from the companies and technology providers with international experience participating in the symposium.

Effort being made to domestically supply coal, which is used as a power input for cement manufacturing industries, is among the efforts towards self-sufficiency. Tracing on the existence of the resource, the only thing expected is making it convenient for the investor who wants to work in the sector. Investors are showing interest in this

regard. Solely after the announcement that a symposium would be held in Ethiopia, three companies showed interest in coal development. There are those who have obtained license for this development. Working to attract those who are interested and participate in the development, it would be possible to solve the current problem of supply and price hike of cement within four or five years.

The government is taking a determined position to solve input supply problem raised by the manufacturing industries. The manufacturing industries are also expected to fix the gap observed by them.

Out of the 14 cement manufacturing industries in the country, only four are fully functional. Most have a fundamental operational problem or gap. They produce less than they are expected to produce. This is the fact the government knows well and they also believed.

The minister said that they should examine themselves why they are producing below capacity while using the same resources as those who are producing well. He stressed that the industries should be ready to solve their internal problems. The government has reached an agreement that there should be a body to help them by establishing a task force. In this way, efforts are being made to solve the sector's problems by filling gaps and providing necessary things, and doing what is expected from the government, the minister said, adding that the demand for resources from the user side should not be forgotten.

At the same time, the minister also mentioned the government's efforts to provide temporary and permanent solutions to the gap in steel supply and rising prices. In particular, he pointed out that it will be used to solve it in a sustainable way. The symposium is expected to support all these government schemes and activities.

Kostentinos Berhe (PhD), an economist, said that the symposium held during this time of establishing national peace is expected to promote the country and attract investment.

Another thing that needs to be considered with the symposium is the need to ensure the readiness to convert the benefits from

the symposium into action. In previous experiences, foreign companies that have entered the country to engage in mining work have stopped their work and returned back. For example, despite efforts made as a country to develop and use natural gas, they have been rolling for years without being implemented. Therefore, gas product is being imported with high foreign exchange. This product is currently increasing in price and putting pressure on the country's economy. He said that the symposium can help to solve such problems.

Recalling the unrest in the country for the past two years has put pressure on the mineral development, Dr. Kostantinos pointed out that the current peace should be enhanced more, especially in the areas where mineral resources are found.

In order to attract mining investment, the areas where the mineral is located should be freed from security threats as the issue of security may be one of the questions raised by the international companies participating in the symposium. They would be interested if the question could be answered, he said.

According to Dr. Kostantinos, the responsibility for achieving results in the field should not be the sole responsibility of one party. Although the majority share belongs to the government, bodies from the regions and kebeles where the mineral is located should work responsibly.

While Ethiopia has potash mineral resource, which is used for fertilizer, it imports fertilizer for agriculture. This is very damaging for a country whose economy is based on agriculture. Everybody is required to act with attention and responsibility to develop the mineral in the country.

Pointing out mining investment is high and the income as well; Dr. Kostantinos said that it is essential to be ready by making the infrastructure comfortable that meets the needs of the companies to earn income from the sector.

As to him, it is not necessary to trust all companies and being careful is essential. It has been stated at various times that there are companies whose licenses have been revoked for not developing the mine sites they were given and for not using them within the time limit. Such a problem could put more pressure on the government. Consequently, it is necessary to ensure that they have the skills, financial capacity and market to work before the license is granted.

He recalled that African countries with mineral resources such as Congo have been affected by robbery due to the lack of proper precautions. The only way to prevent the problem is to create a competent public administration that can lead and manage companies, especially in the areas where the minerals are found.

Dr. Kostantinos pointed out that mineral wealth is considered at a high level. It can generate wealth even better than the results of agriculture. It can also substitute imported products. He mentioned as an example that there are types of minerals used in car batteries, mobile phones and other electrical sources in the country.

Art & Culture

Social media functions and dysfunctions in Africa—who are the culprits?

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

The nature of the media in Africa is defined by many factors. The first is the fact that Africa's media are controlled by global media organizations or multinational media and communication corporations that control and shape both the technology and content of media activities in Africa. Western media corporations define or shape the agendas of African media organizations and their global counterparts. Western media date back from the late 19th and 20th centuries while African media came into existence in the post-colonial period. Social media in Africa is even a more recent phenomenon.

As such, the media in Africa is underdeveloped, and their functions distorted by the long history of post-colonial relationships between the developed centers and the peripheries of the global economy. The rise of social media at the dawn of the 21st century, have further deepened the contradictions between the genuine aspirations of the people of Africa and the objectives of multinational domination of the global media which can be summed as making more profits out of their new gadgets while maintaining the uneven development of the media in the center and periphery of the world economies.

By the same token, the role of social media is shaped by the above contradictions that both undermine and at the same time promote Africa's aspirations for genuine freedom and the need to make its own voice heard in the global arena. It is by now clear that social media have both constructive and destructive functions in Africa. They are both functional and dysfunctional, assets and liabilities weapons for acquiring knowledge and as instruments of neocolonial domination.

The constructive functions of media in general and social media in particular are described as follows: "as offering bigger opportunities for African content creators and for its increasing population. This is supported by government policies supporting the open internet. For a long time, Africa has been narrated as a pessimistic continent calling it a dark continent." This is a reflection of the process of media ownership by Africans that has just started and is proceeding faster than anyone was expecting. "With tools and equipment, Africans have started creating their own narratives

emphasizing stories and content that celebrate the normal African lifestyle making a positive impact on its future." as one observer of the African social media scene recently commented.

The characterization of Africa in the Western media has added to the negative image of the continent although the growth of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is disproving the false claims of Africa being a "dark continent". According to another observer of the African media scene, "The characterization of Africa in the Western media is mostly caused by the effects of colonialism, which gives a false impression that Africa is isolated from the rest of the world."

As the ICT revolution is sweeping through the world, Africa cannot remain isolated. On the contrary are joining the global communities of mobile phones and social media users en masse. As one commentator recently wrote, "In the mid-1990s, as the use of mobile phones started its rapid spread in much of the developed world, few thought of Africa as potential market. Now, with more than 400 million subscribers, its market is larger than North America's" The growth of the internet, mobile phones and social media platforms in Africa was not effected without a price. The Western social media platforms are still dominating and shaping African's social media contents, sometimes proving they are rather liabilities more than assets. The absence of strong legal safeguards against the spread of fake news and negative contents as far as Africa is concerned, has led to the use of the internet not as a weapon for acquiring new knowledge but for spreading false rumors that often lead to violence and all kinds of real or imaginary conflicts.

However, this is not to say that Africa was as peaceful as the Garden of Eden before the advent of the internet and social media. The truth is that the new technological weapons have further exacerbated the volatility of African political and social problems by giving them prominence in global media reporting. Lack of adequate knowledge on the part of the end users of social media has also contributed to violent contents that play on the passion rather than on rationalization of many African social media users. It is however important to observe that any new technology usually comes with drawbacks but improves as it grows through time. The negative

effects of social media are also bound to diminish in the long run and the problems they are creating at present are also bound to disappear with greater knowledge in their utilization as well as with the growing literacy or education of African social media users.

The dual and contradictory implications social media on African culture can be seen from different perspectives. For some, social media in Africa plays a positive role by integrating the people of the continent into global culture, thereby making the journey towards Africa's reinvention a lot shorter and easier. The onus also rests on Africans themselves as they are the ones entitled to use social media content critically, working hard to produce their own contents in the process. Africa is a continent where tradition and modernity are fighting to shape the destinies of more than one billion people or one eighth of the global population. Tradition in Africa is not something that can die or transcended easily because it is embedded in the lives of hundreds of millions of Africans. Tradition or culture in Africa can be improved, modernized and transformed if you like but it cannot be overlooked because culture and tradition in Africa is synonymous with identity.

The right vision for Africans may be to shape their own destinies while remaining an integral part of the global community of cultures and traditions.

What can be done to overcome the dysfunctional role of social media in Africa?

The answer to this question may be long and difficult but the role of social media in Africa cannot be reshaped by government control however benevolent or by multinational corporations however rich they may be. Instead of this, Africans should be allowed to own social media platforms and contents in one way or another as part and parcel of their vision of owning their destinies because the media is a key component of the process.

The distortions of Africa's global media image are due, as we saw above, to the ownership or domination of social media platforms by Western multinational corporations that care little about Africa's narratives or the conflicts that are going on across the length and breadth of the vast continent.

In a blog page entitled, Social Media Futures: How to change the African Narrative, the author Bridget Boskeye

writes that social media is providing a tremendous opportunity for African content creators and their rapidly growing audiences to tell a different story about the African continent, cautioning that, "This powerful celebration and reimagining is fragile and should be supported by internet-literate government policies that support the open internet."

African is indeed building a functional social media culture that would lead the continent towards the process of reinventing the African reality by preserving and modernizing its cultures and traditions. However, since social media ownership is located outside Africa and denominated by powerful multinational media corporations, the road to Africa's autonomous social media creation is bound to be bumpy if not long.

The struggle to stem neocolonial perceptions that are still proving tenable despite technological progress is also bound to be complex. Africa's growth and development in the media sector may not be measured by the number of mobile owners or users of social media platforms but by the new contents about African lives as they are lived by ordinary Africans with all their challenges and hopes.

Africa's genuine freedom will only start when Africa creates its own social media platforms to tell the world the whole truth about its identity and rich culture and traditions. In this sense Africa's true freedom can only be inseparable from its media freedom and the transition from a dysfunctional to a functional social media can only be effected when Africans take possession of both the social media technologies and their contents and platforms.

The subversive nature of Western social media platforms as vehicles of Western national interests is something that can be overcome when Africans will have a determining role in shaping or influencing social media contents. As the above-quoted author of the blog page says, "Negative stories, along with other existing media narratives, around "the dark continent" have continued to negatively define Africa to outsiders while being internalized by many Africans. Now armed with tools to create their own stories...African people and governments have begun to create their own stories to celebrate the normalcy of African lives and contributions, working towards an African-optimistic future."

Global Affairs

COP27: Hope for climate financing springs forth from desert in Egypt

The huge shot in the arm for private-public partnerships and carbon markets should encourage climate activists

Something significant is happening in the desert in Egypt as countries meet at COP27, the United Nations summit on climate change.

Despite frustrating sclerosis in the negotiating halls, the pathway forward for ramping up climate finance to help low-income countries adapt to climate change and transition to clean energy is becoming clearer.

I spent a large part of my career working on international finance at the World Bank and the UN and now advise public development and private funds and teach climate diplomacy focusing on finance. Climate finance has been one of the thorniest issues in global climate negotiations for decades, but I'm seeing four promising signs of progress at COP27.

Getting to net zero – without greenwashing

First, the goal – getting the world to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 to stop global warming – is clearer.

The last climate conference, COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland, nearly fell apart over frustration that international finance wasn't flowing to developing countries and that corporations and financial institutions were greenwashing – making claims they couldn't back up. One year on, something is stirring.

In 2021, the financial sector arrived at COP26 in full force for the first time. Private banks, insurers and institutional investors representing US\$130 trillion (\$178.4 trillion) said they would align their investments with the goal of keeping global warming to 1.5 deg C – a pledge to net zero.

That would increase funding for green growth and clean energy transitions, and reduce investments in fossil fuels. It was an apparent breakthrough. But many observers cried foul and accused the financial institutions of greenwashing.

In the year since then, a UN commission has put a red line around greenwashing, delineating what a company or institution must do to make a credible claim about its net-zero goals. Its checklist isn't mandatory, but it sets a high bar based on science and will help hold companies and investors to account.

Reforming international financial institutions

Second, how international financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank are working is getting much-needed attention.

Over the past 12 months, frustration has grown with the international financial system, especially with the World Bank Group's leadership. Low-income countries have long complained about having to borrow to finance resilience to



PHOTO: AFP

Over the past 12 months, frustration has grown with the international financial system.

climate impacts they didn't cause, and they have called for development banks to take more risk and leverage more private investment for much-needed projects, including expanding renewable energy.

That frustration has culminated in pressure for World Bank president David Malpass to step down. Mr Malpass, nominated by the Trump administration in 2019, has clung on for now, but he is under pressure from the United States, Europe and others to bring forward a new road map for the World Bank's response to climate change this year.

Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley, a leading voice for reform, and others have called for US\$1 trillion already in the international financial system to be redirected to climate resilience projects to help vulnerable countries protect themselves from future disasters associated with climate events.

At COP27, French President Emmanuel Macron supported Ms Mottley's call for a shake-up in how international finance works, and together they have agreed to set up a group to suggest changes at the next meeting of the IMF and World Bank governors in the spring of 2023.

Meanwhile, regional development banks have been reinventing themselves to better address their countries' needs. The Inter-American Development Bank, focused on Latin America and the Caribbean, is considering shifting its business model to take more risk and crowd in more investment from the private sector.

The Asian Development Bank has launched an entirely new operating model designed to achieve greater climate results and leverage private financing

more effectively.

Getting private finance flowing

Third, more public-private partnerships are being developed to speed decarbonisation and power the clean energy transition.

The first of these "Just Energy Transition Partnerships", announced in 2021, was designed to support South Africa's transition away from coal power. It relies on a mix of grants, loans and investments, as well as risk sharing to help bring in more private sector finance.

Indonesia expects to announce a similar partnership as host of the Group of 20 summit. Vietnam is working on another, and Egypt announced a major new partnership at COP27.

However, the public funding has been hard to lock in. Developed countries' coffers are dwindling, with governments including the US unable or unwilling to maintain commitments.

Now, pressure from the war in Ukraine and economic crises is adding to their problems.

The lack of public funds was the impetus behind US special climate envoy John Kerry's proposal to use a new form of carbon offsets to pay for green energy investments in countries transitioning from coal. The idea, loosely sketched out, is that countries dependent on coal could sell carbon credits to companies, with the revenue going to fund clean energy projects.

The country would speed its exit from coal and lower its emissions, and the private company could then claim that reduction in its own accounting towards

net-zero emissions.

Globally, voluntary carbon markets for these offsets have grown from US\$300 million to US\$2 billion since 2019, but they are still relatively small and fragile and need more robust rules.

Mr Kerry's proposal drew criticism, pending the fine print, for fear of swamping the market with industrial credits, collapsing prices and potentially allowing companies in the developed world to greenwash their own claims by retiring coal in the developing world.

New rules to strengthen carbon markets

Fourth, new rules are emerging to strengthen those voluntary carbon markets.

A new set of "high-integrity carbon credit principles" is expected in 2023. A code of conduct for how corporations can use voluntary carbon markets to meet their net-zero claims has already been issued, and standards for ensuring that a company's plans meet the Paris Agreement's goals are evolving.

Incredibly, all this progress is outside the Paris Agreement, which simply calls for governments to make "finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development".

Negotiators seem reluctant to mention this widespread reform movement in the formal text being negotiated at COP27, but walking through the halls of the summit venue, they cannot ignore it. It's been too slow in coming, but change in the financial system is on the way.

Source (THE STRAIT TIMES)

Law & Politics

The nation cannot afford to continue vacillating in war: Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed

BY STAFF REPORTER

Speaking to lawmakers on the 4th regular session of the House of People's Representatives yesterday, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed touched upon a wide range of current affairs including economic, social, and political matters. The following is an excerpt of his briefing on political and diplomatic issues.

Briefing lawmakers on the issue of Pretoria Peace deal, the Premier said that we cannot wallow in an endless war. It is imperative to stop conflict to pave the way for prosperity. We are fighting on multiple fronts, we are not dealing with one force, and we are in a hybrid war on many fronts. Every negotiation is destined to serve national causes. We have made ourselves clear time and time again that we will go until the end of the earth to make peace.

Ethiopia is best benefited in peace. Entrepreneurs of war are always antagonistic to peace. There are those who detest neither peace nor war. There are people who try to make a profit out of conflict and war. It should be clear that those who detest peace are those who want war. Equally, there are people who serve as ambassadors of peace. Peace is our priority. We need to stop the war; otherwise, the country will be crashed. We prioritized peace to ensure the continuity of the nation. There is no good war and bad peace. War is even worse than winning. It kills people and costs dollars. But we will fight when the country's existence and national interest face danger and when the sovereignty and dignity of the country are grappled with threats. Negotiation is not bad if it is about protecting these issues. The people of Tigray should stop listening to the sound of a gun. That was why we sent mediators before the war.

Peace is not about the absence of war it is about the prevalence of the rule of war. The country is best by fair enough pitfalls. Every negotiation or deal that will make law and order prevail is not bad. We have discussed and agreed. We need to live up to our words to realize the peace accord.

Our problems are best resolved when we are able to resolve the issue peacefully. We have to make sure that we work diligently to avoid implementation problems. As a matter of fact, 154 Negotiations have failed Worldwide due to implementation failure. We should strive to avoid this fate. America has designated al-Qaeda for over 20 years while negotiating with the group secretly.



Reflecting his opinion on the issue of diplomacy, the Premier told lawmakers that the hallmarks of Ethiopian diplomacy are freedom, equality, and fairness. This is never to change. We believe in African solutions to African problems. There must have a win-win approach

Responding to the issue of Wolkait, Abiy said that the Ethiopian government has nothing to do with all hotchpotch issues or rumors. We went all the way to Pretoria to bring peace not to negotiate the country's dispute land issue. It will be sorted out in accordance with the law of the country. For those who argue the land was taken by force. My interest is to make sure that the same mistake is not repeated. The same things should never be repeated today. It will be most beneficial to the Wolkait community if it is dealt with legally. It will help both the Tigray and Amhara communities.

The question of Wolkait has been there for a long period of time. Those who fail to discharge their responsibilities are trying to defame the federal government by brewing lots of conspiracies. We have remained silent in order not to distract the peace deal.

There are entities that try to through intrigues in the name of the federal government. The people of Tigray are our people. We should help them when they get into unwanted trouble. There must be sympathy for victory. TPLF and Tigray people are not the same. We need to be fair and magnanimous as the victor. Our armed forces are helping the people of Tigray. We are not sure what the future holds in store. Negotiation is worthwhile. The people of Tigray need food and medication. I am grateful for the peace deal. I am resolute in the enforcement of the deal.

Speaking of restoration works, Prime Minister Abiy stated that we are helping the war-affected communities and restoring damaged infrastructural facilities. Returning displaced communities. We are relocating displaced communities stationed in the Shire town. There are many people who have been displaced from Wolkait. If we are able to create a democratic platform, the issue would be addressed permanently and peacefully. It is better to avoid conspiracy in this regard.

Commenting on the issue of Shene terrorist group, Prime Minister Abiy also noted that there is no freedom in terrorism. Shene is a terrorist group not only to Ethiopia but also its paymasters. It is targeting development projects. It is through constitution and negotiation that problems are addressed. Our door to peace is always open. There is no return in killing civilians burning properties and looting. There is no right in killing farmers and innocent people. If the other side is ready to negotiate without the barrel of a

gun, then we are ready to deal peacefully. But we will deploy military force if the other side resorts to force.

Commenting on the issue of theft, Abiy said that the red lines we have drowned become red carpet. Theft is rampant in Addis Ababa. It is really upsetting to see theft as right. Theft is cancer to a country. Thieves do not deposit their money in banks. They engage in unlawful and clandestine activities. And, this harms the nation. There are people exploiting and using the national problem as an opportunity. Corruption is becoming common in the country. Theft is becoming an increasingly new normal. These corrupt individuals are distracting development endeavors. Thieves could have lavish homes but do not have a country they belong to. We have formed a task force nationally and are closely following the matter and we are discussing it in the ministerial council. We will disclose this to the people days later. We establish hotlines; fighting theft demands shared responsibilities and effort to find a lasting solution to the problem. We need to also improve the work and discipline of civil servants as well.

Reflecting his opinion on the issue of diplomacy, the Premier told lawmakers that the hallmarks of Ethiopian diplomacy are freedom, equality, and fairness. This is never to change. We believe in African solutions to African problems. There must have a win-win approach. We have tried to create amicable relations with neighboring countries over the last three months. We have done a great job to improve our relations with Eritrea, Somalia, South Sudan Djibouti, and Sudan.

Everybody is a diplomat to his or her country. Ethiopian Diasporas need to get engaged in the politics of the western countries they reside in, besides helping their homeland. Our scholars should at least serve their country by preparing publications too.

Lastly, briefing the parliamentarians on the matter of National dialogue Abiy indicated that the task is a tall order. We should all support the committee. This marks a great opportunity for Ethiopia. Members of the committee are patriots and the Ethiopian government is committed to finding a lasting solution to our backlogs in the country by providing all-rounded support to the dialogue. Inclusive national dialogue should be a solution oriented order. The dialogue will help overcome the country's challenges by great margins.

Planet Earth

Europe's African gas demand should accelerate climate fund than aggravating climate change

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

Following the Europe's energy crisis due to the Russia-Ukraine war, the European continent eyes on Africa's natural gas reserve to fill the energy demand gap. Consequently, the European countries are eyeing on Africa's energy potential to replace the Russian gas flow to Europe.

Economically, this would help the African continent to benefit from its natural resource by providing the gas reserve to Europe. The countries that provide the natural gas to the Europe would benefit from foreign currency earning, job creation opportunity for the youth, attracting foreign direct investment and potential foreign companies for new investments both in the sector and other fields. This kind of opportunity could also strengthen the diplomatic and economic relations between the African and European continents.

This kind of massive turnout of the European continent to use Africa's resource directly and indirectly would benefit the African continent. Europe's interest on Africa's natural gas helps African countries to get a massive new market for their natural gas. The international media is forecasting that Africa is on the way to export around 50 percent of its natural gas production to Europe and Asia between 2022 and 2025. This would help Africa to facilitate its economic development by creating more jobs and attracting new investments.

But, at the same time, Climate campaigners

and climate activists fear that the new Europe's eye on Africa's natural gas may aggravate the continent's climate crisis. African climate activists and their supporters were campaigning to promote expansion of renewable energy sources in Africa and minimizing the fossil fuel and natural gas investments. But, the climate activists feared the Europe's focus on African natural gas may initiate the continent to invest more in search of natural gas than in investing on renewable energy sources.

Africa's energy access is far lower than other regions of the world. According to reports, more than 600 million of the continent's over 1.3 billion people live without electricity. Hence, the continent needs ambitious investments in renewable energy sources than limited sources. In this regard, the fear of the climate activists is that the Europe's demand on African natural gas may force the continent to invest in search of natural gases and fossil fuels than in renewable energy sources.

In addition, the huge investment in natural gas and fossil fuel may also lead the continent to further environmental harms, according to the climate activists. Hence, the climate campaigners cautioned that climate issue needs due attention while Africa is preparing to provide its natural gas to Europe. The activists feared that the new face for Africa's natural gas may aggravate Africa's climate crisis and climate change during this critical time.

But, if Africa properly and wisely used the

opportunity, the continent can transform even its climate action and would help its renewable energy investment. Europe's demand for Africa's natural gas could offer financing solutions for Africa's green energy future by selling its gas potential and reversely invested on its renewable energy sources, like hydro, solar and wind.

Climate crisis affects the African continent even beyond the other parts of the world. With its limited technological advancements and dependent on nature, climate change impacts affected the continent badly. The continent's energy access remains poor. Due to these reasons, the continent needs strong interventions to minimize the impacts of climate change. The fear of climate activists is the current development may aggravate these shortcomings of the continent.

The climate campaigners' alarms the new development may promote gas projects in Africa. There was a plan to end supports for oil and gas projects in Africa, which they hoped a potential end of new plans to exploit vast quantities of natural gas resources in different African countries, though African countries are opposing the plans to phase-out supports for gas projects. Europe's turning its face to African gas resource may extend the Africa's gas projects and the activists are alarming their concern.

If properly applied, Africa's gas sale to Europe may become a blessing to finance the formers climate action and the investments in the

energy sector. The energy sector investment costs huge finance and technology and Africa's major limitation to run huge projects in the energy sector is funding. With proper action plans, the continent could benefit from the gas sale to Europe to finance its renewable energy development. On the other hand, rewarding the environment to minimize the environmental harms of the oil projects with the income generated from the gas could also be another mechanism to save the environment.

Europe should also support Africa's struggle of building climate resilient continent. As Europe sees Africa as new potential of gas source for its energy demand, it is critical to support Africa's climate action and the efforts of the continent to expand energy access. Europe should give due attention on financing Africa's climate action and Africa's renewable energy investment projects while it demands African gas resource.

All in all, Africa's gas project must be climate friendly. Opposing the Africa's gas project development is not the solution, instead, making the investment climate friendly and a source of climate finance is a double advantage. As the users are the developed world, Europe, it is also critical to finance Africa's climate actions parallel to demanding Africa's gas resource for own energy demand. I hope, the new development would be a blessing to accelerate climate finance and climate action than aggravating climate change and climate crisis in Africa.



Published Weekly in Collaboration with Haramaya University

HU fortitude on irrigation wheat seed production

BY DIRRIBA TESHOME

Haramaya University (HU) has been exerting all its efforts to ensure food security since its establishment through providing special improved seeds and seedlings. Currently, it is working hard on producing improved wheat seeds for irrigation to enhance the national efforts of the government in achieving food security by national production.

In the first week of this November, HU distributed one thousand quintals of improved seeds worth 6.1 million Birr through East Hararge Zone Agriculture Office. The improved seeds will be multiplied in eight districts by farmers organized in clusters on 1000 hectares of irrigated land, as it was indicated on the handing over ceremony.

This is not the first time but HU has been supporting the national irrigation based wheat grain production initiative since 2020 through research, provision of improved seeds for multiplication, training, technical backstopping, and market linkage facilitation for farmers who produce quality seeds.

HU Vice President for Research

Affairs, Tesfaye Lemma (PhD and Associate Professor of Agricultural Extension) said that timely availability of adequate quantity of appropriate and quality seeds is one of the critical factors for the success and sustainability of the wheat initiative. HU has been working in partnership with East Hararge Zone Agriculture Office to support farmers who are able and willing to produce quality seeds for local market in addition to grain production.

At least 30,000 quintals of quality declared seeds will be harvested to meet zonal wheat seeds demand for the next season. Moreover, the support will increase income of the direct beneficiaries, reduce seeds' supply shortage, and stimulate local seed business development, he noted.

Speaking on the occasion, Head of Zonal Agricultural Office, Getahun Nigatu, expressed his gratitude to the HU for its continuous technical and material supports to wheat and other related initiatives promising to own the initiative and to provide coordinated support and to conduct regular follow up for effective implementation on the

ground.

Similarly, in the third week of October this year, HU Office of the Vice President for Research Affairs held a consultative workshop in Harar City with relevant stakeholders regarding winter irrigation wheat seed development in Meta, Meyu Mulike, and Gole Oda districts of East Hararge Zone.

On the forum, HU's fortitude to ensure food security by finding wheat seeds suitable for the local climate and distributing them to the farmers was lauded.

Deputy Governor of East Hararge Zone Administration, Ayalew Takele, said "Haramaya University is doing exemplary work by supporting farmers professionally and providing them with a variety of improved seeds by increasing production and productivity in the national effort to ensure food security."

The government has decided to work hard domestically to substitute and reduce or stop importing wheat from abroad. Taking the good experience gained from the previous yield, the plan for winter irrigation-based wheat

production in Meta, Meyu Mulike, and Gole Oda districts of East Hararge Zone is on discussion, he explained.

In 2022/23 too, activities are being done to produce wheat on 25,000 hectares of land in East Hararge Zone, and HU is expected along with zone and district experts and members of the community, will play a major role in the success of the plan, he hoped.

Speaking on the forum on behalf of HU Vice President for Research Affairs, Chanyalew Seyoum (PhD), Director of Extension Research and Publication Directorate, explained that HU is discussing with concerned stakeholders the situations and problems related to winter irrigation-based wheat production and its delivery to the users.

"HU is currently conducting research on winter irrigation-based wheat production in addition to carrying out capacity-building and awareness-creation activities. Moreover, wheat production research that Master and Doctorate students are conducting on 25 wheat varieties is additional effort for the success of the plan," Dr. Chanyalew noted at last.