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## African Media: Rectifying Africa's distorted image

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

**ADDIS ABABA**-Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) proposal to the establishment of a pan-African media would enable the continent to tell its own story and to repulse the corporate media's distorted portrayal, African journalists said.

Speaking to local media, Ghanaian Journalist Boba Fosasari stated that the African Union Commission (AUC) should take the lead in translating Premier Abiy's recommendation to African Union Continental Media House.

According to him, a continent-wide media is also the instrument to power Africa's development and socioeconomic and political progress.

Sharing the above, a Senegalese Journalist Amudu Ban noted that such move will give Africa the necessary caliber to eschew global media's false narratives and misinformation campaign. Shunning positive developments in Africa, some big outlets have largely engaged to present the continent as a place of famine and dismemberment.

"It was a great opportunity that Abiy proposed the establishment of the African media as it allows persuading other leaders. Before I came to Ethiopia, I had a wrong perception about the situation in the country. This could be one of the examples of the Western media's misinformation."

Commenting on the issue, Prime Minister's Foreign Relation Policy Advisor Minister

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## Ministry carries out afforestation of over 2 mln. ha of land

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

**ADDIS ABABA** – The afforestation of over 2 million hectares of land have been done over the last six months of this fiscal year alone, Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) disclosed.

MoA Natural Resource State Minister Prof. Eyasu Elias told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the nation had planned to engage

*See Ministry carries ... Page 3*

## Ethiopia's hotels voice satisfaction after AU Summit

BY MENGESHA AMARE

**ADDIS ABABA**- Representatives of Skylight and Hilton hotels said the recently-concluded 36th African Union Assembly played an immense role in reviving the hotel business and increasing their respective income.

*See Ethiopia's hotels ... Page 3*

## Renewing more push for Africa's UNSC seat

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA**-Deploying experienced diplomats, ensuring political stability, and addressing bureaucratic red tape would play a vital role in helping Africa secure a permanent seat in the UNSC, a political expert said.

The undemocratic culture of the UNSC is widely regarded as the major factor that affected the continent with over 1.2 billion people remaining without a permanent seat.

Speaking to *The Ethiopian Herald*, a Professor of Public Policy Costantinos

Berhetesfa (PhD) stated that securing a seat in the world's principal decision-making body enables Africa to better promote and defend its interests.

Noting UNSC permanent seat is a very powerful position in global politics, the expert stressed that African countries need to exert meticulous political engagement to achieve their goal. Also, African leaders must always be determined to ensure the interest of their people and pay firm attention to industry expansion and ease the continent's reliance on foreign aid.

*See Renewing more ... Page 3*



Photo: Eyob Teferi



# News



Ambassador Jemal Beker

## Ethiopia, Pakistan working towards high level ties

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

**ADDIS ABABA** – Ethiopia and Pakistan have been enjoying the cordial relation and engaging in diverse areas including socio-political and economic engagements, but, both want new high level ties, Ambassador Jemal Beker said.

In his interview with Daily Times, the Ethiopian Ambassador to Pakistan, Jemal Beker said that the minimal trade volume of these two countries was not satisfactory because of the absence of institutional linkages. From now on, the two sides are striving to ensure linkages between them.

The Ambassador said: “The bilateral trade between the two countries is minimal amounting to 78 million USD, however, its target is to take 200 million USD by the end of 2023.”

Around 80 percent of the population is dependent on agriculture sector which makes 90 percent of exports and 45 percent of the GDP, he noted adding that taxes and duties on import of over 500 agriculture items have been abolished which resulted in hampering crops to enable Ethiopia to become exporter of agricultural products.

“We started wheat export to Kenya and would like to do the same for Pakistan, where the food insecurity is looming. Some 12 agro processing units have been established and linked with the agriculture input which helps to boost country’s economy,” the Ambassador mentioned.

“Ethiopia is setting by example by producing 96.4 percent of energy from cheapest sources. It has already been exporting clean energy to Djibouti, Kenya and Sudan, and underway to export to other regional countries,” he remarked.

He said that Ethiopia is a gateway to Africa and Pakistani investors can do a good business by investing in Ethiopia. Also, it is introducing one-window facility where investors will have all the facilities for import and export under one roof.

Moreover, Ethiopia has also been playing a remarkable role in bolstering various sectors such as in agriculture, mining sector, aviation, investment and others.

“It is very important for the Pakistani business communities to enter in to Ethiopian market and import agricultural products such as coffee, tea, pulses, oilseeds and vegetables at affordable rate.”

Ethiopian Airline operations in Pakistan as it will be operating four flights a week from Karachi by the end of this month and enable both countries citizens to travel to each other countries, it was learnt.

## Authority extending invitation to investors in civil airstrip, heliports construction

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA**—Ethiopian Civil Aviation Authority (ECAA) has invited regional, city administrations, private investors and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to engage in airstrip and heliport construction.

Briefing local media yesterday, ECAA General Director Getachew Mengistie stated that the government has amended legal directive that allows Ethiopian private sectors, regional and city administrations as well as NGOs to construct own and business airstrips and heliports.

“So far, the number of functional airports is about 22 including the four international ones. Hence, the facility seekers and the air transport service are unmatched. As of now, those who are interested in the aviation industry can construct their own airstrips and heliports,” he said.

The Aviation Authority has installed platforms to respond any requests for registration and approval of civil airstrips and heliports for domestic use only, he elaborated. Besides, technical supports will



Photo: Hadush-Abreha

be provided to applicants, he added.

ECAA Deputy General Director Misrak Tilahun on her part stated that ECAA and Ethiopian Investment Commission have signed Memorandum of Understanding aiming to support private investment in the aviation industry.

“So far, airstrips built in Ethiopia were used to access grand projects, mining places, entertainment areas, and for humanitarian

missions. Following the approval of the new directive the authority is receiving number of airstrip and heliport construction requests from private investors, regional and city administrations,” Misrak said.

The ECAA will access the proposed sites and will process request approvals. Moreover, the Ethiopian Airports Authority has agreed to provide technical assistance on the areas of planning, designing and construction of airstrips and heliports, according to her.



## ECX, Hijra Bank ink MoU on modernizing payment system

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

**ADDIS ABABA**- Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX) and Hijra Bank inked MoU to work together for making payment system modern.

ECX Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Mergia Bayissa stated that the Exchange has signed MoU with Hijra Bank as its 20th payment partner to make payment system advanced and fast.

The system helps the suppliers to transfer the money they sold directly from the buyer’s bank account to their account upon transaction completion.

“We are working to make payment system more accessible to the traders and other beneficiaries like farmers and sellers, suppliers of the agriculture products in the

nation.”

Around 22 agriculture products are entered to the transaction and industry products such cement, salt and sugar mining products opal, sapphire and emerald, too, are made ready to enter in the transaction process, he stated.

“ECX prepared payment system farmers to supply and sell their products to the market without the membership. Online electronics transaction services would be applied.

The entire products pass through legal finance system of transaction thus the process helps the Hijra bank increase its customers and expand service provision more than ever.

This system also helps exporters, unions and banks to ensure legality, accountability, secure and health cash flow in the market system of Ethiopia, he added.

Hijra Bank President Dawit Keno on his part said that the bank is providing interest free banking services, started its operation last year by 10,000 shareholders and reach its branch 60 in the nation. “The number of bank’s employees has reached 500 and it has made connection with international money transfer institutions,” he said.

As to him, the bank has signed agreement with ECX to pass agricultural products through modern transaction, transparency, develop trust, and have a convenient working atmosphere.

“The bank works based on Sharia law of finance system of accounting and auditing protocols. We signed the contract to make farmers and exporters equally benefited in trading, transaction and payment system of our bank,” he added.



# News

## Commission continues delivering humanitarian relief in north Ethiopia

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

**ADDIS ABABA**—During the second round humanitarian aid, over 157,000 Metric Tons (MT) food and 2 billion Birr have been distributed to the needy in the North part of Ethiopia, the National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC) disclosed.

NDRMC Public Relations Director Debebe Zewdie told local media that 21.2 million needy who are affected by various manmade and natural disasters across the country are being provided with daily food aid.

Last December, 157,852MT of food was distributed to people affected by the conflict in northern parts of the country, according to the Director.

The second round humanitarian aid delivery to the conflict affected communities in northern Ethiopia addressed 92 percent, Debebe said.

The humanitarian assistance is supplied by government and various partners by considering the country's capacity.



He said: "Moreover, 1,316,848 Litter of fuel and over 2 billion Birr has been accessible to citizens who want support in the Tigray State. The Director further called on aid organizations and international partners to address the growing demand among affected communities."

There are many citizens, who need daily support in most parts of the country, and the

humanitarian aid that has been provided is inadequate; therefore, he said adding that private and governmental institutions and humanitarian aid organizations are expected to provide the needy with additional support.

As to NDRMC, over 90,000 quintals of wheat and nutritious food were distributed to over 450,000 people in the first round alone.

## Ministry carries out afforestation ...

in afforestation of 5 million hectares of land through river basin development at a national level, but it was possible to reforest 2 million out of it.

Prof. Eyasu said that farmers in various areas have been conducting wide range rehabilitation works to reemerge affected basins.

Commenting on the role of forest development in conserving the ecosystem, the state minister stated that along with river basin development works other related plants that are used for human and animal consumptions have also been planted.

"In addition, forest development protection works have been undertaken on 2 million hectares of land. In various areas, the communities are aware of the values and culture of developing and protecting seedlings and developed sense of belongingness towards such river basin development," he said.

As to him, forest development is mainly



*Eyasu Elias (Prof.)*

important to protect climate change, agricultural productivity and they can also provide a crucial buffer for the communities. Other forest development initiatives will also be undertaken.

Currently, over 7 million hectares of land

is affected by soil acidity out of which 3 million is severely affected. Also, shortage of provision of chemicals worsens the problem, he indicated.

The state minister also noted that natural conservation work needs various stakeholders' participations at a national level through various national initiatives, and experts' involvement.

Nowadays, soil acidity is severely happening in different productive regions such as in west Amhara, most parts of Oromia, Sidama, South and South West areas.

"Natural conservation and afforestation play an important role in controlling climate change, carbon emission and other related impacts. Due to scarcity of rain fall and unseasonal rainfall in Somalia state and South Omo, there is always flood, drought. So, various initiatives should be taken for a better ecosystem," he pinpointed.

## Ethiopia's hotels voice satisfaction ...

Having stayed with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Skylight Hotel Public Relations Head Yohannes Afework noted that the coming of guests to the capital has a vital contribution in increasing the hotels' income.

Not only raising the income of hotels but a large number of incoming guests have also availed the opportunity to Ethiopia garner a substantial amount of foreign currency, Yohannes added. "To accommodate more guests, we even used expansion sections and almost all of our guests expressed delight over the service they obtained during their stay here."

"The hotel has given due attention to building Ethiopia's image among AU guests by availing quality service to the latter. The number of our customers was significantly higher during the summit and provided summit participants the service keeping the international standard."

Hilton Addis Hotel Deputy Marketing Director Daniel Gelaw said that the hotel's long experience in Ethiopia's hospitality business help it to render quality service to AU guests. "We hosted high-level AU dignitaries and other guests from various countries and all expressed delight and satisfaction over the service."

As to him, the summit helped the revival of the pandemic and conflict-impacted hotel business. "We draw lessons from our experience and are ready to provide seamless service for our guests and make their stay here comfortable and memorable. Vigorous activities are also underway to showcase Ethiopia's much cherished hospitality to our customers."

Both Yohannes and Daniel expressed appreciation for the role police and other law enforcement agencies have played in ensuring the safety and security of the hotel guests.

## African Media: ...

Ambassador Taye Atskeselassie stated that in covering the AU Summit, the corporate media hypnotized the escorting of Israel's delegate due to protocol reasons. Meanwhile the outlets categorically ignored the intense discussions held on peace, security, economic development by African leaders.

"The fact that Africans are not owners of the media paves the way for Western outlets to take the advantage and misinform the world about the continent."

For media leadership professional Abel Adamu, Africa needs to own a media house that narrates its own story. In doing so, professionals must gather up, discuss as well as adopt other countries' experience to come up with ways to make it a reality.

It is to be recalled that in his statement made at the opening of the 36th AU Summit last week, PM Abiy pleaded for the establishment of a pan-African media house that will better present the continent's reality. He called upon all Africans to tackle the continent's trademark negative portrayal by the global media. "Africa should tell her own story, and not allow others to tell it in the service of their own interests."

"Until Africa tells her own stories, her image will remain distorted—a distortion that affects not just how others view us but also how we view ourselves. We owe it to ourselves and to our children that Africa's truths need to be told as they are, untainted with external interests and biases," Abiy emphasized.

## Renewing more...

To secure a permanent seat in the UNSC, it is also crucial to tap Africa's immense natural resources including water, arable land, and labor force, and galvanize efforts for food security. Despite having 74 million hectares of arable land, Ethiopia, for instance, still harvests 20 percent of the arable land.

As to him, South Africa, Zambia, and Namibia are exemplary in generating substantial revenue from export products by effectively utilizing natural resources.

As Africa is growing both in economy and population, the UNSC has become more important than ever to the continent. The presence of African countries in the council permanently is also beneficial in legitimizing conflict resolutions and ensuring the effectiveness of peace-enforcing missions in the continent.

Concerning Ethiopia's accession to the position, many scholars expressed convictions that as one of the oldest members of the UN and also a host for the AU, the country has every right to aspire.



# Opinion

## Safeguarding common security for shared development

BY ZHAO ZHIYUAN  
/Chinese Ambassador to Ethiopia/

Today, our world, our times and history are changing in ways like never before, and the international community is confronted with multiple risks and challenges rarely seen before. Regional security hotspots keep flaring up, local conflicts and turbulence occur frequently, the COVID-19 pandemic persists, unilateralism and protectionism have risen significantly, and traditional and non-traditional security threats are entwined. The deficits in peace, development, security and governance are growing, and the world is once again at a crossroads in history.

At such a critical juncture for world peace and development, Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered a keynote speech titled *Rising to Challenges and Building a Bright Future Through Cooperation* at the opening ceremony of the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2022, and proposed for the first time the Global Security Initiative (GSI). The other day, China officially released *The Global Security Initiative Concept Paper*, demonstrating China's great responsibilities to maintain world peace and firm resolve to safeguard global security.

The Global Security Initiative Concept Paper is consistent with "six commitments" as its core concepts and principles: the commitment to the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security provides conceptual guidance; the commitment to respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries is the basic premise; the

commitment to abiding by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter is a primary benchmark; the commitment to taking the legitimate security concerns of all countries seriously is an important principle; the commitment to peacefully resolving differences and disputes between countries through dialogue and consultation is a must choice; and the commitment to maintaining security in both traditional and non-traditional domains is an inherent requirement. Living up to the universal expectations from the international community, the Concept Paper wins more global recognition in China's advocacy of cooperation, provides guidance for all stakeholders to find effective solutions to security plight and disputes, and fosters a more comprehensive understanding of the international community in China's contribution to solving global security issues.

The Chinese government will give a full play to multiple platforms and mechanisms of cooperation, in a bid to safeguard common security and pursue shared development. China will continue to play a positive role in the General Assembly, relevant UN Committees, the Security Council, relevant institutions, and other international and regional organizations; to leverage the roles of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, BRICS cooperation, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, the "China+Central Asia" mechanism, and relevant mechanisms of East Asia cooperation; to hold high-level conferences on the GSI in due course to strengthen policy communication in the field of security,

promote intergovernmental dialogue and cooperation, and further foster synergy in the international community to address security challenges; to support the China-Africa Peace and Security Forum, the Middle East Security Forum, the Beijing Xiangshan Forum, the Global Public Security Cooperation Forum (Lianyungang) and other international dialogue platforms in contributing to deepening exchange and cooperation on security; and to build more international platforms and mechanisms for exchange and cooperation on addressing security challenges in such areas as counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, biosecurity and emerging technologies, with a view to improving the governance capacity in the domain of non-traditional security.

Guided by the GSI, China will continue to enhance security cooperation with Africa. China supports the efforts of African countries, the AU and sub-regional organizations to resolve regional conflicts, fight terrorism and safeguard maritime security, calls on the international community to provide financial and technical support to Africa-led counter-terrorism operations, and supports African countries in strengthening their ability to safeguard peace independently. China supports addressing African problems in the African way, and promotes peaceful settlement of hotspots in the Horn of Africa, the Sahel, the Great Lakes region and other areas. China actively implements the Outlook on Peace and Development in the Horn of Africa, promotes the institutionalization of the China-Horn of Africa Peace, Governance and Development Conference, and

works actively to launch pilot projects of cooperation.

China is ready to conduct security cooperation with Ethiopia under the framework of the GSI, and actively promote coordination of security concepts and convergence of interests. As an anchor of peace in the horn of Africa, Ethiopia with its own peace and stability holds great significance for maintaining lasting peace in the region. China-Ethiopia comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership is advancing with strong momentum. Practical cooperation in various fields is deepening with more tangible fruits. Both countries have the common interest of creating a peaceful and stable environment for development. China welcomes the active participation of Ethiopia and more African countries in the GSI, promotes the synergy between African Peace and Security Architecture and the GSI, and works with our African friends to enrich the substance of the initiative by actively exploring new forms and areas of cooperation.

It is our common aspiration to achieve lasting world peace, so that all countries can enjoy a peaceful and stable external environment and their people can live a happy life with their rights fully guaranteed. Like passengers aboard on the same ship, let's work in solidarity to foster a community of shared security for mankind and build a world that is free from fear and enjoys universal security!

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## Way out of neocolonial trap: Pan-Africanism

BY MENGESHA AMARE

The continent of Africa is these days well aware of all the tricks and conspiracies and gets ready to overcome every step to hold it back by setting up a viable bond—Pan-Africanism.

It is purely an idea of earnest integration, global competitiveness and peaceful coexistence with a view to creating an independent, well-to-do and harmonious continent. Needless to state, the continent of Africa should be free from uninvited foreign intrusion, being labeled as incapable and have a full discretion to push its own leaders to throne and get them down following public consent, but due to foreign assignment.

Pan-Africanism is a viable path for Africa to be well emancipated from poverty, illiteracy and maladministration compatible with its affluence and powerful labor force.

Yes, pan-Africanism has incorporated

global competitive capacity, spotlight peaceful agreement over disputes and trivial clashes orchestrated by elements who wouldn't love Africa's peace and fraternity.

Creating a livable and nonviolent Africa should not be left only to individuals, groups, associations, governments who are all the time advocating Africa's unity, harmonious way of living, spirit of supporting one another, rather it badly requires the combined effort of all.

Africa has to be an influential and potent global partner as it lacks nothing except coordination and determined leadership prioritizing its national, regional and continental interest. Thanks to the spirit of Pan-Africanism however hopes are rising to lift the continent from the ocean of oppression, being twisted to the direction masters would love as well as scarcity it has found itself in.

Yes, no time other than today is much more convenient to help Africa declare

independence either in terms of economy, social, even political spheres under the umbrella of the spirit of pan Africanism.

The African agenda 2063 has come up with a number of programs and projects to help the continent meet its vision at the right time set to do. To this end, countries of the continent should be determined enough to sustainably implement programs and projects incorporating all the invaluable elements hammered towards pulling Africa out of the ocean of abject poverty, sporadic conflict, calculatingly carried out dishonesty following the spirit of fattening personal gain instead of serving public interest.

All these irregularities are going to get vanished if the leaders of Africa move in unison, develop fraternity and peaceful coexistence. As pan-Africanism is the dawn of hope for the continent and a well thought internal platform, Africa has to live up to its promises and programs framed towards ensuring economic

sovereignty, peaceful avenue and genuine integrity. In so doing, it would be possible for Africa to reap the fruits of the spirit of Pan-Africanism within the shortest time possible.

African would record remarkable outcomes in the years to come if it does properly impellent the essence of this miracle move. Hence, leaders have to draw important lessons via properly monitoring and evaluating the undertakings carried out over the past ten years to pave avenues for the next task. The journey to agenda 2063 has firmly commenced and the continent will be a place of its oaths based on its vibrant, visionary and patriotic front-runners—LEADERS.

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

# Editorial

# Opinion

## High time for Africa to reshape its wrong portrait on global stage

For a long, Africa has been a victim of media propaganda being portrayed as a dark continent marred by hunger and backwardness. The wrong portrayal of the continent by years of negative and biased media coverage also gave the continent a bad image globally. The wrong narrative was intense that Africa has been synonymous with impoverishment and conflict. The fact that the information flow is controlled by western media denied the continent fair and real representations. In fact, the media has been a powerful tool of the west to impose certain interests in African countries.

Partly, the continent's failure to set and frame its own narratives contributed to its bad reputation in the global limelight. Balanced reporting is a missing element in global media when it comes to dealing with African issues. The continent was also at the receiving end of international media's acts of omission or commission. Conflicts and poverty are overemphasized while positive developments are largely ignored by western media. Ethiopia's coverage of the conflict in the northern part of the country is a case in point in this regard. There has been a coordinated misinformation campaign and fabrication of hoax stories to give a different image of the country.

Some international media outlets were engaged in mere propaganda serving their paymasters or special group interests. This drew unfair external pressure and put the country on the back foot. Yet, positive developments and progress received little attention from the global media. For instance, the media outlets turned a blind eye to the Pretoria peace agreement signed between the Ethiopian government and Tigray People's Liberation Front.

Having precious yet unexploited natural resources with a young population, Africa in fact has more good news to supply. From little acts of kindness to life-changing projects, good things are happening in the continent that the media should give coverage to. But the continent currently lacks the channels with which to tell its stories the way it wants them told. Besides, the wrong media coverage, African issues are poorly communicated or entertained. To advance the major undertakings or projects of the continent, Africa should have its own media outlets and reshape its narratives. There must be pan-Africanist media institutions that help the continent tell its own stories in its own way. At the just-ended 36th AU summit Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed reiterated his suggestion that Africa needs its own media house to be able to produce and narrate its stories on its own and from its own perspective. African nations should pull all the resources and set up strong media organizations that set and spread the African agenda. One that controls the media indeed controls the narrative. For Africa to have the right place on the global stage, it should be able to tell its stories from its own perspective. There are mammoth and daunting tasks that Africa Union aspires to achieve. In this regard, having a strong media that best serves the ambitions of African people is a must-do and timely task.

## How much does peace cost?

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Let alone taking the global arena into account, a clash between community members, friends, workmates, classmates and family members, such as a husband and a wife, has snatched the comfort of mind and given the involving parties hard time. In the presence of disagreements, working mode has been vanished, mental amity has been dilapidated and the whole spirit of normalcy is highly wedged. Even the unthinkable would be made possible, connotatively, the laborious task perhaps a century long built city, would be converted into ash in a fraction of seconds following lack of truce.

It is quite unforgettable that Ethiopians especially who reside in the northern part have been war-ravaged and lost incalculable wealth and experience huge loss of life due to lack of peace.

However, these days people are breathing a sigh of relief, damaged infrastructure are being upheld, development aspects in the country are being well expanded, people of the two regions (Amhara and Tigray states) are normally exchanging ideas, commodities and doing much more though a lot remains to be fixed.

The gist of this piece is not talking about the peace blowing in the northern part of Ethiopia, but its priceless nature in general. Ethiopia hosted a remarkable AU Summit as peace prevails in it. Visitors, tourists and leaders of great countries have shown keen interest to visit and invest in Ethiopia following the peace the country has been entertaining.

Ethiopians commencement of wheat export was born to the peaceful setup. If sunlight and/or clean air (oxygen) is chargeable and has to be bought from nature, who is going to service in the globe?

The response given to this question does also work for peace. No wealth, no capital or no outclassed knowledge can buy peace, no doubt. Peace is quite priceless. No price is estimated to obligate it. No matter how mammoth the wealth the well-to-do have accrued, they could hardly unequivocally secure peace. Instead, peace is grown in rational mind and rational human being who has never attempted to surpass and infringe others rights to fatten personal gain and quench self-thirst.

Peace is nothing, but oxygen living things breathe in life. Hence, no one can guess its cost and no money can buy it at all.

Coming back to the previous concept, if sunlight or air is charged, no one can survive on planet earth, those who lack

peace can't either. Hence, peace is soul. Lack of peace is tantamount to lack of oxygen to breathe and sunlight to have a proper anatomy and grow what human beings need.

Taking all this fact into account, one can say that peace is the air and sun light that can be bought at all. However, knowingly or calculatingly countries of the world, there are exceptions of course, have been running activities against peace trajectory. The rationale behind this devilish move perhaps is developing egocentric spirit, having a chauvinistic gesture to put others under control, expanding territorial stratagem, developing desire of exploding others wealth, deforming the strategic geopolitical and spatial structure.

This entire sly move has definitely born instability and recurrent turmoil among people of the world, though the degree varies, which has a direct bearing to all the trials against peace.

The most important thing that has to be taken into account in this regard is ensuring peace should not be left only to ministries of peace and line authorities which are in charge of preaching elements of serenity, religious institutions which are working to shape the generation in tune with virtuous values and gracious public engagements; rather it needs the combined effort of all.

True, peace is in everyone's palm, mind and mental set up. Very inexpensive poured from hell, hearty and lovable mentality, but never reaped with innumerable material wealth. It is why people can confidently say that no price is fixed to procure peace. Thus, the answer for the question, "How much does peace cost?" is unknown as it will never be calculated.

So, as one of the Chinese proverb goes, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step" world peace, which is the basis of every sacred activity in the planet starts from an individual effort. The collective effort of all would be instrumental in creating a peaceful world. Even leaders and governors of the world countries are expected to rescue the planet from being vanished due to severe climate change (manifested by flush flood, wildfire and unprecedented catastrophes), drought, and chronic conflict and so forth shooting all activities using peace gun.

So long as peace is disrupted by the veil acts of anti-peace elements across the globe, and they are armored in the general society, inculcating the invaluable significance of peace in the minds of every soul in the universe would be a lasting weapon to ensure peace. Otherwise, no peace is bought using money as it is quite inestimable at all.

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



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The Ethiopian Herald



# Business & Economy

## Feasible framework for transforming African agriculture

BY MENGESHA AMARE

African countries have these days been determined to bring about real change in economic, social, cultural and even political arenas via transformation. They have also been highly endeavoring to renovate the agriculture sector in their respective territories thereby being triumphant over poverty, backwardness, conflict-oriented and other manifestations of under civilization from which they are suffering still.

Without a shadow of doubt, Africa is a rural continent and agriculture is extremely important as the majority of its population has highly depended on this soil-oriented means of economic achievement.

African leaders convened in Addis Ababa, the seat of their commission and discussed a range of issues revolving around African Affairs. Of the myriads of concerns the leaders deliberated on is the issue of agriculture, the mainstay of continent's economy.

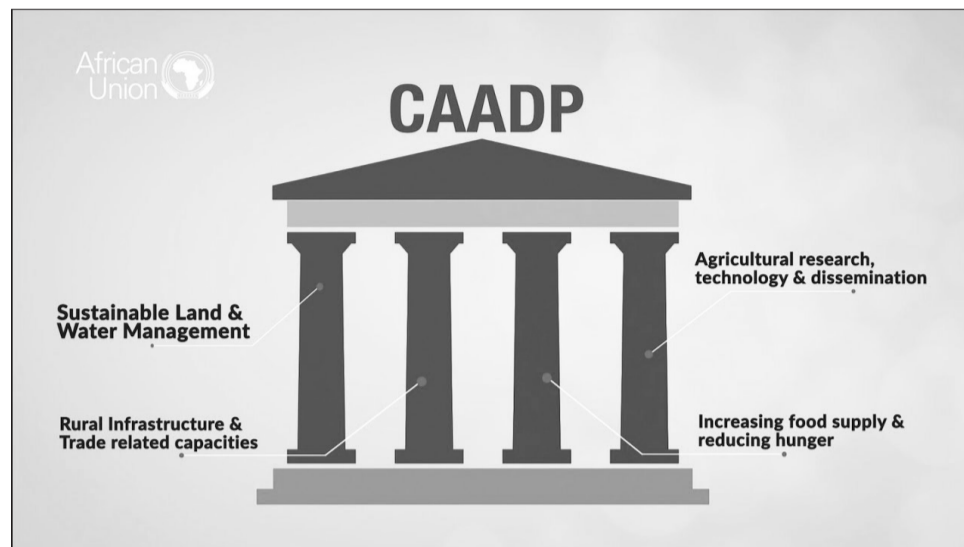
One of the mechanisms on which the leaders have focused is Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP), a policy framework for agricultural transformation, wealth creation, and food security, among others.

Ending hunger on the continent and tripling inter-Africa trade regarding agricultural goods have been fueled by catalyzing and facilitating the coordination of regional and crosscutting platforms of regional nature.

Yes, Africa's own firm commitment to boost agriculture needs to be taken as a weapon to make the background of re-emerging international recognition stating that funding agriculture is vital for sustainable development. No. Africa's being aid dependent as opposed to its endowment with untapped resources has to be reined somewhere and sometime in short.

Cognizant of the fact that Africa is now in a position to create wealth tantamount to its unexploited natural resources and capable human labor, this writer asked Solomon Mola, an agricultural expert graduated in Agricultural Economics to seek professional detail regarding the issue under discussion. He said, "Agricultural transformation has to be prioritized and provided with coordination of regional packages and has to be adopted as a regional coordination and harmonization framework to accelerate achievement of CAADP goals as the latter serves as a central instrument to assemble financial, institutional and technical support required to drive agricultural transformation.

As to Solomon, CAADP is instrumental in inspiring African agricultural research



institutions, farmers, and the private sector whose contribution is great in terms of bringing about remarkable change in agricultural development. It is also about boosting investment to stimulate growth in agriculture.

"The Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program (CAADP) is an agenda 2063 continental initiative aiming at helping African countries to eliminate hunger and reduce poverty by raising economic growth through agriculture-led development," he added.

He said African governments agreed to allocate at least 10% of national budgets to agriculture and rural development, and to achieve agricultural growth rates of at least 6% per annum through CAADP. Underlying these investment commitments are targets for reducing poverty and malnutrition, increasing productivity and farm incomes, and improving the sustainability of agricultural production and use of natural resources.

He further said that CAADP also supports countries to enhance resilience to climate variability through development of disaster preparedness policies and strategies, early warning response systems and social safety nets.

According to Solomon, CAADP has four priority areas: encompassing areas under sustainable land management and reliable water control systems, improving rural infrastructure and trade-related capacities for market access, increasing food supply, reducing hunger, and improving responses to food emergency crises as well as enlightening agriculture research, technology dissemination and adoption.

He further elucidated that adaptation to climate change in agricultural development in Africa and environment in the eyes of homegrown facets is highly focused as it would be instrumental in reinvigorating Africa's agricultural development.

As to him, the CAADP has been serving as the framework for action for agricultural transformation across Africa since 2003.

As an African Union initiative, the framework supports member states in increasing investment and productivity in the agricultural sector, and its agenda for adaptation to climate change is successfully implemented.

According to the expert, adaptation to climate change would help secure a productive and climate-resilient agricultural sector in Africa.

Needless to state, a programme on agriculture must remain living and open to continuing improvement and also be open to interpretation for each of Africa's sub-regions in order to best address that continent's diversity.

"The fundamental mutually reinforcing pillars on which Africa's agriculture, such as food security and trade balance, need to be prioritized as snowballing food supply and reducing hunger is the call of the era," he said.

It is well recognized that Africa has so far lagged behind all other regions in terms of farm productivity levels with depressed crop and livestock yields, and limited use of irrigation and other inputs. However, it is now high time for accessing improved technology and transforming agriculture since Africa can well exploit its agricultural potential and infrastructure capacity thereby coming up with remarkable achievements regarding the sector.

According to Solomon, the continent has to capitalize on rehabilitating and retaining of soil moisture via keeping farmlands and other surrounding ecology green as it is of significantly important in ensuring economically viable agricultural production and productivity.

Here the very important thing that has to be taken into serious account, he said, is every activity carried out on the agriculture sector has to be compatible with the requirements for an agricultural production process respecting natural conditions and the environment. This move would be of paramount importance in optimizing agricultural production.

Buttressing agricultural production and enhancing environmental protection and biodiversity, conserving energy, promoting more efficient use of resources as well as protecting soil health and resilience are quite inseparable trajectories with a view to bringing about the desired outcome at all.

"CAADP also would be of instrumental in providing the foundation on which a healthy, consumer based agriculture and food production system can be developed for the entire continent and beyond," he underlined.

The environmental advantages of CAADP, including soil and water conservation, landscape protection, mitigation of flooding, reduced pollution of waterways from sediments and particular bound phosphorus, and improved drought proofing, will be increasingly important in the future, he applauded.

He said, "Taking the variation in African natural features, climates, ecology, cultures, and traditions, and the push-pull effects of African Union policy and programs into account, the future of the platform needs to be well nurtured and put into practice. Truly speaking, yield performance and stability, operating costs, environmental policies and programs, and climate change will likely be the major driving forces defining the direction and for the extension of CAADP in Africa."

He also said that the platform represents an invaluable shift toward development that is fully owned and led by African governments. It reflects African governments' recognition of agriculture as central for the alleviation of poverty and hunger and hence for reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In a nutshell, a framework rather than a roadmap, CAADP is composed of a set of key principles and targets for achieving the desired goals set by African countries. It is at once flexible enough to accommodate the need for approaches toward poverty and hunger alleviation to be tailored to regional and national contexts, and broad enough to address policy and capacity issues across the entire agricultural sector and across the entire African continent.

It is also high time for Africa to firmly emancipate itself from aid dependent and fund-oriented livelihood. The continent must exploit its untapped resource, virgin land, inexpensive human power and doable homegrown economic trajectory. Not only is Africa expected to capitalize on agriculture and environment but it needs to embark on investment, technology, infrastructure development and regional integration to seize the ladder of success it has long been aspiring to attain.



# Art & Culture

## Ethiopia this time: A perfect place for Spritual retreat

*(The sweet Begena, large congregation and alms giving elevating spirit)*

BY KFLEYESUS ABEBE

Similar to King David's Harp, Ethiopian traditional instrument Begena has 10 strings. King David's Harp is said to have therapeutic effect. As we read the book of Samuel, we learn the power of the Harp as comforting and healing King Saul. Begena too has the humming sound. It has a melancholic effect and the casting out power of evil spirit and creating peace of mind to the listener and player. The humming sound is intended to recall the suffering of Jesus Christ on one hand and peoples transgression on the other hand. The lyrics are also in the same wave length with the effect of reminiscing, repenting and telling the futility of the world. Usually, the lyrics have connotative and denotative meanings just like a pun or locally called gold and wax. Tuning to Begena or Begena songs is very popular in this long season of fasting, lent.

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*I got he who found me  
I followed he who called me  
When he calls me from afar,  
Fearful I couldn't get near  
He crossed the river to come to me  
Handed me the harp lovingly (2x)  
I used to live for my name  
But my name was from the sky  
I realized my name was from him  
(Tadele Gedif ----)*

*For your will to happen on me,  
I left everything behind  
If ever there is anything left of me,  
Oh, God, it can't be more than You  
O, the Kind, it can't be more than You  
For everything You say can't be left undone*



*For everything You say surely happen  
When I should wait for Your command,  
Your will*

*Why I am troubled then (2x)  
Here after I won't worry (2x)  
Because everything You do is for Good  
I will be strong since You are with me (2x)  
I left everything for Your wish to rule  
O father it won't be more than You  
O prince it won't be more than You  
(Deacon Tadele)*

What is very distinctive about Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church is its preservation of tradition. As King David's harp is imitated by Begena, it has also attempted to relive important deeds of Jesus as put in the scripture. The church replicates all what Lord Jesus Christ has done in his life on earth. Followers of the church are expected to imitate and live their life similar with the life of the Son of God, Jesus Christ



on earth. It is mentioned in the four gospels that Jesus has fasted forty days and forty nights before he preached. Therefore, on these days faithfuls are anticipated to fast as their Lord did. It is called *Abiy Tsom*/The grand fasting or *Hudade*.

"Hudade" is a vast state farm symbolizing the lengthy fasting and participation of every Christian from children to adult as a state farm is cultivated by everyone. "Hudade" is a beautiful atmosphere of calmness; spirituality, togetherness, simple but lovely life style taking control of everyone. As this life style stretches over two months, not only Orthodox faithful participate, it also positively affects the whole population one way or another. People from other religions show solidarity and good wish to their Orthodox Christian friends, colleagues and neighbors.

Unlike anyother time, many people are seen turning their faces to churches. There are large congregations with dedicated faithfuls reciting from the scripture, singing hymns,

praying and bowing. There costumes are eye-catching. After the church service, there are attempts to live up to the commandements. There is also family gathering, praying together and eating together at the end of each fasting day. It is like what David said in his psalms: "How wonderful, how beautiful, when brothers and sisters get along!" What await a fasting family is the simple foods: vegetables, lentils and related.

If this is careful seen, churches at such occasions can be a place of spiritual retreat. Many soul-searchers across the country make pligriamages and retreats to find tranquility and religous practice. Accordingly, it promotes this season of weeping, praying and gratitude not just bring delivernace, it can also attract tourists to join the ceremony. Just like Ethiopian churches praying for peace and wellbeing of people, the nations and the world at large, people across the world may join these masses, singing of hymns and bowing along Ethiopians.

## Sound continental glue

BY MENGESHA AMARE

*Mother Africa has been labeled,  
Its sons and daughters are labeled,  
As illiterate, poor and handicap,  
For an intrinsic mission, a mere wrap,  
To exploit resources over creating gap,  
This and the not yet cited conspiracy,  
Under the guise of sowing democracy,  
Is going to be made void,  
Seen off hereafter for good!  
Thanks to Africans commitment,  
To come up with a viable instrument!  
Conceived in African womb,  
In a bid to sterilize colonial bomb,  
Key to transform economy,  
Social and political gloomy,  
Instrumental for dynamism,  
Africans true bond—Pan-Africanism,  
Hello Ethiopia!*

*Hello mother Africa,  
Wake up the rich continent,  
Confined in a pitiable tenet,  
A rosy future is waiting for you,  
African leaders have commenced a trek,  
That helps seize the right track,  
Africa!  
With untapped resources, precious minerals,  
Being looked for others,  
Device a solution to problems,  
Applying the principle of,  
'African-solutions-to-African problems,'  
Defeat poverty, illiteracy and anxiety,  
Africa has to be influential global partner,  
Affluent and wealth operator,  
As per its capacity and catchy future,  
It is time for Africa,  
The home to 54 shares,  
Gorges, mountains, plateaus and rivers,*

*Africa has to work,  
To have the discretion,  
To well tap resources,  
To elect own leaders,  
Without interference,  
Undue impositions and scary step,  
Either in sanction or some sort of trap,  
Take the right direction,  
To take a global portion,  
Relevant UNSC position,  
Africa!  
Combine efforts, amalgamate power,  
To gain a wealth tower,  
Entertain collective thought,  
To own the desired amount,  
Through an eternal, sound glue,  
A source of sovereignty, avenue for freedom,  
A divine Pan-Africanism,  
Effectively use year, month, day even hour;*

*To emancipate yourself, to gain power,  
Time does have meaning,  
To take to have to bring,  
Africa!  
Say 'enough is enough!'  
For conflict, dissention and strife,  
At all, don't waste time,  
To be prime!  
Show your dynamism,  
Through Pan Africanism!  
Labeling Africa as poor and incapable,  
Has to be made soon a puzzle,  
It is an avenue, glue and a bond,  
To show the capacity, knowledge and wisdom,  
By ensuring full freedom,  
It is a weapon to overcome colonialism,  
Africans brain child—Pan Africanism,  
The source of radical change, greatness and dynamism!*



# Science & Technology

## Investing in digitalization to promote development in Africa

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

Though Africa is the richest continent in natural resources with untapped development potential, it remains the poorest continent. The continent is the top source of raw material for the global market. Modern industries of the world are dominantly dependent on Africa's raw material supply for their inputs. But, due to lack of technological advancement, modern infrastructural development and other factors, the continent still remains to face socio-economic problems.

Africa as a continent is striving to boost its continental development and planning to see developed and prosperous Africa by 2063. To achieve the goal, the continental organization, the African Union, set an Agenda 2063 with the objective of transforming Africa in all sectors. With these objective, new continental initiatives, strategies, policies, programs and actions are being implemented since the Agenda 2063 was launched almost ten years ago.

As part of the continental initiative to accelerate the continent's economic development and interconnectivity among the citizens' of the member states, Africa launched the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in 2020. Though, AfCFTA started its function and in good progress, its development is limited. The trade agreement needs infrastructural networking, introducing modern technologies and transforming the digital sector to promote services and market transactions.

Especially, the digital sector is the key player in the modern economic and trade transaction. Hence, Africa needs transforming its digital sector so as to realize the interconnectivity and economic transaction within the continent. Without modernizing services using technological advancements, it is tough to easily transform Africa's economy, trade transaction and to realize the visions of the continent. Hence, investing to transform the digital sector and technological infrastructural networking must get a priority in this regard.

For the African continent, transforming the digital sector would become a game-changer in boosting economic growth, industrialization, and to improve the lives of the peoples of the continent. Digitalization and new technological innovations can help to modernize services throughout the continent and this would contribute to accelerate the implementation of the AfCFTA and to realize the Agenda 2063 of the African Union vision.

During a briefing to journalists this week on the sideline of the 36 African Union Ordinary Session, African Union Commission's Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, Amani Abou-Zeid (PhD) said that modernizing and developing the continent's infrastructure is crucial requirement to accelerate the development of the continent.



Hence, she said, AU is working to boost continental infrastructural development with modern technologies and gives due attention to transform the digital sector in the continent.

For the commissioner, African economy was badly affected by the recent continental and global developments, by the COVID-19 and the political developments within and outside of the continent. Though it passed all these challenges, with joint efforts taken to solve the challenges, Africa achieved a lot at continental level in infrastructural development. She said that Africa is implementing a strategy that promotes the development of the continent's energy infrastructure to boost the continent's access to clean energy. Investing in expanding affordable and accessible energy in the continent would play vital role to develop technological transformation and to expand digitalization in the continent.

In addition, the Infrastructure and Energy Commissioner reiterated that the continental organization is working to boost continental interconnectivity through transportation by introducing modern systems. As to her, using technological developments, 35 African countries reached an agreement to apply a single air transport market scheme in the continent. According to the commissioner, the single air transport market scheme in the continent would accelerate the implementation of The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) launched three years ago with the goal of creating single African market.

In addition, it would accelerate continental movement of peoples and goods.

Synergizing the continent's resources, infrastructure and services using technological advancements would facilitate the continent's journey to development and prosperity. Introducing and implementing technologies in the infrastructure and accelerating digitalization are vital for the continental transformation. As to Commissioner Dr. Amani, Africa is working to accelerate digitalization in the continent so as to transform the service sector.

According to the Commissioner, the continent is working to expand and to transform continental digitalization so as to make the continental service, trade transaction and market easily accessible. In addition, developing digitalization in the continent would make movement of peoples easy by implementing including digital identification cards for the continent's people. The commissioner during her briefing stated that in digitalization sector, to accelerate and facilitate continentally inclusive common market, activities are being done in developing the digitalization sector. In addition, digitalization is using in facilitating the health, education, transport and to transform the service sector for the people of the continent.

As to her to facilitate and modernize the functioning of sectors, digital strategy is applied in health, education, transportation sector in the continent. Hence, in addition to investing in infrastructural development in

the continent, Africa is giving due attention to digitalizing services using technological advancements.

"Digitalization is vital to accelerate African Continental Free Trade Agreement and to transform the service sector in the continent," the commissioner stated. She added that to expand digitalization, "it is critical to build secure, safe and easily accessible internet accessibility throughout the continent and efforts are being taken to promoting the expansion of affordable internet access in the continent." In this regard, the continent is also giving an attention to human resource development in cyber security through trainings to build cyber resilience in the continent to make the fast growing digitalization secure and safe.

"Energy and digitalization are critical pillars to accelerate the continental free trade area agreement," hence, she said Africa is working to realize digital Africa. There are efforts to establish a single digital market in the continent and the continent is also working to apply digital identification card.

As to her, to accelerate the continental development, Africa eyes on investing in developing and modernizing the continent's infrastructure. Parallel to expanding the continent's infrastructural development, Africa is working to transform digitalization to support its development goals. Similarly, considering its importance, there are efforts to apply digital identification.

In addition to the continental efforts in infrastructural development, Africa is also jointly working with other stakeholders of the continent that are participating in Africa's infrastructural works like China and other countries.

Digital technology would help to drive innovation, economic growth and job creation in many key sectors of the economy. In addition, it allows for greater interconnection of African markets with one another and with the rest of the world. Similarly, digitalization can enhance both market and financial access for all, mainly in marginalized areas neglected by traditional financial institutions.

According to experts in the sector, promoting digitalization in Africa would also maximize the positive impact of sectors such as health, energy, transport, agriculture, education and facilitating access to basic social services. Not only that, digitalization can also help in promoting good governance and development policies and programmers in the government sector.

To improve the continent's digitalization, in addition to creating enabling environment with policies and infrastructural developments, the continent should also encourage the private sector investment in the digitalization process. Creating enabling environment for the private sector would boost the digitalization efforts of the continent.



# Society

## Harnessing the power of media to ensure lasting peace, reconciliation

BY TEWODROS KASSA

Media, used to be said the fourth power, is a viable tool to transmit any message to a wider audience so swiftly and easily. However, depending on the way it is administered and managed, media can influence society negatively or positively. Owing to this, different countries have created a conducive environment and directives to utilize media responsibly and understandably. At the same time, some countries face difficulties due to the wrong utilization of this important sector.

The Rwandan media are among the leading ones that are mentioned and blamed in this regard- for their destructive role in spreading hate among the communities and being a main reason of the genocide.

As documents indicated, the news media (a popular local radio station) played a crucial role in promoting violence against the Tutsi minority population and fuelling Rwanda genocide in 1994.

The other way round, different studies indicated that media can be a great assistance in conflict management and peace building. The media can be a good tool in a healthy and functioning environment; but more is needed than ethical and responsible reporting to ensure lasting peace and safety.

The media report and reflect on pressing issues and can help to question established concepts and ideas. However, the potential of the media in conflict and post-conflict situations remains a net positive and has been sadly underutilized to this point in time.

According to the studies, the media can therefore not only influence society before the conflict by recognising and properly addressing the issue; but also can play a constructive role in preaching peace during post-conflict periods. Unlike international media covering conflicts, local media are a recognized part of society with the ability to accelerate and magnify fears or reduce them.

Moreover, lack of information can, at any stage of a conflict, make people desperate, restless and easy to manipulate. The ability to make informed decisions strengthens societies and fosters economic growth, democratic structures and the positive outlook on the future. For this very reason, the United Nations Millennium Declaration stressed the need “to ensure the freedom of the media to perform their essential role and the right of the public to have access to information”

Recently, the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission urged the media professionals to carry out their responsibility properly and in a civilized manner so as to ensure sustainable peace and stability in the country.



In an exclusive interview with The Ethiopian Press Agency, National Dialogue Commission Communication Head Yonas Adaye (PhD) said that the media have an enormous role towards changing the society's perspective and building sustainable peace in the country. Deploying the media has also great potential to solve

problems easily. “The media are playing constructive role in peace building and the dialogue process; and can explain the reality on the ground by spreading credible news. Thus, we should work together on this issue,” he noted.

“Ethiopia needs peace, not war. Thus, media

professionals should explain this and work in a way that strengthens unity. Working together to get out of poverty, promoting mutual coexistence, and the culture of togetherness is important to maintain the socio-economic progress of the society. In terms of working with the media and making information available to the public in a sustainable manner is also expected from all government organizations”, he said.

On his part, Hawassa University Journalism and Communication Assistant Professor Melisew Dejene (PhD) said that some of the western media's low appetite for positive outcomes of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA), manifest their interest of prolong conflict in Ethiopia.

Western media's insufficient coverage of post-conflict Ethiopia, the restoration of infrastructure and essential basic services including electric, telecom, and internet service as well as other positive developments emanate from their obsession with conflict and crises.

The Expert further noted that some big media misinform the international community by magnifying the humanitarian crises and blaming the Ethiopian government for human rights violations without evidence. The reports of some media houses regarding the conflict in the northern parts of Ethiopia deviated from the principles of peace journalism and attested to the fact that the outlets are instruments of hidden interests.

Noting the post-conflict developments in Tigray State would have kept Ethiopia attractive to the international media, Melisew emphasized the need to exercise peace journalism to heal the wounds of those, from both sides, affected by the conflict. The consistent delivery of reliable and sufficient information to the corporate media is also something worth considering to easing biased reports.

Sharing the above rationale, Media and Communication Lecturer at Jimma University Getachew Tilahun (PhD) stated the philosophy of Western media organizations on conflict reporting. “They are providing coverage to the peace agreement though it is unsatisfactory when compared with their conflict reports. The outlets have served their interest and we could not expect anything different from them.”

As to him, the political interest some Western powers pursue in the Horn of Africa is also another factor for big media houses to focus solely on conflict reporting.

Mentioning the value of peace is always denied during peaceful times, he recommended the media to continuously inform the audience about the price of peace and the cost of conflict. Promoting peace journalism should be a prior responsibility of the media this time, he underscored.





## Towards making Ethiopia Africa's tourism hub

BY TEWODROS KASSA

The 36th African Union annual Summit and the 42nd Ordinary Session of the Executive Council (Ministerial Session) that took place from the 15th February 2023 to the 19th February 2023 at the African Union Commission Headquarter, Addis Ababa concluded successfully.

The Summit attracted numerous heads of states, diplomats, journalists, members of international organizations, among others to attend the annual Summit.

According to the Ethiopian Media Authority, some 852 journalists have attended and covered the 36th AU Summit here in Addis Ababa. The number of foreign journalists that came to cover last year's AU summit was 330 and this year's assembly has seen an increment of over 36 percent from the preceding year.

Thus, the annual African Union Summit has become a crucial opportunity to promote the country's tourism industry and generate a tangible income from the sector.

Noticeably, the government has been undertaking various measures through prioritizing the sector's substantial contribution to the national economy. The recently-concluded AU Summit was instrumental in giving impetus for Ethiopia's tourism and hospitality industry. The seamless provision of services and amenities including electricity, telecom, and security is the main factor for this.

The Ministry of Tourism stated that it employed relevant agencies including the Ethiopian Airlines and diplomatic missions as critically essential vehicles for the flow of international tourists.

Tourism State Minister Selamawit Dawit told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the Ministry has partnered with pertinent stakeholders to enable Ethiopia to become the tourism hub of East Africa and Africa in general. Consolidated efforts are also underway to support the country's tourism potential and to build the nation's positive image among the international visitors.

Accordingly, the Ministry, in partnership with Ethiopian Embassy in Washington, D.C., and the airliner, hosted a colorful cultural and tourism promotion event on the 17th February 2023 to introduce the country's tourist attraction sites to potential visitors.

"We are also working in unison with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ethiopian diplomatic missions in various countries to promote the immense tourism potential of the country to the outside world. Such promotion would continue in different parts of the world to boost the foreign exchange earnings from the tourism business."

Various tour packages were prepared for



Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital, hosts AU summit every year

the African Union Summit participants and other invited guests to visit Addis Ababa's famous tourist attraction sites including Entoto and Unity parks as well as the National Museum and traditional restaurants. Promotional video clips and other promotions were also displayed in the African Union (AU) Headquarters in a bid to promote Ethiopia's tourist destinations.

Therefore, the Ministry has done its level best towards promoting the country's outstanding tourist destinations and newly developing tourist destinations during the African Union's successive summits.

"The conference immensely contributed to raise the profile of Ethiopia and its capital. Traditional evening programs were also organized to display that Ethiopia is a multicultural nation and has distinctive cultural values. Such summit is instrumental in creating a great economic revival at both the country and city level

On his part, the Addis Ababa Culture, Arts and Tourism Bureau Tourism Destination Development and Quality Assurance Director Amdemariam Mamo told *The Ethiopian Press Agency* (EPA) that the

36th African Union Summit has been a platform that yielded greater benefits to the revival of tourism activity in the country.

According to him, the owners of the star-designated hotels in Addis Ababa offered state of the art services and held coffee ceremonies on all of the four days of the AU sessions and ensured a good reception.

Hosts, wearing traditional costumes, promoted Ethiopians' culture. They sold traditional crafts and items, and entertained guests with traditional music and cultural night programs so as to promote the country's cultural diversity.

According to tourism experts, extending a warm welcome to participants of the AU Sessions and helping them to feel at home would enable to unlock Ethiopia's immense potential for tourism.

Travel Journalist Henok Seyoum said that integrated efforts of all stakeholders are crucial to portray the nation's positive image among AU guests. Apart from forging bilateral and multilateral relations, the summit could help Ethiopia to stimulate the tourism sector.

"It is vital to take advantage of such high-level meetings to enhance the development of the tourism sector. In doing so, there must be a way to enable summit participants to visit the Science Museum, Friendship, Unity as well as Entoto Parks, among others," he said.

Similarly, the media should play a due role in promoting Ethiopia's tourist attraction sites and encouraging participants of the AU sessions to visit the country. Appreciating the efforts geared by the Ethiopian Airlines and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he called on other stakeholders to make similar engagements.

In sum, not only the annual AU sessions but also other continental and international conferences that are carried out in the country will not only play an essential role in building Ethiopia's positive image but also enable the country to get the right benefit from the tourism sector.

What is more, the Ethiopian Airlines is also a potential opportunity to make Ethiopia the gateway of African tourism through expanding its flight to Africa and other continents.





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