



Photo: Dagne Abera

## Guinea-Bissau president's state visit to Ethiopia

### STAFF REPORTER

**ADDIS ABABA** – Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) received Guinea-Bissau President Umaro Sissoco Embaló.

Guinea-Bissau President Umaro

Sissoco Embaló arrived in Addis Ababa yesterday for a two day State visit.

Up on his arrival at Bole International Airport, Guinea-Bissau President, Umaro Sissoco Embaló was welcomed/ received by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed

(PhD), Defense Minister Abraham Belay and other senior government officials.

Prime Minister Abiy and President Umaro Sissoco Embaló are expected to discuss on bilateral issues.

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## AUC to streamline education in 2024

### BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA** –Investing in education and expanding innovation and science programs as well as bringing African children back to schools will be the agenda of the African Union Commission (AUC) for the year 2024, the Education Commissioner said.

Briefing journalists yesterday, AUC Education, Science, Technology and Innovation Commissioner Prof. Mohammed Belhocine stated that the commission has been working tirelessly to make education the primary concern of African leaders. “Large numbers of children are now out of school due to various reasons and education here in Africa needs

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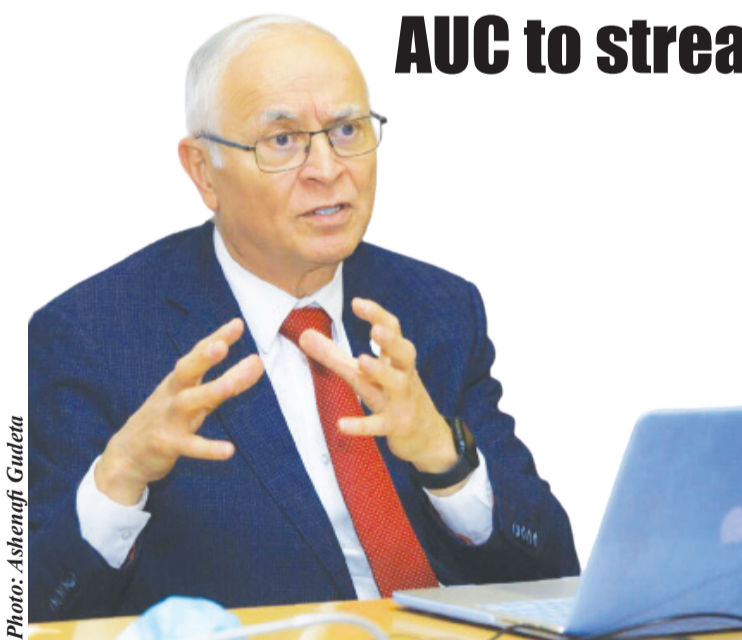


Photo: Ashenafi Gudeta



Photo: Ashenafi Gudeta

## African FMs express commitment to continental dev't, stability

### BY HAILE DEMEKE

**ADDIS ABABA** – Ethiopia's Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen and his African counterparts coming here to the AU session affirmed their countries' commitment to the continent's economic development and to ensure its stability.

In his media briefing yesterday, the Ministry

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“Writing was a means to cry, protest, explain and express my pain..”

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Boarding schools, to excelling academically, ensuring quality education

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# News



## Ministry urges citizenry to be part of school community

BY TAMERU REGASA

**ADDIS ABABA-** Minister of Ministry of Education Prof. Birhanu Nega urged every agent/ citizenry should be part of school community to improve the quality of education.

Speaking to international media, the minister said that in a recent years the quality of education have been challenged by multi negative factors and lack of quality education have been causing the country directly or indirectly to encounter social, political, moral and economic problems.

Listing the negative factors affecting quality of education in the country, Prof. Birhanu said that problems related with school infrastructure, Political interference in education system, state of teacher training and cheating on national exam are the key challenges of quality education in the country.

Explaining the adverse effects of deterioration of quality of education, he said that the deterioration of quality of education is the main cause of the challenges the country has been recurrently encountering.

Concerning the interference of politics in education sector, the minister said that the politics have been leading some local education administrators to support cheating on exam in an organized way.

This is why the ministry had centered activities related with national exam so as to reduce cheating on exam.

He said that the ministry has put campaign for education and massive teacher retraining as a future direction that will be implemented in the nearest future to improve quality of education.

As to him the designed campaign is helpful to enhance the involvement of all agents including Diasporas to build school infrastructure and achieve another target that enable to improve quality of education.

## Ministry turns to private sector for cotton import-substitution

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

**ADDIS ABABA-** The Ministry of Industry said a new approach is being implemented to enhance the participation of local companies in cotton production to satisfy the local demand and to substitute the imported ones.

Speaking at a discussion forum held with local investors here Wednesday, Industry Minister Melaku Alebel stated that the government has a firm desire to attract the participation of local investors in cotton farming and support their use of modern technologies. “We set up the strategy to benefit both the producers and suppliers of the commodity by availing three million hectares of land suitable for cotton farming.”

The minister added: “capitalizing on Ethiopia’s conducive agro ecology to cotton production, we need to link cotton farmers with textile industries; to increase productivity and to improve citizens’ livelihoods in a sustainable manner. The government has also done commendable jobs to enhance the penetration of modern technologies in cotton production that will ensure productivity and quality level.”

During the occasion, a research paper was



presented under the title “Opportunities and challenges of cotton production in Ethiopia” for the forum participants’ discussion.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, a participant from the privately-owned Riders Trading and Manufacturing S.C. Redwan Hussein said that the company has been hugely working to exploit the conducive business climate created in the textile industry. Vigorous efforts have also been exerted to increase the volume of cotton exports and benefit the company and its employees.

Noting the company’s broad-based engagement in manufacturing, trading, and agriculture sectors, Redwan praise the government unwavering support to domestic

investors. “Despite this, the private sector is still challenged by limited foreign currency supply and shortage of spare parts and other imported items that keep the operation of cotton factories.”

“Currently, there is no market-related problem for cotton producers and we directly access the raw cotton from farmers. Moreover, the government’s relentless support have played a vital role in putting local producers in a good shape to supply quality garments to the local market and ease Ethiopia’s reliance on imported items,” he remarked.

In the 10 consecutive years before 2020, textile products worth 5.14 billion USD were imported by Ethiopia.

## Workshop deliberates on achieving universal electricity access by 2030

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** – Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE) called up on private sectors to make strong linkage with government in a bid to realize universal electricity access by 2030 in Ethiopia.

Speaking at a three- day workshop organized under the theme : “National Renewable Energy Exhibition and Symposium”, MoWE Energy Sector Development State Minister Sultan Wali (PhD Eng.) on Wednesday said that Ethiopia has been generating merely 5 GW from the aggregate potential of 150 GW of hydro power, solar, geothermal, and wind energy.

As to the State Minister, the previous policy which excluded the private sector participation, lack of adequate performance, huge finance demand to generate and distribute the energy have forced 65 percent of citizens to live in darkness and unable to meet the set target.

He further stated that MoWE has planned to achieve 65 and 35 percent of National grid and Offline grid by 2030 respectively while private sector should contribute discharging their respective duty as their active participation would play crucial role in transferring technology, sharing experience, promoting products, and the likes.

“Currently MoWE has been producing alternative cooking technology aiming at reducing deforestation, carbon emission, and protecting environment thereby amending the policy to attract the private investors put in to



Photo by Tsehaye Nigusie

the energy sector,” he added.

Approached by the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Amhara State Water and Energy Bureau Deputy Head Tilahun Shimles said that the involvement of private investors and partners in addressing electric power is crucial.

As to Tilahun, the demand of electric power is increasing due to the increase of the number of population. Therefore, it is high time to involve private sectors to solve a range of problems in this regard, especially to take children and others out of difficult situations.

In this workshop, traders, private organizations, NGOs, and the like have been participating from various directions, which would be significantly useful in realizing electric access in the nation.

“Particularly, some eight zones out of 12, have lost energy development due to the

north conflict while the state has established some 15,000 associations in order to back the former status of the area very soon,” he noted.

Tilahun further stated that most of the Amhara state parts have not used cooking technology as well. . Among others, lack of awareness, serious attention towards modern technology usage, and the likes are hindering to access electric power during the past over many years. In this regard, some districts (Woredas) have not been using electricity and energy so far.

“The state has also established formal structure from Federal to lower level in a bid to filling electric power supply gap in the near future,” he added.

Furthermore, some 150 participants drawn from regional energy offices, sector government offices, private sector, academics, development partners, and policy makers have attended the workshop.

# News

## AU Summit: ...

it is impacted by climate change, desertification, deforestation, land degradation and others.

He, therefore, said that to overcome these challenges, Ethiopia has been implementing the Green Legacy Initiative.

Ethiopia's green legacy initiative has encouraged neighboring countries to build a resilient socio-economic community. Its achievements on highland investments, specifically landscape restoration, forest and environment conservation and other activities have been benefiting not only Ethiopia, but also the riparian countries, the coordinator said.

It was learnt that community mobilization, landscape and deforestation restoration, leaders' commitment, tree based landscape restoration or nature based solutions, sense of ownership, achievement of ambitious plans, media outlets

contribution, land and forest conservation and others are identified to share African brothers as best practices on the sidelines of this AU Summit.

"We plan to start best practices sharing from tree based landscape restoration activities. These activities have created more jobs for the youth and other communities. Currently, the number of seedling multiplication stations has reached to 121, 000. These all created more jobs, too."

The efforts of ministries and other institutions in implementing green legacy initiatives have been bearing fruit and have become exemplary for other countries. Ethiopia plans to expand its green legacy initiative and its best practices to strengthen Pan-Africanism. For next winter, Ethiopia has been receiving seedling demands of neighboring countries to expand the initiative.



## AUC to ...

special attention. We will install various projects to improve educational accessibility in the continent."

Noting the United Nations also evaluated the status of Africa's education at the heads of state level, the commissioner highlighted that the issue has drawn global attention.

The AU has evaluated the educational system in several parts of the continent and found that education quality is affected by many factors. The income of teachers, for example, harms the quality of education.

Belhocine added: "students need to master science, Technology, engineering, and mathematics. In this regard, research that is conducted in several African countries is showing that we are not doing well. So, improving education in such departments is our goal in the near future."

Mentioning the commission's commendable engagement to address the prevailing challenges, he stressed that poor infrastructure and investment and a limited workforce hampered their efforts.

The agenda of improving these trends emanated from global research and the AU 2063 agenda, the commissioner remarked.

## African FMs ...

of Foreign Affairs Spokesperson Ambassador Meles Alem highlighted the common position that foreign ministers of Gabon, Gambia, Malawi, Tunisia, and Libya took with Ethiopia on the importance of Africa's economic integration.

In discussions the foreign ministers held at the sidelines of the 42nd Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union (AU), Demeke also exchanged views on ways to enhance Ethiopia's diplomatic ties with the respective country. He also briefed the foreign ministers about the current situation of Ethiopia, in particular the results gained after the Pretoria Peace Accord, among other issues

of mutual interest.

"Demeke told his counterparts that Ethiopia prioritizes peace and ensuring law and order is beyond any agenda. Consensus was reached among the participants that this year AU's session heralds Ethiopia's transition to peace and stability after two years of unrest."

The AU-led peace process has demonstrated the true meaning of the principle of African Solutions to African Problems which is exemplary for other countries to solve problems in their capacity. Ethiopia has agreed with different African countries to strengthen economic and business partnerships besides political diplomacy, Meles added.

The rehabilitation and restoration of war-affected communities is one of the main agendas of the foreign ministers' discussions whereby the Ethiopian government informed African partners about its commitment to normalizing situations in the area.

According to the spokesperson, Ethiopia also capitalized on the meetings to request the support of African partners for post-war rehabilitation while the latter demonstrated a keen interest in contributing share.

Apart from African countries, officials and representatives from Europe, Asia and other parts of the world were in attendance at the meetings.

## Ethiopia's role in promoting food ...

country's numerous smallholder farmers that cultivate more of wheat for consumption and less of it for the market (Matouš et al., 2013). Of course, as discussed by Minot et al. (2015) and CSA (2013), it is produced by both small-scale and large-scale commercial farms. However, according to Demeke and Marcantonio (2013), except for some government-owned large-scale and commercial farms, wheat is produced predominantly by smallholder farmers under rain feed conditions.

It is clear that in the country small-scale wheat farmers dominate large-scale commercial farms, and it has its own negative influence on production and productivity in the country and it affects the competitiveness of wheat quality at the world market.

The highlands of the central, south-eastern and northwest parts of the country are the main wheat-growing areas of Ethiopia. Regionally, the national production of wheat comes from Oromia (57.4%), Amhara (27%), SNNPR (8.7%) and Tigray (6.2%) (CSA, 2014). Wheat has many uses like that of other cereal crops produced in the country. In Ethiopia, wheat grain is used in the preparation of different

traditional as well as modern processed food products such as injera and other industrial processed products like pasta and macaroni (Nigussie et al., 2015). Besides, wheat straw is commonly used as a roof tacking material and as a feed for animals. So, wheat is an important cereal crop which should get emphasis on both its production and its marketing.

In Ethiopia wheat is an important staple food and cash crop in increasing income of the people, food security, employment and national GDP increment. However, its production and marketing is challenged by factors such as shortage of agricultural inputs, diseases and pests, shortage of infrastructures, shortage of institutional services, shortage of storage materials, product quality, low selling price and price cheating. But, in opposite to these challenges, available opportunities such as government policy, expansion of market, increasing demand for wheat and potential of the area for wheat production encourage wheat producers and traders to engage in wheat production and marketing activities. This was not properly utilized for several decades. During the 2021/22 season, more than 400,000 hectares of land have been covered by

irrigated wheat production.

The point is what are the main reasons behind food shortage in Africa? Recurrent drought, low agricultural productivity, shortage of mechanized agriculture and modern agricultural inputs could be mentioned. Recently, the skyrocketing of wheat prices triggered by the Russo-Ukraine war, the resultant rise in oil prices has further exacerbated the already hard situation.

On the other hand, internal conflicts in many African countries have resulted in massive level of displacing the productive population that could have produced more food.

How is Ethiopia tackling this problem? The country has stopped or totally minimized import of food from foreign lands as Prime Minister Abiy has declared that his government has fulfilled its promise by launching a national wheat export program a couple of days back.

Ethiopia started the program on wheat production and export three years back and the current export of wheat has seen the light of day as the result of strong political leadership and commitment that has been monitoring and evaluating progress at all levels.

African countries need to learn from Ethiopia's experience of import substitution in food production. Unless the African countries join hands in feeding their own population, it would be difficult to predict that the continent can fulfil the strategic objectives of Agenda 2063.

The economic growth and self-sufficiency in food by African countries is not something that should be postponed for years as climate change induced drought and flooding is snatching lives in the continent. On the other hand, unless African countries work together to pull themselves out of this dependency syndrome, real freedom will certainly be at stake.

Food insecurity has already resulted in the proliferation of lower infant mortality rate, child and elderly malnutrition and low general health status which needs to be addressed

Food aid has been a vehicle for the promotion of foreign policy objectives of several western countries and African leaders must be aware of the face that political independence must be supplemented with economic and at least self-sufficiency in food. This is a matter of sovereignty, freedom and independence of these countries.

# Opinion

## Step for mirroring Africa

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Some 1.4 billion populations of African continent, out of the 8 billion souls the universe houses, are waiting for real change and means to be great compatible with all the resources and potentials the continent does possess. The continent has been determined more than ever before to equate itself with the developed portion of the planet tapping what it has been possessing in terms of resource, human capital, inviting wealth condition and virgin land to invest. The young continent has now opened its eyes towards untouched natural resources it has long possessed and indescribable opportunities to get prospered.

The 42nd executives' meeting and the 36th conference of Heads of States would be a viable platform to sketch what has to be entertained to meet the visions of Agenda 2063.

To this end, the leaders of Africa have been discussing all the opportunities it has to garner and address the challenges it has potentially encountered. Yes, the hurdles the continent has been facing could not be beyond its capacity if all states are willing to collaborative work in all aspects. Needless to state, the continent is likely to face the brunt of the problem due to its fledgling economy, fragmented administration exposed to bribery and embezzlement as well as the socio-economic trajectory susceptible to climate change impacts.

Unequivocally, countries of the continent should accelerate inclusive recovery efforts to boost economic growth via applying multiple technological, financial, health, educational and socio-cultural dynamics.

The continent is dedicated than ever to diminish the impacts of climate change and economic setbacks and reinvigorate green development. The convening of leaders in their capital would be of paramount importance in well discussing myriads of social, economic and even political steeplechases from which the continent has been suffering so far.

Wake up Africa! Wake up Ethiopia! All opportunities for growth and radical change are knocking your door. Repossession efforts must be inclusive with a view to fostering a new social contract that offers equal opportunity for all walks of life in the continent.

The capital city of Ethiopia, the seat of African Union, the home of all Africans in simple terms Addis Ababa has always been the preferred destination of African leaders and they all the time feel at home whenever they are in Addis.

Yes, Addis Ababa has been reputed in terms of peace and tranquility. Especially following the peace accord reached at Pretoria and Nairobi in the aftermath of the northern conflict, the country in general

**U**nequivocally, countries of the continent should accelerate inclusive recovery efforts to boost economic growth via applying multiple technological, financial, health, educational and socio-cultural dynamics

and the capital city in particular are given serenity to confidently receive guests. Cognizant of the fact that the capital can be a comfortable and convenient venue to host such important sessions, the country is expected to capitalize on boosting conference tourism.

Taking advantage of Ethiopia's capability and wonderful record of hosting international events with success, leaders of the African countries are all the time fond of coming to their second home.

By the same token, all Ethiopians in general and Addis residents in particular, are very affectionate and welcoming. This is said not out of the blue as many international tourists, foreign visitors and pertinent guests have been widely witnessing. Leaders close talk and coming together and happening to the capital would help device potential solutions in a bid to alleviate the political tension and conflict ridden facets as it is a means to formulate lasting solution to the problems keeping 'African solutions to African problems' principle. True, Africa is rising though it is left with a long journey to be hit since a range of socio-economic bottlenecks are seriously compromising its welfare despite untapped and virgin resources.

Without a shadow of doubt, the ability of African countries to effectively tackle poverty and maladministration is well known, but they have not yet effectively utilized as expected.

For instance, Africa's trade flows and supply chains have to be promoted, and pertinent as well as influential institutions

are expected to grow for Africa to promote local solutions. Africa has positively reacted to a number of challenges so far and created the Africa Exchange Trade Platform (ATEX) digital platform to boost trade in critical commodities.

The very important thing that has to be well comprehended that the continent has had substantial opportunities to build strong, resilient and competitive economies through accelerated implementation of, among others, the African Continental Free Trade Area, development of carbon credit markets, fostering the emergency of regional value chains in the series and electric vehicle sub sector.

A Leader coming to Addis Ababa can be a source of revenue for the country as the capital of Ethiopia, the seat of scores of international agencies such as UNECA; the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa is getting smarter and smarter from time to time. The reputation the capital has been built has to be kept intact and all concerned are expected to contribute much more to the shining image of Ethiopia in Africa, as the radical change Ethiopia can bring would fuel that of the whole continent.

Interestingly, this year's summit can be a singular chance for Ethiopia as it has come after the northern conflict, which has caused incalculable property damage and unprecedented life loss.

The sighs of relief citizens of the country in general and those of the northern part are sipping have paved the golden way to hold the very important AU Summit.

The prevalence of appealing weather condition and the attention grabbing topographical scenes are the rationales behind what makes Ethiopia the preferred place apart from its citizens' hospitality and generous gesture. All these aspects have to be well visited by leaders of Africa to well introduce Ethiopia the rest of the world.

It is crystal clear that the country has come up with numerous practical changes following the recent reform. The government has for instance, capitalized on constructing mega projects at national level like Gorgora, Wonchi, Koyisha Projects, which have been attracting not only international tourists but also national ones since they are all made by taking advantage of the huge natural beauty of the lakes and the green forests with which the county has been bedecked.

There are also a number of places to visit in Addis such as Unity Park, Friendship Park, Entoto Park, all the newly built streets where pedestrians can enjoy walking long.

Not only has the capital possessed eye catching developments but it has also owned knowledge center like the modern Abrehot or enlightenment Library and the Science and Technology Museum and all these have to be accessible to all AU

Summit participants as the projects are part of the African growth and change.

Hence, the leaders who are taking part in the AU Summit are expected to be given ample opportunity to visit these mega projects and the not yet mentioned ones as much as possible. Doing so would have dual advantage, indeed! In the first place, it can be regarded as an invaluable platform to well exhibit Ethiopia's potential in the tourism sector, and this remarkable asset has to be well exploited and gets Ethiopia benefited maximum with respect to conference tourism.

Second, the events such as the AU heads of state conferences are key that inevitably invite other conferences to be held here. In so doing, the leaders can draw important lessons from Ethiopia peculiarly on how to make the unthinkable possible, the remote reachable.

Truly speaking, the AU summit is an invaluable one in many senses and all of the participants and Ethiopians have to discharge their respective responsibilities to push the continent to the next level of success as Africa is rising these days. The growth of Ethiopia unequivocally attracts continental change, certainly!

It has been unforgettable that there were pressures and undue interventions not to hold the AU summit in Addis Ababa last year, but ultimately it was held here and it was another successful event irrespective of the adverse propaganda and falsehood fabrications disseminated about Ethiopia.

This year, all have made history and finally Ethiopia can host its guests in an atmosphere of peace and harmony. Obviously, internal anti-peace elements coupled with bodies who would not like to see Ethiopia's growth and prosperity have tired all their best to tarnish its image. However, as the unwavering stance of the reform administration could never be twisted, Ethiopia's continental as well as global place has been kept intact.

Frankly speaking, getting Ethiopia prospered is fostering Africa's rise. Genuinely and hospitably hosting the respected African guests would help smoothen Ethiopians' interactions with the guests and make Africa a small hut accommodating all its sons and daughters for the same cause lifting Africa out of the ring of poverty and sluggish pace of growth—for the betterment of the live of the 1.4 billion populations. Africa is rising, it is time for Africa. Leaders are expected to work more in a coordinated manner to make new continent with new dynamism. Ethiopia is mirroring Africa as all the positive or negative records have had a direct bearing to African aspects.

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

# Editorial

## Reverencing praiseworthy supports

As Ethiopia hosts the African Summit, it is seizing the opportunity to hail African countries that have been standing by its side for over two years in fending unfair external intervention. The country was marred by two years of conflict that also triggered massive foreign intervention sugarcoated by issues of human rights and humanitarian assistance.

There have been some foreign entities that visibly tried to infringe on the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. There were also attempts to put unwarranted pressure using the United Nations Security Council and other international organs.

The pretexts were largely humanitarian issues and human rights. During the turbulent years of the conflict, the barrages of bogus stories and fake information sparked unjust foreign interferences. Special interest groups and individual countries also imposed sanctions and suspended financial aid to which the country paid dearly.

However, the intervention also served a blessing in disguise in rallying African nations against foreign intervention. African countries, scholars, even ordinary citizens have been staunch supporters of Ethiopia's causes. The countries have been standing up for Ethiopia in the face of intense foreign intervention. Some boldly sided and some voted against proposed statements and resolutions to be issued in the UNSC and UN meetings.

Besides, African people were expressing their disapproval of external intervention through different means engaged in mass rallies and campaigns. The good gesture in addition to curtailing the country from unwarranted pressure, it also yielded the grand Pretoria Peace deal that was brokered by the African Union. The peace accord perfectly fits the concept of African Solution to Africa's problems.

In a reciprocated move, the Deputy Prime Minister Demeke made the above remark while opening the 42nd Ordinary Session of the African Union Executive Council.

"We are grateful to the AU's overwhelming support to Pretoria's Peace Agreement and we are also very delighted by the solidarity that fellow African brothers and sisters have shown for Ethiopia's cause," Demeke told the session.

As to him, the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) between the government and TPLF showcases the success of the AU's principle of seeking African solutions to African problems. "I am pleased to inform you that the peace agreement is on course for full implementation."

In fact, Ethiopia recognizes the good African friends for their unreserved effort to challenge modern day imperialism. But it should be noted that foreign intervention remains an impediment in the continent's effort to become political and economically independent. In this regard, Ethiopia sets best example in terms of fending of foreign pressure and finding solutions to internal problems. Thus, African nations should work closely and take coordinated action to be a sovereign continent and strong enough to stand in the face of external intervention. And, Ethiopia will continue to be the hallmark pan Africanism movement as it used to be for centuries.

In sum, Ethiopia is grateful for the praiseworthy supports it received from other African nations during its struggle with misinformation and disinformation; before some months some irresponsible media outlets had disseminated fake news that could violate its sovereignty. It was during this period that other African nations stood beside Ethiopia. Hence, Ethiopia continues appreciating their notable commitment.



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Editor-in-Chief: Worku Belachew  
email- workubelachew@press.et  
Address- Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-city  
Woreda - 05, House No----  
Tel- +251 111 26 41 98

Managing Editor: Wakuman Kudama  
Email: wakuma220@gmail.com

### Deputy Editors-in-Chief:

Alem Hailu  
Elizabeth Mengistu  
Zekarias Woldemariam  
Desta Geberehiwot  
Daniel Beyene

Website: www.press.et  
email: ethiopianherald@press.et  
Fb/ /Ethiopian Press Agency/  
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# opinion

## Ethiopia's role in promoting food production in Africa

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

The 36<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the African Assembly of Heads of State and Government have kicked off in Addis Ababa, the de-facto regional capital of Ethiopia. The Assembly will deliberate on various issues including the economic development of Africa with a special emphasis on agriculture. The author dedicates this article to the Assembly and all who labor from dawn to dusk to ensure food security in Africa.

The writer regrets the fact that Africa has so far not been able to feed its population for various reasons and most African countries either buy food or are heavily dependent on food aid from western countries. In October 2022 the WFP reported that it provided food assistance to 2.8 million people and special nutrition programs for 143,000 people. Even today, western aid agencies report that more than 20 million people in the Horn of Africa are in urgent need for food aid.

Agriculture sets as the pace setter for current and Africa's future economic development. Most of the world's arable land, and over half of the population is employed under the agricultural sector and it is the largest contributor to the total gross domestic product (GDP).

Regrettably, Africa contributes the least to world food production, to little food and lower production and productivity, has been broadly slow paced since the 1980s (AGRA, 2018). Most of Africa's food deficient population lives in low-income countries, and many of these countries have been attempting to make progress towards the structural transformation of their economies. Such successful transformation is driven by agricultural productivity growth which enables the peoples to shift from agriculture towards manufacturing industry, increase in per capita income and reduction in poverty and hunger (FAO 2017).

Agriculture is also the backbone of the Ethiopian economy, and more than 85% of the national growth domestic product of the country is derived from the sector. Its economy was registered 7.7% growth in 2017/2018, slower than the 10.9% expansion recorded in 2015/2016. This growth was attributed to 12.2% rise in industrial output, 8.8% expansion in service sector and 3.5% growth in agriculture (NBE, 2018).

In 2020, total arable land of Ethiopia was 16,195 thousand hectares. Arable land of Ethiopia increased from 9,908 thousand hectares in 2001 to 16,195 thousand hectares in 2020 growing at an average annual rate of 2.69%.

Ethiopia has great agricultural potential because of its vast areas of fertile land, diverse climate, generally adequate rainfall, and large labor force.

Crop production is a major contributor to GDP, accounting for approximately 28% from the sub-sectors of agriculture. On the other hand, livestock rearing is an integral part

of agriculture, and the contribution of live animals and their products to the agricultural economy accounts for 40% (Duguma et al., 2012).

According to Ejersa (2011), coffee, pulses, oilseeds, potatoes, sugarcane, vegetables and cereals are the principal crops grown in Ethiopia. Among the above-listed types of crops, cereals are the most important food crop which provides daily food calories to the people. Hence, cereal production and marketing are the means of livelihood strategy for millions of smallholder households in Ethiopia (Taffesse et al., 2012).

Teff, wheat, maize, sorghum and barley are the major cereals that occupy almost three-quarters of the total area cultivated (Taffesse et al. 2012), and households spend an average of 40% of their income on food. In the production season of 2011/2012, from the total grain produced in Ethiopia, cereals account for 188.09 million quintals (CSA, 2012). In 2014/2015, the total grain production reached 270.4 million quintals, of which cereal production accounted for 235.45 million quintals (CSA, 2015). The total grain crops produced during the year 2015/2016 increased by 2.41% from the 2014/2015. On the other hand, CSA report from 2019 indicates that the total cereal production of wheat was 267.8 million quintals and 277.7 million quintals in 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 production seasons, respectively. Based on the report, there is 3.67% change in production between the two production seasons.

Wheat is one of the globally produced and marketed cereal crops which cover 15% of the total sowing areas of cereal crops in the world (Kiss, 2011). It is an important industrial and food grain which ranks second among the most important cereal crops in the world after rice and traded internationally (Asadallah, 2014; Falola et al., 2017).

In sub-Saharan African countries, wheat is also a strategic commodity which generates farm income and improves food security status (Amentae et al., 2017; Minot et al., 2015; Negassa et al., 2013). Many African countries are producing wheat for both consumption and sale, but the level of production and sale is varied between countries. The region has suitable agro-ecological profile which should have enabled it to produce a variety of food crops like wheat.

Ethiopia is one of the largest wheat producers in terms of total wheat area cultivated and total production (CSA, 2012). Wheat and wheat products represent 14% of the total calorie intake in the country which makes wheat the second-most important food behind maize (19%) and ahead of teff (10%), sorghum (11%) and enset (12%) (FAO, 2014).

In Ethiopia, wheat ranks fourth after teff, maize and sorghum in area coverage and third after maize and teff in total production (CSA, 2012; Minot et al., 2015). However, the production of wheat is tremendously of a subsistence nature and dominated by the

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# Business & Economy

## The bank industry in Ethiopia: Bright hope for entrepreneurs

BY LAKACHEW ATINAFU

Along with maintaining law and order government is incumbent upon devising sound and convenient policies prioritizing the economic sector.

Documents from the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) revealed that monetary policy of central banks in a simplified analysis amounts to the determination of the “optimal” quantity of money or (in a dynamic sense) the optimal rate of growth

More generally, monetary policy refers to a bundle of actions and regulatory stances taken by the central bank including all of the following:

In the very recent period, the NBE is working to build a healthy economy; the National Bank has stated that the work of expanding the ways of earning currency, producing proxy products locally and evaluating the loans given by banks will be implemented.

It is self-evident that monetary policy plays an important role in the performance of an economy.

However, the effectiveness of the policy in achieving the intended goal largely might to fall to be institutional factors that constrain or facilitate the implementation process of the policy.

The Deputy Governor of the National Bank, Salomon Desta said that in order to build a healthy economy, it is necessary to increase foreign exchange reserves and to make Ethiopia comfortable for foreign investment and to promote foreign trade.

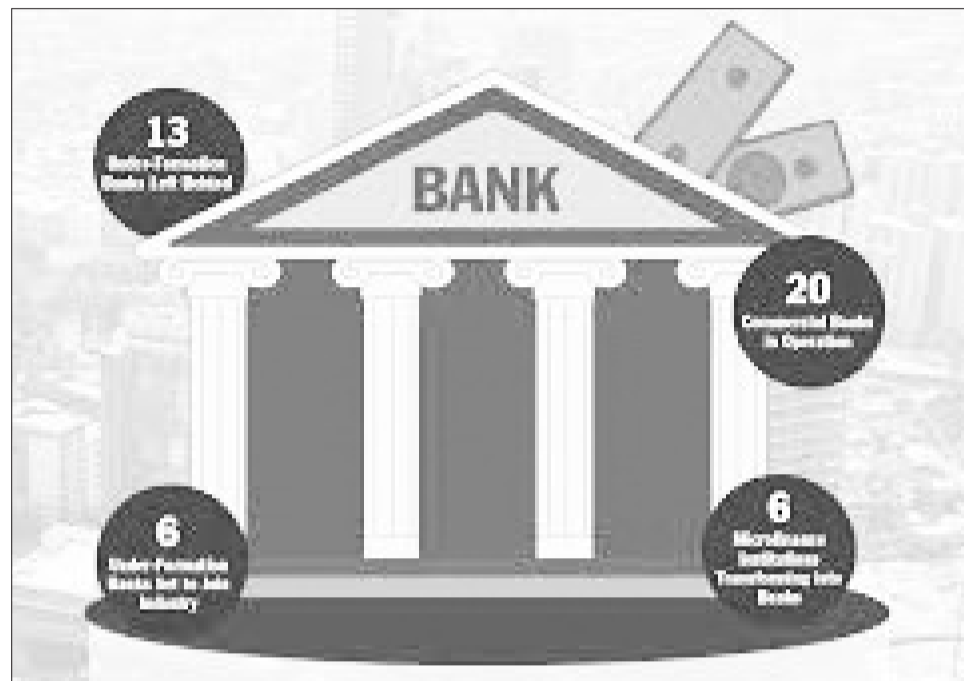
Solomon said that the National Bank will take the lion’s share in increasing the banks’ foreign currency reserves. He said that there is great economic potential in the service sector to promote more investment and increase foreign exchange reserves.

He stated that it is important to take care of the financial sector and expand its reach. He also said that the National Bank will increase foreign currency reserves and stabilize the market in the coming years. According to his explanation; increasing foreign exchange reserves and stabilizing the market is critical to building a healthy economy.

For this, the National Bank will focus on building a healthy economy in the coming years, he said. The bank recognizes its role in a healthy economy and is actively involved in nurturing the financial sector and expanding its reach.

Ethiopia’s access to the financial sector compared to 80 percent access to the financial sector of neighboring countries, Ethiopia’s 45 percent access is not satisfactory, he added.

He further explained that the National Bank of Ethiopia has made strong efforts



**In the very recent period, the NBE is working to build a healthy economy; the National Bank has stated that the work of expanding the ways of earning currency, producing proxy products locally and evaluating the loans given by banks will be implemented**

to increase access to credit and finance for small farmers and is working in coordination with relevant stakeholders for this purpose. He said that the National Bank has been doing many activities to improve the performance of commercial banks in maintaining the savings culture of the society and will continue to do so.

At the African level, the Ethiopian banking industry has not reached the desired level in terms of accessibility and technological penetration. He said the situation requires the participation of all actors in the area. Accordingly, he stressed that by equipping the banking sector with technology and skilled manpower, it is an activity that enhances international competitiveness.

For decades, Ethiopia’s banking and finance

sector has been almost entirely closed to foreigners. But that is soon expected to change as the Government of Ethiopia is aiming to introduce a suite of reforms that will open the sector to international competition with the goal of attracting foreign capital to improve the country’s competitiveness and contribute to its economic growth. Opportunities will be significant.

Currently, there are thirty banks operating in the country consisting of 8,250 branches, serving the country’s population of nearly 115 million. The National Bank of Ethiopia’s (NBE) quarterly bulletin published in October 2022 reported that deposits are equivalent to over USD 30 billion, and loans equivalent to over USD 25 billion.

A draft policy document circulated by the National Bank of Ethiopia outlines four ways that foreign entities might enter the Ethiopian banking sector.

Opportunities for U.S. firms include both goods and services: consulting, financial technologies including back end or transaction support hardware and software, payment services, and specialized services in areas such as marketing, and merger and acquisitions. Liberalization of the telecom sector has further driven interest in the use of mobile money which will require relevant software and fin tech solutions.

Challenges exist including a foreign exchange shortage in the country, development of stringent policies by the NBE to minimize risks associated with allowing foreign competition, and what is anticipated to be a slow permitting process. Ethiopia’s current credit supply, product offerings, financial infrastructure, and staff capacity are other potential hurdles that new entrants to the market will have to be cognizant of.

The National Bank of Ethiopia is taking a lead on this liberalization process. In

October 2022, discussions with local banks and relevant stakeholders were held to collect feedback on the plan and to inform a way forward. CS Ethiopia will continue to monitor and report on these financial sector reforms as they evolve. The introduction of a wide range of monetary instruments by central banks engenders competition, efficiency and transparency and broadens financial intermediation in the banking system. It also promotes liquidity management of commercial banks and gradually leads to the development of well functioning money and financial markets which could serve as catalysts for economic growth and development.

So far, the use of such instruments has been extremely limited in Ethiopia due to the underdevelopment of the monetary market and the virtual non-existence of a financial market. Thus, it is envisaged to use a mix of diversified monetary policy instruments so as to effectively carry out the monetary management function of the NBE.

Open Market Operation (Sale and purchase of bonds or securities issued by governments) has generally been used by countries as one of the main instruments for the development of monetary markets. Trading in these instruments liquefies the financial system in particular and the national economy in general and increases financial intermediation.

In light of this, the NBE will use open market operations (sale and purchase of government securities) as one of its monetary policy instruments. In the absence of its own securities, certain amount of government treasury bills needs to be allocated to NBE by the government for its monetary policy purpose.

To prepare the ground for enhanced open market operations, the yield on government securities should be at least close to the minimum interest rate. As a next step, secondary market for government securities needs to be established.

An outstanding central bank credit facility is another instrument used to enhance the financial capacity of commercial banks and to promote financial intermediation and efficiency.

The key advantages of such standing credit facility are transparency and predictability of accessing central banks’ resources to cover short-term needs. This credit facility gives banks an assurance that, when confronted with problems of shortfall in the clearing and a lack of alternatives for raising immediate funds in the inter-bank market, they can settle the clearing with the central bank’s funds at a reasonable interest rate which has a clear relationship with short term market interest rates. The NBE will use this facility as one of its monetary policy instrument.

# Art & Culture

## “Writing was a means to cry, protest, explain and express my pain..”

BY KFLEEEYESUS ABEBE

Ethiopia has a long tradition of writing that is decorated on stones, owning unique alphabet, religious manuscripts, and historical records. Modern literature, however, is a century-long phenomenon characterized by poems, short stories, novels, and memoirs particularly in Ethiopia's working language Amharic. There are also Ethiopian literary works in English.

Ethiopian diaspora can be credited with its current active engagement in literature bridging the gap in Ethiopian history and helping the world have a holistic image of their country of origin. Ethiopian American Novelists Dinaw Mengestu and Maaza Mengiste wrote captivating stories exploiting Ethiopian history and culture. Ethiopian British Lemn Sissay is known for his memoir which is filled with unusual circumstances. He is also an award-winning poet.

The Ethiopian diaspora literary movement is still fervent as Ethiopian Canadian, Adel Ben-Harhara published his Memoir in three volumes in 2022.

The Ethiopian Herald had a chance to sit down with the author and ask his inspiration, the challenges he endured in writing the books, and his thoughts on culture, language, and literature.

**The Ethiopia Herald:** You begin the story by saying: “I am kind of suppressing guilt.” What do you mean by that?

I have presented the first sixty years of my life, as well as my family and cultural history, in three volumes. Volume One, **To Have Nothing**, covers the first sixteen years of my life growing up in Ethiopia. Volume Two, **Hope in the Sky**, portrays two periods of time when I lived in North Yemen, totaling twelve years. Volume Three, **My Silver Lining**, covers the years I lived in the US before my second stint in North Yemen. It includes my current life in Canada, my home since leaving North Yemen for a second time.

Living on three continents has defined the person I am today a man who has been influenced by and represents a mix of Ethiopian, Arab, American, and Canadian cultures. I was taught Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Marxism, and Mormonism, and I have both rejected and embraced various elements of each. My spiritual, ideological, philosophical, and cultural views and values comprise a mosaic that represents all that I have experienced, observed, and absorbed during the six decades that I have walked and run on this planet.

When I decided to share the twists and turns of my life in a book portraying events that occurred while traversing multiple cultures, languages, religions, and geographical areas, I was confronted with a few hurdles: suppressed emotions of **guilt** and **fear** about my past.

**Guilt;** I was worried about hurting or upsetting the people who would be characters in my life story (my family and friends). There are details and events in my memoir that are not talked about in my cultures. I was petrified of violating the norms and values I grew up with and crossing the religious boundaries I was taught not to cross. I didn't want to embarrass or shame my family, but I needed to be honest, first and foremost with myself but also with my readers.

**Fear;** writing about me, my most intimate and vulnerable moments, and having to look at my own life in the mirror? Doing so would involve taking a piece of my soul and putting it forward for public consumption. There are details of my life in these books that no one knew about until now (except the people involved). Now the world will know some of the most intimate moments of my life! The notion of sharing my emotions but also my personal history was scary; releasing these emotions and details almost broke me!

**EH:** The second fascinating thing is that you

started taking journals at age 10. How did that come? Have you been exposed to fancy school or do you have it from your parents?

Since childhood, I knew something was different about my circumstances. I wanted to keep a record of my experiences, so I started writing my journals at the age of ten or almost eleven, but I didn't have the conviction to say, “I have a story to tell.”

The journals I was writing were my way of expressing my pain, my anguish moments. So, it was a means to skip the pain I had. It was not someone who told me to write. It was not something I thought about, but it was a means to cry, complain, explain, and express my pain. That is where it started.

**EH:** The title of your first book is *To Have Nothing*. What do you want to tell us? Are you going to tell us how it feels to have nothing?

*To Have Nothing* is characterized by a peculiarly nostalgic, reflective tone. Nostalgia is triggered by old photographs or objects and the material remains of the past but also by conversation. It is a longing for longing; it is both retrospective and prospective.

The passage of time is probably the most basic facet of human perception. It is a process through which the beauty of childhood joys and pains remain. Yes, memories may fade. And traumatic memories in particular may be suppressed, but they do not disappear.

The title of this book, **To Have Nothing**, speaks to the struggles I encountered during most of the first sixteen years of my life. At the age of five, I was thrust from being a well-cared for child with an aristocratic father and two mothers to being homeless and essentially orphaned almost overnight. For a couple of years of my childhood, I had no parents, no home, no food, no future, and no hope. I was at the mercy of the Almighty.

**EH:** So, what do you expect the reader to gain from reading your book?

I have struggled to overcome immense challenges throughout my life, but I've also experienced great victories. Challenges and triumphs mold a person into who they become, and we all continue to evolve as we keep moving through life, applying what we have learned as new hurdles and dilemmas come our way.

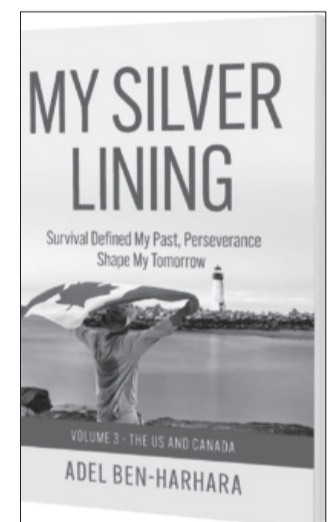
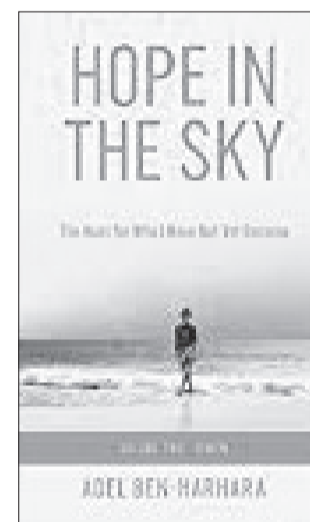
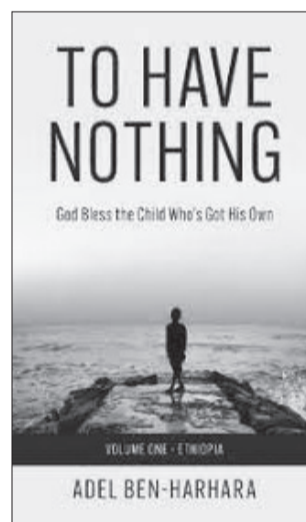
My purpose in writing my memoir is first and foremost to share my life story in hopes that



Adel Ben-Harhara, MBA, PMP, and Author.

“

I want to raise awareness and provoke deeper thought and personal growth within readers (as the world continues to embrace multiculturalism) and within myself



it will entertain, motivate, and inspire others. But my intention extends much farther. I want to raise awareness and provoke deeper thought and personal growth within readers (as the world continues to embrace multiculturalism) and within myself.

**EH:** The other interesting thing about you is you are also trilingual. How did it help you?

I can speak, read, and write three languages. When people ask me where I am from or what my native language is, I'm hesitant to respond because the answer is not straightforward. If I say I am Yemeni and speak Arabic, people assume I am a typical Arab, which I am not. But to say I am Ethiopian and speak Amharic also does not present the full picture of who I am.

In my formal Amharic lessons, at the age five I was taught Ge'ez. The teacher was a Jew. He thought me Judaism, too. And I have an afternoon to study Arabic.

Studying one language is difficult let alone two of them. On top of that, there were two religions. Juggling these two languages and memorizing the Quran and trying to understand Torah, built my brain to think and operate differently.

**EH:** You have been in many cultures, and you live in Canada which is very diverse. What do you recommend Ethiopia in proving a harmonious and peaceful country?

Although I have settled in western Canada

and am enjoying a fulfilling life, Ethiopia and Yemen are also my homes and will forever be my native lands. They are where many of my family members reside. They are the countries that provided me with numerous learning opportunities that continue to influence my approach to life's challenges and joys.

Ethiopia is an ancient nation where all aspects of diversity existed in it for centuries. Perhaps the world should have learned from Ethiopia how to coexist, because Islam started here 1444 years ago and perhaps the rest of the world never heard of it. Christianity has been around for the past 2015 years. Judaism lingered in this land for several centuries before that. So, to tell Ethiopians how to co-exist is to teach your mother how to deliver a baby.

Ethiopia is the only country divided up its nation into elements of ethnicity (ethnic federalism); as to me that is what continues to prompt war and conflict. It seems a recipe for disaster as each group observably clings to its own ideas and practices and aims to choke out the other.

**EH:** You are a person who went through a very tough childhood. Is there anything you have in mind to help children?

I donated the Amharic version of my book as a public property. That is my way of paying back to humanity and supporting children who are faced with growing up without parental love and guidance, as I was.

# Science & Technology



Photo : UK Embassy Commis

## British Embassy funded Warka Incubation program graduate trainees

BY KFLEYESUS ABEBE

Like many Ethiopians, Tiya Belay learnt the harm plastic bags can cause to the environment. But as graduate of environmental engineering and someone engaged in the sector, she has practically seen the effects of plastic wastes in the country. In consequence, she felt a moral responsibility to fight the effect of plastic waste. Tiya along with her husband came up with environment friendly paper bags.

“It is hard to dispose plastic bags. They take 80 years to 500 years to be totally decayed. Even after they decayed they leave toxic chemicals to the soil. They cause contamination to water, air and the soil. So, we have been concerned about this for a while and we came up with this idea of replacing the use of plastic with paper bags. The paper bags are environmental friendly when they are used and disposed.”

Another interesting thing about Tiya’s company Afro Zembil is her products are made recycling used papers collecting from schools, offices and other places that dispose papers at large scale.

“ We don’t use logs to produce our paper products. Instead we recycle already used papers thinking that we would also prevent burning of papers that result air pollution. We collect the papers from school, offices and other similar places and pulped it with water and chemicals, roll it and dry it again to give us such packages.”

Another start up with business name Askema also recycle materials and help prevent environmental degradation. The business is poised to substitute imported car clutches with local products. This local clutches are made from bones, ceramic and other industry wastes. “Askema” meaning Monk Cap optimizes weather condition to monks and car clutches also optimize energy to cars”, says Behaylu Soboka, founder of the start up. “Askema is monks cap and has advantage of optimizing heat so that monks sustain heat while long prayer. Car clutches at the same time optimize and regulate energy. So, we relate this and produce clutches from waste products.”

The company’s marketing manager



Betelhiem Ayele says the products are already on the market and their business are taking roots.

“Three organizations that work on cars have started working with us. We are also cooperating with polytechnic colleges. We are promoting ourselves in such a way. We started the business on loan bases but now we are in good posture. A standard packaging however is a challenge to our progress. We want a standard package that is fitting to our products and create good impression for customers.”

Internet utilization in Ethiopia is raising and connectivity, exchange of information and knowledge is also simultaneously growing. Taking this into account, three friends Dr. Zimare Tadesse, Dr. Helina Abere and software engineer Lydia Daniel gathered together to create a channel where women get information related to sexual reproduction. The startup TenaSeb is now providing its medical consulting and guidance directly through telephone, telegram and posting relevant videos on YouTube. Their service is also reaching Ethiopians living in middle east. If they get financial support, they have a plan to include men in TenaSeb service and men will also get essential medical advices. They also wanted to work with ministry of health.



British Embassy funded Warka Incubation program has been providing training on marketing, business model and other essential skills to above startups and other seven startup businesses. “ British Embassy along with Warka incubation gave us important training on how to develop our startup, develop it to business idea and how to reach the community. We have got practical skills. They have helped us a lot,” says Dr. Helina Abere.

On the inauguration of these startups, British Ambassador to Ethiopia Darren Welch express his surprise and the embassy’s keenness to carry on similar programs in the future.

“This is really important program that we are very proud to be associated with this program. Something we fund in partnership with Xhub from the embassy here. The finalists whose work enjoying and admiring have completed a 3 months incubation program. They received training, coaching on a range of topics from marketing to business development. And, they have learn from one another. They come through competitive process and they now going to receive seed money to support further business development. This the first incubation program we have run from here by support of the embassy but it won’t be the last. I have seen this fantastic ideas come to



fruition. It is very very rewarding.”

The startups want to expand their business but they need support of relevant stakeholders like the ministry of job creation, ministry of health and ministry of science and technology. They need business places, financial support and collaboration and recognition to excel their business by creating jobs for youth and benefiting the society by their entrepreneurship and innovation. Ethiopian State minister of Science and Technology Huria Ali has been in attendance in the inauguration ceremony. She visited works of the startups, expressed her fascination and affirmed government’s support for this and similar startups to grow and benefit the society.

“I believe the training you got from Warka Incubation program will help you to run your business efficiently and you would provide quality products to the market. You will create new jobs, save foreign currency and thereby contribute share for the development of the country. I can affirm my ministry support in this journey.

The state minister also said that government put technology at the center of its economic ambition. She briefed activities such as encouraging innovation, spurring digital economy and others are being accomplished to realize the dream.



# Society

## Boarding schools, to excelling academically, ensuring quality education

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

The government of Ethiopia has been executing various activities with the aim of improving education quality, producing citizens equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and critical thinking thereby realizing the targets set to the education sector,

As a result, over the years the country has seen remarkable progress in terms of expanding primary schools and universities in all states and increasing access to education through the country.

Consecutively, primary school enrolment rate has seen significant improvement even though ensuring education quality remains one of the biggest challenges facing the sector.

Understanding the seriousness of the issue, since recent times, numerous measures that are instrumental to ensure quality education, have been exercised. For instance, offering high school leaving exams at the universities instead of at schools' premises was taken as remedy to curb the trend of theft and fraud and improve the quality of education.

Similarly, more efforts are exerted in expanding special boarding schools across the country to enabling top performing students utilize their full potential, equip and prepare them for their future and improve education quality. Consequently, the beginnings are demonstrating promising results.

In an exclusive interview with The Ethiopian Herald, Oromia Development Association Director General Dejene Iticha said that the association is working to ensure quality education and produce skilled human capital that could fit the quality of international human power demand.

The Education Bureau is evaluating the progress and performance of the boarding schools and oversees activities as per the set standards. Education standards and facilities in Oromia Special Boarding schools are improving year in, year out and, the number of students joining international acclaimed higher education institutions is growing.

He further noted that the Association is working in partnership with Oromia Education Bureau and other pertinent stakeholders at large to ensure quality education.

Oromia Special Boarding School and special schools Directorate Director Desta Hailu noted that it is a unique opportunity for students to nurture their talents,



empower and make them competent, as lifelong learners, to participate in nation building. According to him, as of now, there are nine special boarding schools and 33 special schools running in the State.

The Bureau is striving to provide education in a manner meeting international standards and offers internationally accepted exams. At the same time, the schools are providing language education like Chinese, Arabic, English, as per their preference. English is the common medium of instruction.

“Apart from the formal learning teaching process, the schools also let learners engage in extracurricular programs to familiarize students and teachers coming from a wide range of ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds with the cultures values and norms of others to cultivate diversity through various sports and cultural events” he added.

“Our boarding schools are open to everyone; one can join regardless of his/her ethnic and religious background. Most of the facilities are equipped with state of the art amenities including classrooms, laboratories, digital libraries, meeting hall, administrative offices, dormitories, cafeteria, sport fields, water supply and sanitation, electricity, toilets, and waste disposal system.”

Most of the students are scoring higher grades and are joining internationally acclaimed higher education institutions through scholarships and other approaches.

As to him, there are students who have performed well and pursuing their education in the higher education institutions of South Korea, Türkiye, America and Canada at various fields.

The State also accepts students through scholarship programs, and now there are students coming from Addis Ababa, Harere and Amhara states among others.

“Oromia Education Bureau is committed in strengthening further the quality of education and increasing the number of boarding schools.”

Oromia Special Boarding School Bishoftu Branch Director Tadesse Dugassa for his part said that the School is striving to ensure quality education. “We are committed to support the students as per the set rules and regulations. Each student’s education and extracurricular activities are well tracked; and students with less academic performance record will go under serial of tutorial programs. The special boarding school is striving to be one of the centers of excellence in producing skilled and knowledgeable posterity.”

Wolaita Liqa Secondary School Principal

Matusala Gona for his part said that the School provides boarding service for beneficiaries of both Wolaita Development Association (WODA) and students with cost sharing program.

The School admits students from all parts of Ethiopia who are top achievers and could pass the entrance exam. It one of the best school in Southern Ethiopia and follows Activity Based Learning (ABL) teaching and learning model through employing ICT, and Science Laboratories.

The School is working to ensure quality education and to be one of the excellence hubs; and contribute to the human development efforts of the nation.

Students of 2022 Academic Year have scored higher; and 60 boys and 15 girls have joined higher education. The school has many students graduated from domestic and international colleges.

“Though we want to increase the number of students, we could not make it because of budget strains, we call on stakeholders to extend support,” he opined.

According to him, Wolaita Liqa Secondary School operates under Wolaita Development Association. The School is working in collaboration with Wolaita Administration and Wolaita Sodo University under a range of platforms to undo the challenges.

Dessie Boarding School Principal Belete Desse for his part said that the school was opened in 2018 by admitting grade nine students. These students, taking the national exam in 2022, have registered the highest score of the nation. It was Dessie Boarding School that recorded the highest marks.

The Boarding School has 300 students’ of which 205 are boys and 95 girls; and all scored higher points.

Mikiyas Adane is one of the students who scored the highest score; 666 out of seven hundred, recording 100 marks in both physics and mathematics subjects.

“In my view, boarding schools could play vital role in ensuring quality education. The Ministry of Education and other stakeholders should work on devising strategy to expand boarding schools in accordance with the standards of international boarding schools,” he remarked.

“Wollo University is providing support to the school in teaching and learning; as well equipping laboratories and the library, we are grateful for its commitment,” he added.

# International News

## Bottled water booming despite worries over waste

“Damage from plastics is irreversible,” the chair of Friends of the Earth International tells the BBC.

“Once fragmented into microplastics, it pollutes all of the ecosystem including the oceans and the air we breathe, with no way to recover them.”

The bottled water industry raises strong emotions from its opponents, who like Mr Withanage point to the environmental impact of all the waste plastic. And, with only 2.3% of bottled water coming in glass bottles, there is a lot of plastic.

In the US alone, 50 billion plastic water bottles are purchased every year, according to one report. The study adds that only 9% of plastic bottles sold globally are currently recycled.

The industry counters that today’s bottles, made from polyethylene terephthalate (PET), are 100% recyclable. And increasingly they are made from already recycled PET in the first place.

Others point to bottled water being healthier than sugary soft drinks. And then there were the recent scandals about contaminated tap water in the US.

What is certain is that the global bottled water sector continues to boom. The industry is expected to enjoy revenues of \$324.4bn (£266bn) this year. And that number is tipped to jump to \$419.9bn by 2029. This growth is being led by sparkling water, sales of which are more than doubling.

Simon Oldham, joint managing director of Scottish bottled water brand Highland Spring, confirms the increased demand for the fizzy version.

“During the pandemic, sparkling water in particular saw strong growth, as consumers sought out low/no alcohol drinks that kept them hydrated and offered versatility,” he says.



Mr Oldham adds that the overall increase in sales of bottled water “has been driven by an increased health and wellbeing awareness... with consumers seeking healthy choices and alternatives to both sugary soft drinks and alcoholic beverages”.

Jill Culora, vice president of communications for the US-based International Bottled Water Association, says that for many people bottled water is a health necessity.

“For many economically developing countries, bottled water serves as a partial solution when safe drinking water is not available,” she says. “Many countries have not built the necessary public water distribution systems. For those countries, bottled water is often their only source of safe water.”

“Bottled water is also available in times of emergencies and natural disasters because the bottled water market is strong and viable throughout the year. Sometimes, water from tap water systems can be compromised after emergency situations or natural disasters.”

But in the developed world, what is wrong with tap water for the vast majority of people? “Nothing,” says water expert Cristina Villanueva.

An associate research professor at the

Barcelona-based Institute for Global Health, she has spent years researching water. Ms Villanueva thinks that there is likely one significant factor behind the continuing boom in bottled water sales.

“The publicity and marketing of the bottled water industry, and [by contrast], a lack of publicity for public water supplies, probably has a main role, at least in countries like Spain,” she says.

She adds that while health authorities have a duty to ensure that mains water is safe, they would do well to be more transparent. More information about water quality would help ease people’s concern, she says.

Regarding bottled water specifically, Ms Villanueva says with much coming from natural springs, she is concerned that these sources “are prone to overexploitation” - that too much water is being extracted.

Simon Oldham says that is definitely not the case at Highland Spring, which comes from the Ochil Hills in Perthshire. “We extract no more than 3% of the rain that falls on our catchment, ensuring the long-term sustainability of one of the planet’s more valuable resources for generations to come,” he says.

“We are also very fortunate that Scotland’s

climate has high levels of rainfall throughout the year.”

For anyone concerned about the quality of their tap water, an alternative to buying bottled water is to use a home water purification system, such as one fitted under your sink, or the filters that slot into dedicated water jugs.

This is also a booming global sector, with one recent report predicting that it will more than double from \$22.6bn last year to \$50.7bn in 2029.

In Israel more than three quarters of the country’s drinking water now comes from desalinated plants on the Mediterranean coast. Other countries such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are also heavily reliant upon desalinated water, which tastes very flat and lifeless.

To improve the flavour of this water, and to help remove the chlorine, Israel firm Mayu makes a water jug system called “Swirl”. This comprises a 1.5 litre glass carafe that sits on top of a porcelain base unit.

The latter is battery-powered, and when turned on it creates an oxygenating spiral motion in the water in the carafe, which is said to improve its taste.

Shay Eden, a co-founder at the company, says that the technology also improves tap water in Europe and the US. “In some European cities, the average age of the pipes [in the last mile to people’s homes] is over 75 years,” she says.

“Unfortunately, this means that many contaminants are dissolved into the water during its journey before reaching the glass.”

Back in Barcelona, Cristina Villanueva says “there is no one solution that fits all”. “You have to consider the options whether it’s bottled, tap, or filtered water, taking into account the specific issues where you live and decide your personal choice.”

Source: BBC

### Nigerian leader defends currency swap as pain, protests grow

ABUJA,— Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari said Thursday that the country’s redesigned currency would bolster the upcoming presidential election, appealing for an end to violent protests over a resulting cash shortage that has led to daylong lines at banks, business closures and people unable to pay for basic needs.

As he came under growing pressure to intervene after days of bank attacks by Nigerians who have failed to withdraw their money, Buhari pointed to the expected gains from swapping out the old naira notes, from curbing surging inflation to reducing the influence of money in the Feb. 25 vote to elect his successor.

“This is a positive departure from the past and represents a bold legacy step by this administration towards laying a strong foundation for free and fair elections,” Buhari said.

Nigerians have been unable to access cash in recent weeks after the country’s central bank started switching out currency notes of higher denominations of 1,000 naira (\$2.16), 500 naira (\$1.08), 200 naira (43 U.S. cents) with redesigned ones.

Policymakers said the move will help make Africa’s largest economy cashless and more inclusive. But a limited supply of new notes in banks has resulted in pain instead for many who deposited their old currency ahead of a Feb. 10 deadline but are now unable to withdraw cash to use.

The West African country is heavily reliant on cash and only 45% of adults owned a bank account as of 2021, according to the World Bank. The limited supply has forced people to wait in line at banks all day and night to try to withdraw cash only enough to last them a day.

On Wednesday, weeklong protests against the cash shortage crisis further escalated in Nigeria’s southern region where two banks were set ablaze and major roads were blocked, halting commercial activities. In Edo state, police fired tear gas at demonstrators as they attacked bank facilities.

In addition to the pain of continued fuel scarcity in major cities across Nigeria, many businesses also have been forced to close, further squeezing the informal economy — ranging from agriculture to street trade — that is key to economic growth.

Buhari urged against “violence capable of disrupting the electoral processes” in the election that would see Africa’s most populous country elect a new president after his second and final term.

“Unscrupulous officials in the banking industry” sabotaging the court-contested monetary policy by hoarding new currency notes must be prosecuted, said Buhari, who extended the use of the old 200 naira note until April 10. “I am deeply pained and sincerely sympathize with you all over these unintended outcomes.”

Source: AP

### MTN to invest \$1 Billion Ghana in five years after tax exemption

South Africa’s telecommunication giant MTN has agreed to invest a total sum of \$1 billion in Ghana over the next five years.

MTN Chief Executive Officer Ralph Mupita said the company was committed to investing in the West African country following a tax exemption amounting to about \$773 million.

He said they intend to invest in broadening their 5G network in Ghana to spur further growth across various sectors.

The Ghana Revenue Authority initially claimed that MTN had under declared its revenue by about 30% between 2014 and 2018 after a series of audits.

Once hailed as a regional growth model, it is going through its



worst economic crisis in decades, fuelled by the adverse effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Ukraine crisis.

The West African state is facing an economic crisis with inflation at more than 50 percent and its cedi currency down sharply.

Its consumer inflation slowed slightly to 53.6% year-on-year in January from a more than two-decade high of 54.1% in the previous month, data showed earlier on Wednesday.

Source Africa News



## Top tourist destinations in Addis

BY TEWODROS KASSA

Currently, Addis Ababa is hosting the 36th African Union annual Summit and the 42nd Ordinary Session of the Executive Council (Ministerial Session) at the African Union Commission Headquarter, Addis Ababa. Numerous heads of states, diplomats, journalists, members of international organizations, among others are in the city to attend the annual Summit.

Addis Ababa Hotel Owners Association announced that hotels in the metropolis have started receiving participants of the 36th African Union Summit and are ready to build the image of the country through professional service.

Association President Aster Solomon told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the hotels have made the necessary preparations to provide seamless services to guests who are coming to Addis Ababa for the continental Summit.

She noted that a committee led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has issued guidelines on how the hotels should treat the guests coming for the Summit. Accordingly, the hotels have completed the necessary arrangements to accommodate guests and render the uninterrupted provision of water, electricity, telecommunication, and other amenities.

“We are working in coordination with the relevant stakeholders including police and other law enforcement agencies; to ensure that the guests staying here are secured and comfortable. The security apparatus assured us that our guests are protected at all times.”

Addis hotels have made the necessary preparations concerning the COVID-19 pandemic precautionary guidelines. Also, short phone numbers have been prepared to quickly inform the concerned parties in case of any problems related to security and emergencies, Aster remarked.

It is to be recalled that Addis Ababa hotels expressed readiness to provide world-class services to the AU guests and vowed to make the latter's stay memorable.

On his part, Ethiopian Skylight Hotel Sells Manager AychuGesese told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the hotel, which boasts over 1,000 rooms, is capable of providing world-class services that best fit the needs of high-ranking AU dignitaries.

By the same token, Assistant Director of Sells at Hilton Addis Ababa Hotel, Daniel Gelaw expressed readiness to showcase Hotel's longstanding experience in the hospitality industry to the AU delegates.

The Ministry of Tourism also recommended a few among countless never missed to visit attractions in Addis Ababa and the surroundings.

Therefore, apart from attending the Summit, participants will have the



opportunity to discover the capital of Africa, Addis Ababa and witness that the city is home to all Africans..

The following are some of the major destinations that are situated within a short distance from the capital Addis Ababa and worth visiting. .

### Unity Park

Located inside the Grand Menelik II palace, Unity Park embraces different natural and man-made tourist attractions. It also comprises a mix of landscaped open areas, renovated palace buildings and animal enclosures. The restored rooms feature items like Menelik's sword and a life-size wax replica of former Emperor Haile Selassie.

The Unity Park of Ethiopia has natural, cultural, historical, and heritage tourism attractions all in one place. The unique natural attractions of Unity Park are zoos with 37 mammals, nine types of animals, namely Giraffes, Zebras, Kudu, Impala, Eland, Gemsbok, Nyala, Wildebeest, and White Rhino, thirteen species of aquatic animals, and indigenous various birds in the aviary. The Black Mane Lions, that are found only in Ethiopia; and the traditional

Garden with indigenous plants are also the other attractions of Unity Park. Entoto Park

Entoto Natural Park is a park of serenity and resounding joy. It is a unique place to discover the most breathtaking mountain with streams flowing from clear springs and waterfalls. The Park lies on the southeastern slopes of Entoto Mountain, between the northern limit of the city of Addis Ababa at an altitude of 2,600m, and the track along the mountain ridge at altitude over 3,100 m.

### Sheger Park

Friendship Square of the Sheger Park project includes various attractions at the heart of Addis Ababa. It is a preferred destination to stay mesmerized with the beauty of nature and the reflections of humans' art.

Accordingly, the newly developed boutique parks; Unity, Entoto, and Sheger are the right spot for people who love city parks. The outdoor markets at Merkato and the souvenir shops around the Ethiopian Post Office Headquarter and Shiromeda are ideal places for shopping.

Moreover, Addis Ababa is also an interesting city for nightlife. The Jazz music around Bole and the cultural restaurants that

are dotted across the Bole and Kazanchis areas give a lifetime experience.

As Ethiopia is the origin of coffee, visiting coffee shops around Piazza area is one of the most intriguing incidents that would give long lasting memorable experiences in the city.

What is more, if you are into history and historical landmarks, there are lots of historical important squares that keep significant monuments and icons. Go to the main city center and you will find many astonishing landmarks.

In sum, experts in the tourism sector also recommend the need for coordinated efforts to utilize the country's conference tourism potentials effectively and motivate the tourism sector practitioners to develop their capacity towards hosting more international tourists.

The 42nd Ordinary Session of the Executive Council (Ministerial Session) which started on February 15, 2023, will be concluded this coming Sunday, after holding the 36th Ordinary Session of the African Union Summit (Heads of States and Government session), scheduled to take place on 18 and 19 February 2023.