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BRICS driving force for Ethiopia's future financial boom

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia's BRICS membership would provide a great impetus to its efforts to create a vibrant and competitive financial sector and to align financing programs with development priorities, the Finance State Minister said.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, Finance State Minister Eyob Tekalign (PhD) expressed optimism that the economic bloc will accompany Ethiopia's path to strong financial sector. The accession is also of great importance in helping

Ethiopia to attain a healthy economy.

Moreover, it is also an assertion to Ethiopia's prospect and growth capacity and the country would benefit from technology transfer and development funds from the New Development Bank and other packages. Several countries that have larger economies applied to join the bloc; however, BRICS leaders approved Ethiopia recognizing its large population and noble place in Africa's history, Eyob elaborated.



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Eyob Tekalign (PhD)



Lema Gudisa(Ph.D)

Ethiopia needs to exploit BRICS's membership to expedite dev't: Scholar

BY TAMERU REGASA

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopia ought to properly utilize BRICS membership to expedite economic development programs, scholar suggested.

Apart from being home to various continental and international organizations like the Economic Commission of Africa (ECA) and the African Union (AU), Ethiopia was selected to join the BRICS

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Financial inclusion measures registering remarkable results: Ministry

• CBE inaugurates Special Branch for corporate customers

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – The government's financial inclusive measures have registered remarkable results over the last three years, said the Ministry of Finance.

This was noted when Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE) inaugurated a special

branch known as Abiy branch to enable it to provide quality service for its corporate customers.

During the inauguration ceremony yesterday, Finance Minister Ahmed Shide reiterated that over the last three years, financial inclusion measures taken by the government to increase access to finance have registered remarkable results.

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Corporation set to collect over 8 bln Birr premium revenue

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopian Insurance Corporation has planned to collect over eight billion Birr premium revenue in the year 2023/2024.

Corporation Chief Executive Officer Netsanet Lemessa told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the corporation has scheduled to collect over eight billion Birr premium revenue and increase its profit by 15 percent in the same period.

To this end, the corporation has set to upgrade five branches into higher level and to inaugurate additional five new branches in various areas of the country to make its services accessible to all customers, he expressed.

There are ten branches with five contact offices in various woredas across the country. The corporation

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News

Ministry tables new export strategy

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- The Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration (MoTRI) said a new strategic plan, which is projected to enhance Ethiopian products' acceptance in the export market, has been tabled for discussion with the business community.

Opening the discussion yesterday, MoTRI State Minister Kassahun Gofe indicated the volume of export trade has been growing even though the progress is not as expected. Compared with the country's potential and its GDP growth, the export sector is still at an infant stage. This underperformance needs more effort from all stakeholders in general and exporters in particular.

The state minister further noted that the draft strategy aims to enhance export volume and income and to make it parallel with the GDP growth. "During the 1970-80s, Ethiopia's GDP was about 30.5 billion USD and the figure reached 127 billion USD last year. This simply shows the GDP is in sweeping growth. But, the export trade (both good and service export) accounts only 80.2 percent of the GDP this time.



Kassahun Gofe

So, we need to learn from countries like Vietnam that are generating their biggest income from export."

The strategy, which was prepared in Amharic and English, meticulously identified both the challenges and prospects of Ethiopia's export sector and would be adopted after a few steps, Kassahun remarked.

During the occasion, Senior Policy Advisor at the Ministry Henok Seyoum (PhD)



presented the major subjects included in the draft strategy. The strategy identified foreign currency shortage, limited skilled human capital, quality issues and low or absence of brands as the major shortcomings of Ethiopia's export sector.

Henok; however, said the prospect is still unexploited.

He said: "Abundance of organic raw materials and quality agricultural and manufacturing products, mining and

natural resources are still available for exporters in large. The global market also needs Ethiopia's products for their quality. But, we need to sustain quality production and promotional works."

Commenting on the new strategy, exporters pledged to contribute their part to improve the export business. They also urged the government to fight illicit transaction of foreign currency that is hugely affecting the import-export trade.

Experts say inept land policy hinders productivity

• Ethiopia marks the 1st land day

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – Absence of a comprehensive land policy is highly hindering the country's land management and productivity, so said Land Experts.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) Land Law Expert Abebaw Abebe said that lack of all-inclusive land policies and legal frameworks are seriously impacting the productivity of land and land use.

He further stated that agriculture and rural development policy included issues that help curb land fragmentation; management and use however there are policy gaps in this regard.

"Since land is complicated and the concern of all, it needs to have its own policies, which help land tenure, utilization, legal land transaction and other related issues," he recommended.

He said: "About 30 million acre of land is registered and 25 million parcels are issued land certificates at national level. They have been developing a paperless data system which helps register overall profiles of land owners for transactions and provide updated information to institutions."

So far, capacity building trainings, which help manage the land administration, have been given to 6,200 experts drawn from kebeles and woreda in a bid to make the information system more accessible and reliable at selected universities.



MoA's Land Administration and Geospatial Desk Head Yalemzewd Demissie stated that close to 97% of the people who are situated in the highlands of the country are issued land certificates.

"Over 47,000 legal land owners got access to finance with their certificate as collateral throughout the country in a single year," she added.

As a ten-year development plan, the MoA has established and is implementing agricultural database development, access to finance to farmers, land consolidation, women empowerment, rental market and others.

Moreover, the ministry has established crop insurance to the farming community, as a pilot project, to cover any calamities, she remarked.

About 342 woreda files are recorded

through agricultural data base development so far, therefore, regions, zones and other concerned bodies would easily access any information, he remarked.

On the sidelines of the panel discussion held yesterday, which was organized by Land for life Ethiopia, the nation marks the first land day under the theme "Together for people-centered land governance" in the presence of various federal and regional representatives, it was learnt.

Land for life Ethiopia, a non-governmental and non-profit organization, was established in 2020 by a group of government officials, academics, entrepreneurs and activists.

During the panel discussion, stakeholders undertook various issues regarding challenges and injustices resulted from weak land management and others.

College working to bridge labor gap in hospitality sector

• Graduates 115 students

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- Capital Hotel and Management College (CHMC) has been contributing to satisfy the growing demand for skilled labor in the hotel and tourism sectors and in job creation, the College Dean said.

The CHMC graduated 115 students yesterday in food and beverage services, front office service, food preparation and supervision and other related programs.

CHMC Dean Solomon Taye told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the college has been steadily working to fill the skilled labor gap in the hotel and tourism sectors and enhance the service delivery. "All of our departments are providing international standard training."

He added: "We equip our students with international hospitality principles in a bid to enable them to serve global tourists and to portray Ethiopia's positive image. Nurturing qualified hotel professionals should not be left to a single college and all concerned bodies need to support us."

Capital Hotel and Spa General Manager Bantayehu Woldemichael expressed the company's belief in the need to deploy qualified professionals to improve the service delivery in the hotel sector. "With this profound interest we have been hugely engaged in nurturing hotel professionals and students and helping them to secure jobs in the industry. By doing this, we have played our part to meet the growing demand for skilled labor in the hotel sector."

Cognizant of professionalism's key role in Ethiopia's hospitality industry, Capital Hotel is working not only to produce qualified professionals for its own, but also its competitors in the market, Bantayehu emphasized.

According to him, this high demand for skilled labor in the hotel sector provides a great opportunity for new graduates to secure a job.

Editorial

Scaling up achievements, parrying wrong turns in the New Year

When the bright sun rings in a New Year dispelling the murky cloud blanket over the sky, taking stock of the past to congratulate oneself over emulation-worthy achievements that could serve a source of pride as well as to ponder on shortfalls and wrong turns that beg for remedial solutions are expected from the sagacious.

As the French put it, one has to step back, retreat a little, if one is to successfully jump over something.

A New Year is a milestone for a new beginning or resolution. The same holds true to Ethiopia that is undergoing change. Despite roadblocks it experienced on its ways, the country has succeeded in portraying numerous upswings in the diplomacy, economic spheres, among others.

Above all, in the reform process which the country is translating into action facing logjams, it has sought bridges to political chasms through amicable solutions. The conflict rocking the northern part of the country last year is arrested thanks to the Pretoria Agreement. This is the overarching achievement from the recent past. This achievement is not a windfall. Rather it crystallized taking into account the fact that peace is preferable to wrangling. It is effected mindful of embracing win-win approach pays off. Even if the northern conflict cost the country a lot, its peaceful conclusion has satisfied the global community, citizenry, peace brokers and warring parties. Given facts on the ground, to actualize the agreements reached upon, the ball is set to roll a tad far.

Another bright spot in the outgoing year is the green light Ethiopia basked under as a response to the question it presented to join BRICS. Ethiopia pats on the back any alternative that lends impetus to its effort to unshackle itself from the fettering chain of gruesome poverty. In the domain of development, it is not hard to extrapolate the perks that accrue to the country in the long run from joining the ranks of countries in the BRIC's set.

Also, as part of the Green Development Initiative, planting over 25 billion tree saplings, Ethiopia has undertaken a groundbreaking task to cushion the adverse impacts of climate change. This is a great achievement in warding off the repercussions of climate change. For the furtherance of the remarkable task, the country has brought forth the second round Green Initiative Program. It is deploying an all-out effort towards its fructification. What is more, it is encouraging other countries to follow suit.

Though there are foreign quarters that botchily downplay Ethiopia's push towards self-sufficiency in food and raises brow over registered successes, Ethiopia is exporting wheat to neighboring countries catering to its local demands. What a bumper harvest in wheat that requires a scaling-up task in another crops! What an achievement in import substitution and export trade! These are conspicuous achievement in the economic sphere. They are seen as additional feathers in the nation's cap in the just departing year. Provided gained achievements, the country's potential to thwart dependency syndrome in the not distant future is not subject to doubt.

In the front of diplomacy, the country has gained a multitude of accolades. The foreign affair policy of the country that exercises care not to estrange any country as enemy is attributable to the achievements witnessed. It as well aims at working with all heedful of the benefit of cooperation that is based on common benefits. As a result, attracted by the auspicious policy many countries and leaders are coming to Ethiopia to demonstrate alliance and strike deals.

The aforementioned success stories were not rains out of blue skies. The incumbent was working hard, while busy to bring divergent political views to a common ground and to extinguish conflicts glaring up here and there and time and again.

To give internal problems lasting solutions, the country is doing its level best in facilitating national dialogue. Hopefully, up on the conclusion of the dialogue citizens will come up with a common national narrative or a consensus that augurs well for the country. If the outlooks and interests of citizens converge, the amenities of modern life will not be a high hanging fruits to Ethiopians.

The flying colors that attended the sacrifices of Ethiopian Athletes in Budapest is sign enough how Ethiopians enjoy the global limelight when they close ranks and click with considerateness.

Opinion

Greater expectations from the Ethiopians in the New Year

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

The Ethiopian New Year is just at the corner. A myriad of new expectations and plans for the year that is approaching is already evident at the individual, social and public levels. One can fairly judge that optimists in all walks of life always hope for the better while apparently convinced pessimists may assume that this is just another year of chaotic ordeal marred with civil strife, war and galloping inflation and ethnic based conflicts.

In spite of current challenges that the people and government of Ethiopia are facing, people of all walks of life, Christians and Muslims alike, the IDPs and families in a very difficult situation, merchants, students, entrepreneurs, the unemployed, all hope for better days ahead. This is fair enough but it is certainly difficult to precisely predict what is in store for my people in the New Year. Some hope to get engaged in the coming year, others vow to stop smoking and excessive drinking while still others hope for a scholarship or foreign employment. Students vow for better results next year. Inmates hope for clemency in the New Year. It is incredible indeed! No one ceases to hope for better days ahead.

Ministries, commissions and other public agencies and institutions hope for better performance. This contribution intends to focus on overarching hopes, expectations that the people of Ethiopia are aspiring to see.

The people of Ethiopia here and citizens overseas expect to have a relatively better peaceful year without which the very survival of Ethiopians statehood would be at stake. Peace is a major precondition for every aspect of socio-economic and political livelihood of the peoples of Ethiopia. Some think that ensuring peace is the major prerogative of the federal government but it is foolish to think that the government can ensure sustained peace in the country as the support from all citizens is required for promoting sustainable peace. All stakeholders of the country's political system including political parties, regional governments, CSOs and professional associations, religious groups and organizations, trade unions, youth and veteran associations need to discharge their tangible and visible responsibilities instead of waiting for the government and the ENDF to dish out peace and tranquility for them.

The people and government of Ethiopia are expected to vigorously fight against political liquidators, gun tottering groups who are now busy conducting a proxy war against the people of Ethiopia.

Ethiopians wish to see the convocation of the National Dialogue expected in the New Year which would be the first of its kind in spelling out all the major challenges and bottlenecks that prevent the restoration of

peace in the country. The author hopes that this opportunity should not be missed and should also not be taken as a panacea for all the problems the country is facing.

An inclusive national dialogue must not be a forum of arguments among political parties and their so called activists but needs to give ample opportunities for the potentially voiceless part of the population so that they can openly spell out their concerns and expectations.

The policy document issued by the Ministry of Justice on restorative justice entitled 'Policy options for Transitional Justice' issued in January 2023 is to be implemented in the New Year. Given the scale and amount of miscarriage of justice in the country over the last half a century, restoring justice for victims is something long overdue but let it be restored as it is better late than never.

People are expecting meaningful results on restorative justice as there are hundreds and thousands of victims who have suffered from injustice over the last 50 years.

In the areas of economic development, the first priority is seeking more viable options for reducing unemployment particularly among the youth. Although a number of programs are already on pipeline, CSOs and the private sector need to support government efforts in creating more job opportunities for the unemployed youth at all levels. The author is of the opinion that thousands of youth are joining various armed groups in the country as a means of engaging themselves for getting income in the most illegal manner affecting the peaceful development of the country. Ethiopia is expecting bumper harvest this year and hope that the greater disparity between demand and supply on food items will be narrowed down.

The development of small scale and microenterprises need to effectively target unemployed youth who are hanging around cafes and restaurants during business hours. Programs that were earlier started need to be accelerated and scaled up as this is certainly an important area of social development.

Programs related to import substitution are already showing remarkable improvements particularly in the agriculture sector with self-reliance and export of wheat and possibly rice. The manufacturing sector is also showing remarkable results in replacing import of various industrial commodities by locally produced quality products. This will help to enhance the scale and level of net income for the country and to increase forex for the purpose of reducing debt and debt servicing payments.

Citizens also expect a marked reduction in illegal financial transactions, money laundering and printing of counterfeit bank notes all of which are already a threat to the economic development of the country and national peace and stability.

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



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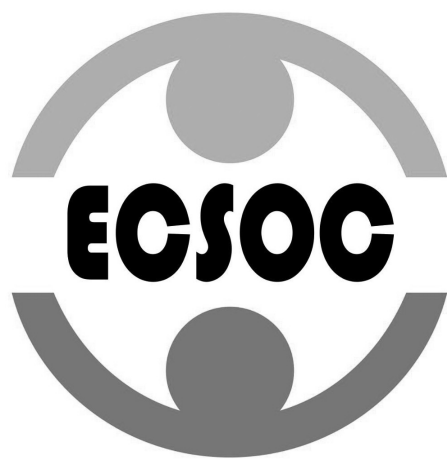
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News



ECSOC backs Nat'l Dialogue process

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations Council (ECSOC) is lending hands with the National Dialogue Commission for the success of the National Dialogue that the country applying as a remedy to deal with its enduring political-economic discords.

ECSOC Program and Development Director Hana Woldegebriel told *The Ethiopia Herald* that the council is working to realize the effectiveness of the national dialogue process through organizing various awareness raising programs.

"We have undertaken a series of awareness raising activities about the national dialogue process and peace by participating government bodies, civil society, youth, women, IDPs, and people with disabilities, private sectors, media and NGOs," she said.

The National Dialogue requires the participation of all actors which needs the application of a multi-stakeholder approach. "Therefore, we are working with the Ministry of Peace and Ethiopian Political Parties Joint Council on the implementation of the national dialogue process," the Director added.

She urged stakeholders to provide the necessary support to the Commission to achieve its tasks of undertaking a successful national dialogue that solve country's basic problems.

Hana added that the national dialogue is expected to go through processes that can bring national consensus. She expressed her anticipation that the dialogue process helps to develop a culture of discussion to realize a lasting peace.

When the National Dialogue came into effect, the first thing it did was to identify the role of civil society Organizations. ECSOC has signed a collaborative framework agreement with the commission to use the available capacity in the civil society organizations, Hana noted.

The National Dialogue Commission had presented a framework that clears the role of civil societies in every phase of national dialogue from preparation to implementation stages.

BRICS driving force...

According to him, Ethiopia's BRICS admission is a manifestation of its strong position in global politics and multilateral relations and it is a great diplomatic success. "It is an outcome of meticulous diplomacy and committed leadership and our membership would give additional energy to the auspicious economic growth."

"Becoming part of the BRICS family is also an indicator of Ethiopia's future economic

capacity and growth prospect. We are ready to utilize this opportunity and contribute a pivotal role for the consolidation of the bloc. Our goal is working with all members and exploiting the opportunities from all directions based on our national interest," the state minister emphasized.

In their recent Summit in Johannesburg, BRICS leaders have expanded the group by inviting six other countries namely Argentina,

Egypt, Ethiopia Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

BRICS is currently made up of the emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. The bloc was formed in 2009 by Brazil, Russia, India and China. South Africa was added in 2010. The BRICS bloc represents around 40 percent of the world's population and contributes more than a quarter of global GDP, it was learned.

Financial inclusion measures...

The government has also been carrying out several activities to improve international competitiveness, modernizing banking service and payment systems, it was learnt.

Early modernizing of banking services will create favorable conditions for the rest of sectors to operate effectively. All services in the banking system are expected to be timely and cost efficient, he said.

The banking sector is one of the fastest technologically growing sectors in the world. As a result, it requires a lot of technological input. He, therefore, said that it is expected to follow and to implement the level reached by the world.

Since CBE's service provision based on technology has a contribution to realize digital Ethiopia in 2025. The digital special branches like the Abiy branch should expand to other parts of the country to standardize service provision. The government would continue its support to CBE recognizing its

role for sector development.

The banking industry requires updating itself with the latest technologies. The CBE and other banks should pay attention to make this a reality, the Minister urged.

CBE President Abie Sano for his part said that the inaugurated special digital branch is intended to provide quality service for corporate customers. Corporate customers can access services through interactive teller machine service via video communication with officers. It is also designed to offer services through an electronic voucher system without anybody's support.

The branch is enabled to contain queue management systems to offer service for Abiy branch customers. They can access different services using cash recycling ATM.

The total branches of CBE reached 1,937. It has 41.3 million customers across the country, it was learnt.



Corporation set to collect...

provides services for clients in Addis Ababa as well as Bahir Dar areas where it has a big market share, Corporation Bahir Dar District Director, Daniel Mekonon said.

However, lack of awareness is still the major challenge that restrict the society to get benefit from insurance, he said.

Last year, Daniel's district collected premium revenue of 200 million Birr and paid out 100 million Birr compensation for loss of life, property and liability vehicle insurance.

Despite all the reparation, the Director believed that people have not been

provided with sufficient compensation for the loss of property.

Conversely, Ethiopian Insurance Corporation Adama District Director, Yifru Legese stated that insurance activities in and around Adama city are growing, and the need for insurance is increasing.

The district has provided compensation insurance for vehicle, fire accident, flooding and factory damages from the 241 million Birr premium revenue it has collected in the last fiscal year. Ethiopian Insurance Corporation has eight branches and Adama district is being revamped into "A level district," it was learnt.

Ethiopia needs to...

countries for its fastest growing economy in Africa.

Therefore, Ethiopia should exploit every opportunity of BRICS membership to speed up its economic growth, so said Lema Gudisa (PhD), Economist and Vice President of Ethiopian Civil Service University.

He told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that being part of BRICS countries is important to boost trade, reduce foreign exchange deficit thereby enhancing Ethiopia's rapid economic growth achieved over the past 15 years.

"The agreement in this bloc relies on achieving mutual growth and benefit. Therefore, it is necessary to be competent for gaining economic benefits," he said.

He also suggested the necessity of manufacturing quality products to gain utmost benefit trading with other BRICS countries.

Ethiopia is rich in natural resources which needs a wide-range of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to exploit this economic potential. In this regard, Lema said, Ethiopia's BRICS membership is crucial to attract FDI.

Most of the member countries of the group are technologically and economically advanced so that Ethiopia will have a chance to share experiences from these countries to increase production and productivity, he noted.

He recommended that Ethiopia should provide timely and expeditious services while welcoming investors from BRICS countries to be a suitable nation for investment preferred by member states.

Ethiopia is a country with a population of 120 million and developed countries that are members of the bloc can also benefit greatly trading with Addis Ababa, according to the Scholar.

Opinion

BRICS:

A wake-up call for the West

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

In no time, the world would witness a new order that operates based on equality. The global landscape which has long been dominated by the Western powers will soon give way for many more emerging superpowers that are capable of changing the world order.

Given that civilizations of both the eastern and western hemispheres of the globe are equally important for humanity, one should not and will not look at the other as a sworn-in enemy. Competitions and rivalries would make our world a living hell. But symbiotic relations among powers potentially lessen tensions and help humanity build a better world. The West in particular should rectify its limitations that are reflected in its relations with the developing world.

The expansion of BRICS (BRICS+) must be perceived as a 'wake-up' call by the West which has long exercised hegemonic and exploitative relations with the developing world.

The question 'Why does the world need a balancing power that can challenge the existing one?' should be brought to the table. Here, it is important to know that the world has been ruled by very few powers that wielded negative influence on developing countries. Many give a severe censure on the West that the relations skewed towards this region have produced undesirable results on the global south.

This time, major countries particularly from the three continents have the supreme power; some call it veto power at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). With all the years that these powers dominated the world, there have been some common and plausible resistances and sentiments from different corners.

The emergence of BRICS must have brought 'a stop and think' situation to the West and start to reconsider revising its major ways of doing business and its mode of partnership. Having a contending power such as BRICS creates an opportunity for the world to choose from the alternatives available. As to reality, the West could no longer be the only choice in today's world order. On the other side, the blocs and their affiliated institutions that are led by the West have already closed their doors and do not let anyone especially from Africa be entertained.

In this case, the West should use the emergence of the BRICS as a stepping stone to see things thoroughly and take action to reform some of the basic policies, strategies and institutions. It is the right time to revise the policy to ensure inclusive partnership.

Shortly, the issue of sustaining hegemony might turn out to be a history as entities like BRICS come along. The master and

Politicizing aid could also be one of the many reasons why the West must reform its strategies and policies with the rest of the world. Such deeds might make many nations turn their back to the West and become eager to either be a part of a certain power bloc or form one's own

slave type of partnership will soon end and nations start asking for equality and fair distribution of power.

The West must understand the current wave of forming a group and becoming more powerful. To this end, the West should try to involve other nations from all parts of the globe to adopt the principle of inclusivity and has to change the existing status quo. The best move could be involving and creating rooms for Africa and others who have remained bystanders to be represented in major international organizations. For instance, leaving 1.4 billion people of Africa at bay in many scenarios is one of the main deficiencies of the hegemonic Western system.

Queries and resistances have been lingering in recent years. Addressing the 70th General Debate at the UN General Assembly back in 2015, former South African President Jacob Zuma said, "It is unacceptable and unjustifiable that more than one billion people in the African continent are still excluded as permanent members of the key

decision-making structure of the United Nations, the Security Council. A continent with a smaller population than Africa is represented by three countries on the UN Security Council."

In particular, bringing African nations into the system could be a cornerstone to step forward to an inclusive world order. Africa should not be patronized by the West; rather the continent has to be a partner to the West. Other than inviting African nations to annual summits, it would be better to pave the way for Africans to be powerful and able to pass decisions on their matters. Learning from the BRICS, the West and the current international institutions must reconsider and revise their policies so that Africa and the rest of the world will have room in their tight tables.

Accordingly, Africans, both the members and on the waiting list, are expecting much more from BRICS apart from being a member. Cognizant of this fact, Africans should again fight for a better seat and power in such blocs. Fortunately, the BRICS has increased African representation from one to three by adding Ethiopia and Egypt to the bloc. However, having secured membership in the bloc does not mean one has the power; rather, there should be a tough struggle to stand on an equal footing among peers. Accordingly, Africans should not sit folding their hands, instead, leaders should roll up their sleeves and work on becoming influential. What has been done in BRICS must be repeated in Western-held institutions.

In good truth, economic power rules the world. Countries with strong economic muscle are leading the entire world. On the other hand, the poor are dominated and tortured. Due to the unstable and weak economy that many nations have due to numerous global tides, most countries such as Africa find it difficult to cope with the fast-going battle for power. International financial institutions such as the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have been the key to dominating the world through loans and sanctions.

In the past many years, Africans and other nations have encountered difficulties due to the pressure and other preconditions from those financial institutions. Besides, it is important to remember that these financial institutions and powerhouses are dominated by the West. The bloc has been wheeling and dealing with most international businesses and deals.

Delivering a speech during a summit on climate resilience at the United Nations, in Geneva, Switzerland, in 2023, United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres slammed the financial system describing it as "biased". The secretary General said that the current system of financial institutions is biased and morally corrupt.

"The system was conceived by a group of rich countries and it was designed and formed to serve the interests of the richest countries. We need new debt architecture and we need to make sure that debt relief is effectively provided by the system even to middle-income countries that are on the verge of very difficult, very dramatic situations including suspending payments," Guterres noted.

The West-dominated power has all the will to twist the hands of many leaders to do what they want to do. Such actions have caused so many flaws to put the West between two fences. In addition, the aforementioned institutions coupled with other humanitarian companies have used their loans and aids as a tool to achieve their goals behind the curtain.

Politicizing aid could also be one of the many reasons why the West must reform its strategies and policies with the rest of the world. Such deeds might make many nations turn their back to the West and become eager to either be a part of a certain power bloc or form one's own. If those financial institutions do not plan to review their policies, it is imminent that other financial institutions will be established and the influence of those former institutions might decrease.

In this regard, the West should take the crucial stride to prepare itself for the reform of those institutions and roadmaps. The West should spearhead to bring about the sought-after change in the world order. It could be hard to share the power that has been in one's hand for quite a few periods. Due to so many reasons, the West must be aware of the current uprising of seeking power and having influence in the political, economic and social activities across the globe. If the door is closed, then one must seek an alternative gate.

The West should again strengthen its alliances with its current allied nations and add more members to its club. Shortly, the new world order might incorporate sects from different corners to achieve the objective of establishing an inclusive world that leaves no one behind. If the West wants to continue to be more influential and powerful in the face of the world, then, it is time to copy what the BRICS did when adding more members and forming equivalent power share. The actions and growing influence of BRICS should be the best alarm and learning tool for the West to reconsider its tactics and ways to live with the world in harmony.

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

Business & Economy

Revolutionizing Agriculture: A step towards knowledge-based economy

BY LAKACHEW ATINAFU

The fourth industrial revolution undoubtedly demands the application of digitization in every aspect of life to align with global competitiveness and lucrative business opportunities. Since the advent of technology and the rise of digitization, the world has experienced significant changes by harnessing the power of updated technologies and applications in people's daily routines.

As an agrarian nation, it is crucial for the relevant authorities in the agriculture sector to embark on a journey to transform the primary economic activity into an intensive and extensive business that embraces innovation through digital apps. In pursuit of this goal, these authorities are actively adopting digital technologies and making them accessible to the public, even though there may be challenges related to literacy within the sector.

The Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Institute has recently announced its commitment to digitize agricultural information within the next three years, with the aim of benefiting over one million farmers. This initiative will enable farmers to access agricultural information through a mobile application called Lersha. The institute has partnered with Green Agro Solutions Private Limited Liability Company to make this application available to farmers.

According to Dr. Mandefro Nigussie, Chief Executive Officer of the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA), digital agriculture empowers farmers to easily access the information and advice they need through their mobile phones while also facilitating the collection of agricultural data in a centralized database.

Dr. Mandefro emphasized the need for large-scale efforts to digitize agriculture and highlighted the importance of involving the private sector alongside government institutions to bring this vision to life. He also emphasized the cost and time-saving potential of consolidating digital agricultural information into a single database.

Dr. Mandefro expressed his commitment to collaborating with the private sector in developing an application that will enable the implementation of this digital transformation. In addition to digitizing agricultural information, the application will provide farmers with the necessary information and recommendations directly on their phones.

The agreement between the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Institute and Green Agro Solutions Private Limited will span three years and cover 150 districts in Amhara, Oromia, Tigray, Central Ethiopia, and the Somali regions. To ensure accessibility, the application



Mobile phones can benefit farmers in low- and middle-income countries by improving access to agricultural advice and market price information

will be designed to be user-friendly for literate farmers. For those without access to smart phones, internet kiosks have been established at farmers' training centers, and development workers have been trained to make the service available.

Dr. Mandefro further emphasized that after three years, the application will expand its reach to more sectors, ensuring its effectiveness and impact. Abraham Andreas, Managing Director of Green Agro Solutions Private Limited, stated that the Lersha App aims to provide multiple services to farmers with small fields through a single platform. This partnership aims to address challenges that organizations alone cannot solve.

Abraham highlighted the significance of information in digital agriculture and affirmed that the application will provide comprehensive information and recommendations to over one million farmers within the next three years. It is worth noting that the Lersha app has already served over 100,000 farmers in the past four years.

Agricultural applications encompass a wide range of activities, including soil cultivation and modification, crop production and improvement, livestock and poultry rising and the development of forest products.

As Africa progresses towards a knowledge based economy, the development of smartphone apps is playing a pivotal role in driving agricultural advancements. These apps have the potential to lower prices for consumers and help farmers optimize their production. Traditional farming models often lead farmers astray due to inaccurate information, leading to the use of counterfeit or subpar seeds.

Fortunately, there are several smartphone apps that are improving agriculture across Africa.

One such app is GeoFarmer, which utilizes internet communication technology (ICT) to enable farmers to manage their farms and crops. Farmers can share their experiences with other farmers and experts, fostering a free-flowing exchange of knowledge that helps improve yield and reduce risks. While many ICT programs remain inaccessible to a large portion of farmers due to usability issues and costs, GeoFarmer provides a cost-effective alternative. Farmers can use the app offline or in rural areas with limited connectivity, leveraging near-real-time data services to co-innovate and enhance their performance.

Another notable app is Pix Fruit, jointly developed by CIRAD and the Senegalese Institute for Agricultural Research. This app streamlines the supply chain, leading to reduced costs for consumers. Traditionally, fruit farmers estimate their crop size by counting fruit on a single tree and extrapolating it to the entire farm.

However, this method has a significant margin of error. Pix Fruit offers a simple solution by allowing farmers to take photos of the fruit on selected trees using their smart phones. Leveraging fruit-recognition technology and data from drones that capture information on climate, sales constraints, and soil conditions, the app calculates the probable overall harvest. This empowers farmers to determine the true value of their crops and negotiate fair prices.

TruTrade is another app that is making a positive impact on agriculture in Africa. This app focuses on Uganda and Kenya

and aims to provide fair prices to farmers. It offers valuable information on crop valuation, market pricing, and market trends. TruTrade connects smallholder farmers directly to buyers, cutting out middlemen and ensuring that farmers receive fair prices for their crops.

The app also provides transparency in the supply chain, which benefits both farmers and consumers. By eliminating price exploitation and promoting fair trade, TruTrade contributes to poverty reduction and economic empowerment in rural communities.

Furthermore, the development of agricultural apps goes hand in hand with the growing availability of smart phones in Africa. As smart phone penetration continues to increase, more farmers have access to these digital tools. This presents an opportunity to bridge the information gap and provide farmers with valuable resources and knowledge to improve their farming practices.

In conclusion, the digitization of agriculture in Ethiopia through the Lersha app and the broader advancements in agricultural apps across Africa are revolutionizing the sector. These apps empower farmers by providing them with access to information, resources, and market opportunities.

By embracing digital technologies, governments, private companies, and development organizations are contributing to the transformation of agriculture into a knowledge-based economy. As these initiatives continue to expand and evolve, they have the potential to enhance productivity, reduce poverty, and create sustainable agricultural practices in Africa.

Planet Earth

Ethiopia expediting efforts to benefit more from carbon trade

BY GIRMACEHW GASHAW

The African countries are exposed to climate change impacts. According to OCHA, at least 36.1 million people will be affected by severe drought in October 2022, including 24.1 million in Ethiopia, 7.8 million in Somalia and 4.2 million in Kenya.

This environmental phenomenon keeps Ethiopia always on the alert to take preemptive action rather than sitting ideal observing the recurrent drought which affected people in millions. Instead of observing what is going on in every other day, the country has been planting various kinds of seedlings devising an initiative called green legacy.

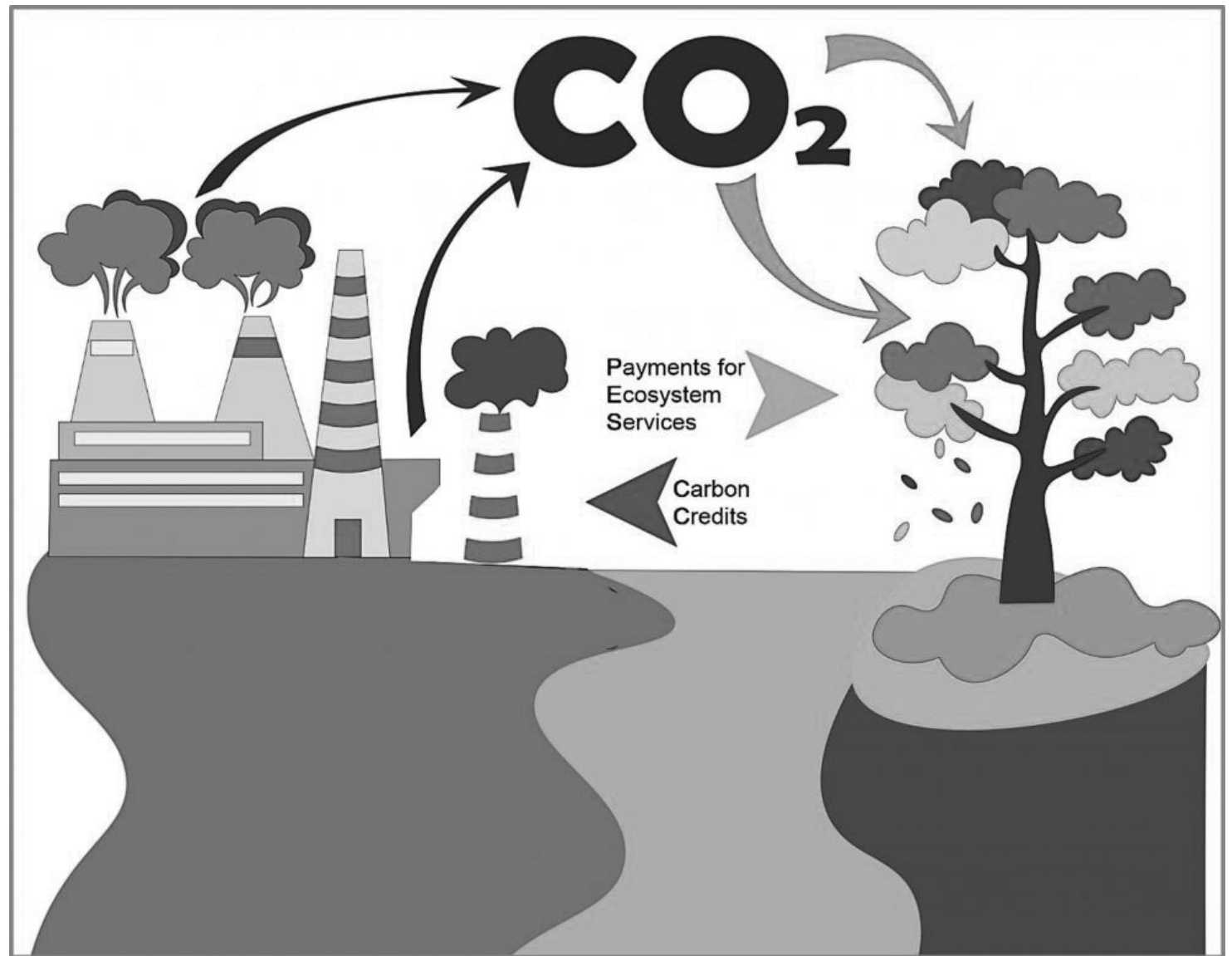
Accordingly over the past four years alone, the country has been planting more than 25 billion seedlings. The effort has not only changing the drought impact; it also shaped the perception of the people towards environment protection.

Carbon-trading deals involving forestry projects in developing countries could reduce poverty at the same time as they offer an inexpensive way to off-set carbon dioxide emissions. Under the clean development mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto Protocol, industrialized nations are allowed to meet part of their carbon emission reduction commitments by carrying out reforestation and clean energy projects in developing countries.

Ethiopia aims to accomplish key economic goals while reducing GHG emissions through efforts that include carbon trading. It's Climate- Resilient-Green- Economy Strategy (CRGE) launched in 2012 underpins the country's goal to become net carbon neutral by 2025. Experts estimate that such an accomplishment would involve the country in doubling its forest cover to around 30 percent of its landmass which makes it a daunting task.

The Ethiopian government has adopted and commenced the implementation of a UN initiative called REDD+ [Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation, and (+) the role of sustainable management of forests, conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries].

REDD+Ethiopia considers carbon trading as financial tool as well as one of the benefits of the efforts being made towards implementing CRGE. So REDD+ can be taken as one of the instruments of CRGE being used to address the problems that the forest sector is facing presently. A country of a large expanse of deforested lands and degraded lands suitable for forest restoration, Ethiopia has a huge potential for REDD+ implementation resulting in accumulation of huge quantity of Carbon Credits that can be monetized in the Carbon market.



Ethiopia is not a stranger to carbon trading, now it is trying to do it in huge scale by implementing REDD+. Carbon Trading afforestation projects are a feasible income earning opportunity for farmers in Africa to diversify their agricultural enterprises and to get the most out of ,if any, their underutilized lands. However making a project qualified to get Carbon Credit is not an easy ride.

The recent report indicated that Ethiopia can earn 500 million USD every year from carbon trading through the Green Legacy Initiative, National REDD+ Coordinator said. Ethiopia REDD+ Coordinator Yitebitu Moges told local media that carbon trading is a market-based system in which developed countries pay developing countries that develop forestry to absorb carbon and engage in development practices that reduce specific amounts of carbon.

In Ethiopia, 25 billion tree seedlings have been planted or 10 million hectares covered with seedlings over the past five years and 10 million of hectare, sequestering 5 tons of carbon dioxide every year, he said.

“If you are able to find market that buys a ton of carbon dioxide with 10 USD, that means we have 500 million USD flowing to Ethiopia every year from the ten million hectares of forest that has been growing.”

Sequestering carbon by planting trees means growing money, the coordinator

noted, adding that it should therefore be promoted like other sectors.

According to him, there is high level support from the government in terms of planting trees and protecting forests, but the investment on experts in resources mobilization and carbon trading is limited.

Establishing a system for carbon accounting, measurement, monitoring, reporting and verification system is necessary, Yitebitu noted, adding that experts that are able to write monitoring report and invite people from abroad to validate and verify our numbers for carbon sequestration or emission reduction are also crucial.

In addition to carbon trading, he elaborated on the importance of tree seedlings in preventing soil erosion entering the Abay basin.

With afforestation in the basin, soil erosion can be prevented and clean water will flow into the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam supplying energy sustainably, he pointed out.

What happens in Ethiopia right now is the rain falls on deforested landscape and goes into the ocean as flood. During the dry season, there is shortage of water because the abundant water during the rainy season has not been caught.

“The best instrument is forestry to really regulate this discrepancy so that you will

have a smooth flow of water during the rainy as well as the dry seasons.”

The demand of timber is also very huge in Ethiopia and the country is paying 400 million USD every year to import finished furniture products, the coordinator noted.

Timber planting is therefore needed in order to fulfill the demand for construction, industry and furniture.

In this regard, the coordinator emphasized that the Green Legacy Initiative is an exemplary work; and many countries know about it and their ambassadors participate in the tree planting in Ethiopia.

The REDD+ Coordinator disclosed that Saudi Arabia and Kenya are replicating this strategy.

The National REDD+ Strategy (NRS) contributes a large part to the Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy and Ethiopia's greening targets in 2030, while maximizing national co-benefits thereby adding to the global climate change mitigation efforts through improving forest resource and land management.

As carbon trading helps to build stronger relationships between nations and strengthens global efforts to address climate change, Ethiopia together with other African brothers and sisters should extend it massively and contribute something for the struggle against climate change.

Art & Culture

Nigerian Cinema in the Vanguard of the Industry in Africa, the World

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

While most African countries are lagging behind in terms of the development of their movie industries, Nigeria is leading not only the continent but also most of the rest of the world in terms of annual movie production, income from the industry and the impacts it is having beyond the borders of Africa. In the matter of five or six decades, after independence, Nigerian cinema has grown into a giant industry that has changed film history in Africa as well as around the world and presently ranks second or third after America's Hollywood and India's Bollywood.

Nigeria is big in many ways. It is a big country with the biggest population size and the biggest economy according to its GDP ranking in Africa. Nigeria has also produced some of the biggest artists and writers in the continent. It is also the first country in Africa to win the Nobel Prize in Literature through poet and playwright Wole Soyinka. And now it has one of the biggest film industries in Africa if not in the whole world as it is ranking third after the American Hollywood and the Indian Bollywood. It has deservedly named its film industry Nollywood.

From my readings about Nigerian cinema, I may outline the following reasons for showing what has made Nigerian industry such a powerful engine of cultural and economic growth in a relatively short time. The first reason is its long history. According to Wikipedia, "Its history dates back as early as the late 19th century and into the colonial era in the early 20th century. The history and development of the Nigerian motion picture industry is something generally classified in four main eras: the colonial era, Golden Age era, video film era and the emerging new Nigerian film era."

The second reason may be the size of the Nigeria film industry. It is a huge industry by any account. According to one information, "With over 6.4 billion USD in annual revenue and with more than 2,500 movies per year, the Nigeria's film industry is taking the world by storm. It is currently one of the world's top film industries, producing more movies in each year than even Hollywood."

To give you an idea of the size of the revenue generated by the Nigerian film industry, it is equal Ethiopia's revenue from foreign trade in two years, with a little more than 3 billion USD registered every year. Even in Nigeria itself, 6 billion USD represents quite a large contribution to the annual GDP.

The third reason for the impressive growth of Nigerian cinema might be strong government intervention to support the industry which is now in its latest era of development. Since the turn of the century, Nollywood as an industry was launched by the joint efforts and policy coordination of the government of Nigeria and the financial sector. "In 2006, "project Nollywood" was launched by the Nigerian



government in conjunction with Ecobank. The project provided \$781 million to Nigerian filmmakers to produce high quality films.

The Nigerian film industry is divided into four major eras. "The history and development of the Nigerian motion picture industry is sometimes generally classified into four main eras. These are the colonial era, Golden Age era, video film era and the emerging New Nigerian cinema era." To make another comparison, Ethiopian cinema is still largely in its video film era because most producers use the video format camera to make their films. Ethiopia had produced its first feature-length movie a 30 mm black and white camera back in 1964 called *Hirut Abatwa manew* (*Who Is Hirut's Father?*) Now after more than seven decades it has restarted from the video format which is an easier way of making movies with reduced quality.

The Nigerian film industry however did not follow a linear progression without ups and downs. There were challenging moments along the way until it reached its presently lucrative phase. According to available information, "After the decline of the Golden era, Nigerian film industry witnessed a second major boom in the 1990s, supposedly marked by the release of the direct-to-video film entitled "Living in Bondage (1992)"; the industry peaked in the mid-2000s to become the second largest film industry in the world in terms of the number of annual film productions...Since the mid-2000s, during the decline of the video-film era, the Nigerian cinema has undergone some restructuring to promote quality in output and professionalism in the industry..."

Almost all film industries around the world have seen moments of decline to be followed by moments of glory resulting from factors inside as well as outside the industry. As we said above, the Nigerian film industry was fortunate enough to benefit both from government and financial sector largess because these two actors have shown early interest in the industry or foresaw its future potentials. In most African countries, the cinema is largely regarded as a marginal entertainment business and its significance is often downplayed.

Almost all African countries have strong storytelling, oral or folk traditions from which they can draw ideas that would fuel the industry

In Africa, many countries do not even have a cinema policy let alone the guts to support it with government or bank money. This perception is however bound to change with time when the main drivers of African film industries will see how lucrative the sector is although it may not be a priority development era at present.

What is known as the Home video Boom era in Nigerian cinema started in the late 1980s and lasted until the mid-2010s following the thriving of television production during that particular era. New Nigerian Cinema started in the mid-2000s and has continued until the present time. "This is an emerging phase in Nigerian cinema in which there became a major shift in the method of film production, from the video format back to the cinema method, which constituted the films produced in the Golden era."

By comparison, Ethiopian cinema saw a brief period consisting of its birth in the 1960s,

then sunk in total oblivion for the following many decades only to reemerge in the 1990s following the country's economic growth period when individual producers put in their money in the business which proved lucrative although short-lived. Nowadays, the Ethiopian film industry is languishing in a period of stagnation following the COVID-19 crisis that has undermined the hope for strongly in the revival of the cinema culture mainly in the capital Addis Ababa. Judging the challenges of the Ethiopian film business is facing, we can conclude that the emergence of what we may call "Ethiopia's New Cinema" is bound to be delayed by many years if not decades.

With the exception of Egypt, South Africa, Morocco, and to some extent Kenya and Uganda, the film industry in Africa is still in the doldrums and there is no early exit from the unenviable situation. There is however, an opportunity for many African film industries to learn from the Nigerian experience. First, African film industries need money to finance their production. This money can come from internal sources such as government support or bank loans or from external sources such as joint-productions with European or American film establishments. Every African country might need a national fund for the development of the film industry with financial resources allocated by government and the business community in a kind of joint ventures. Before that happens however, African governments should recognize the film industry as a vital cultural machine that shapes new perceptions while generating huge incomes if it is properly managed and funded. From this understanding should be born actions that practically promote the industry such as the establishment of film schools and other educational and training institutions.

Almost all African countries have strong storytelling, oral or folk traditions from which they can draw ideas that would fuel the industry. There are also strong script writing traditions in many African countries where the theater is pretty well developed, although undermined by the development of electronic media in recent years. There are as many scriptwriters in Africa as there are novelists, poets and dramatists, some of whom have even attained international standards and recognition.

These creative workers could be used to develop the film industry because the distance between the silver screen and the imaginative writer is short. In Egypt, for instance, there were many fiction writers who worked for the film industry and contributed to shaping it and giving it importance. One such personality was Naguib Mahfouz, whose film scripts served as engines in the development of the country's film industry. In the past, African filmmakers were influenced by European or American film culture. It is now time for them to develop their own African brand of cinema based on their history, traditions and resources. There is indeed a lot to learn from Nigeria's pioneering achievements to consolidate Africa's standing in the global film industry.

Law & Politics

Promoting Pan-Africanism to curb collective woes

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

In today's world, there are several pressing and complicated global issues that need to be tackled. One approach that can significantly help deal with such issues is the promotion of Pan-Africanism.

Pan-Africanism refers to a strategic approach that entails addressing the challenges faced by Africa and promoting African unity. By embracing this approach, we can make an effort to tackle the problems we face today on a continental scale. The promotion of Pan-Africanism is not only necessary but also vital.

By embracing this approach, we can take several measures to address the various challenges we face as a global community. The need for Pan-Africanism arises because of the complex and multi-dimensional challenges faced by Africa. By promoting this approach, we can identify and address these challenges effectively. One of the most significant advantages of Pan-Africanism is that it provides a platform for Africans to work together and address the challenges they face.

By the same token, it promotes a sense of unity and belonging among Africans. Another advantage of this approach is that it helps to address the various social, economic, and political issues that plague the African continent. By working as a collective, Africans can identify commonalities and develop strategies for addressing these issues.

Pan-Africanism also fosters an environment of cross-cultural understanding and cooperation. Moreover, promoting this approach can help to address the deep-rooted issues of colonialism and neo-colonialism that have impacted the African continent for many years.

By embracing Pan-Africanism, we can forge relationships between African countries and promote economic and trade ties. This can lead to the growth and development of African economies, which would benefit not only Africa but also the global community. The promotion of Pan-Africanism is a necessary and vital approach to addressing the various challenges faced by the African continent.

The concept of Pan-Africanism promotes the idea that Africans should work together in solidarity and unity. This sense of cooperation and collaboration can help to address global issues more effectively. Many African nations face significant challenges, and by working together through Pan-Africanism, they can pool their knowledge and resources to tackle these issues. This approach also allows African nations to benefit from the expertise of their peers.

Importantly, unity through Pan-Africanism can also help African nations tackle regional conflicts and disputes. Through collaboration, African nations can find lasting solutions to internal disputes that have the potential to escalate into international crises. In addition, promoting Pan-Africanism can help address the problematic past of colonialism and imperialism. African nations faced



significant damage from these historical factors, and the approach of solidarity promotes reparation and healing.

Through Pan-Africanism, African nations can work together to harness those resources and develop sustainable economic growth. Stronger economic growth in Africa can lead to more job opportunities, increased investment potential, and also more significant political clout for African nations on the international stage. Promoting Pan-Africanism is not just about celebrating African cultures but rather about promoting unity, solidarity, and cooperation. Through these values, African nations can confront global challenges, exercise greater international influence, and create regional stability and prosperity.

Through cultural exchange, African nations can learn from each other's experiences and knowledge. This process can help to promote innovation and creativity to tackle the problems that they face. Building this environment of mutual trust and understanding is a crucial aspect of encouraging cooperation among African nations.

The building of mutual trust, understanding, and cooperation can have a significant impact on regional stability and security. This approach encourages the resolution of disputes peacefully among African countries to benefit the region's overall prosperity. Importantly, promoting Pan-Africanism can also help to eradicate stereotypes or preconceptions that people around the world might have of African nations. It can help the international community to appreciate the diversity of the African continent, its richness of culture, and traditions.

By promoting cultural exchange, African countries can also share their traditional knowledge, best practices, and innovative techniques, which can help solve problems that they face within and outside of their territories. Pan-Africanism contributes to the building of mutual trust and understanding among the African nations. By promoting this approach, African countries can foster cooperation, support each other, and work together to address shared global concerns.

Furthermore, advancing Pan-Africanism enables African countries to address security challenges collectively. The continent faces various security threats, including terrorism, conflicts, and organized crime. By coordinating efforts and pooling

resources, nations can enhance their security measures, promote peacekeeping operations, and combat transnational threats that affect the stability and safety of African nations.

By recognizing and celebrating this diversity, African nations can encourage cultural exchange, preserve indigenous knowledge, and promote intercultural dialogue. This cultural exchange helps in building bridges of understanding and respect among African nations and beyond.

Advancing Pan-Africanism contributes to shaping a new narrative for Africa. By challenging stereotypes and negative perceptions, African nations can reclaim their own narrative and present themselves to the world as dynamic, vibrant, and capable contributors to global progress. This reframing of African identity encourages international cooperation and partnerships based on mutual respect and shared objectives.

By amplifying the influence of Pan-Africanism, we can effectively confront issues such as climate change, terrorism, migration, and the complexities of the global economy, among others. This strategic approach encompasses collaborative efforts aimed at finding sustainable solutions on a continental scale.

Pan-Africanism plays a significant role in addressing the complex security challenges posed by terrorism. By fostering information exchange, intelligence sharing, and joint counter-terrorism initiatives, African nations can enhance their capabilities in preventing and combating extremist activities. This unified response ensures a coordinated effort to protect citizens and stabilize regions affected by terrorism while also promoting peacebuilding and countering radicalization through social development programs.

By consolidating resources, sharing expertise, and coordinating responses, African nations can strengthen healthcare systems, enhance disease surveillance, and improve access to essential medicines and vaccines. This unity enables the continent to mount effective responses to outbreaks such as pandemics, minimize their impact, and build resilient healthcare systems for the future.

Pan-Africanism plays a crucial role in protecting and preserving Africa's rich cultural heritage. By fostering cultural

exchange and collaboration, African nations can promote cultural diversity, heritage tourism, and the safeguarding of indigenous knowledge systems. This not only preserves Africa's unique identity but also enhances intercultural understanding and mutual respect among nations, contributing to peace, stability, and social cohesion.

Advancing Pan-Africanism also offers the opportunity to address the challenges of food security and agricultural sustainability. By sharing best practices, knowledge, and technologies, African countries can strengthen agricultural value chains, enhance productivity, and ensure food availability and access for all citizens. This collective effort addresses the root causes of hunger, promotes sustainable farming practices, and mitigates the impacts of climate change on agriculture.

Advancing Pan-Africanism is an imperative strategic measure to confront the contemporary pressing global challenges, Ambassador Jemal Beker said.

In his remark made lately with Pakistan-based Ambassadors of all the African countries in Islamabad, Ethiopian Ambassador to Pakistan Jemal Beker said that the discussion of African Envoys centers on amplifying the influence of Pan-Africanism to effectively tackle challenges including climate change, terrorism, migration, and the complexities of the global economy.

Amb. Jemal further underscored the importance of promoting African collective interests on the international stage through a cohesive adherence to pan-African principles.

He said, "Notably, the Pretoria Agreement has shown advancement of Pan-Africanism and the beginning and successful execution of the agreement, characterized by a resolute commitment to 'Africa Solutions to African Problems.'"

The collaborative effort of fellow African nations and international partners would contribute to the realization of the agreement; he said the accord is instrumental in upholding Ethiopia's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and constitutional order thereby facilitating unimpeded humanitarian access to conflict-affected areas.

He said, "On the other hand, quoting the State of Emergency declared in Amhara State to ensure rule of law and maintain law and order by containing illicitly armed groups, the government opened dialogue with stakeholders to resolve the issues through peaceful means as the government believes in National Dialogue, which is the silver bullet to sustainable peace and prosperity."

The Dean of African Missions in Islamabad and Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco, Mohamed Karmoune also spoke of the occasion and praised the African countries unity in resolving global issues.

He said, "The Pretoria Agreement and its implementation are run in good faith, and bold steps have been taken to promote Pan-Africanism for ensuring the socio-economic development of the entire Africa."



Ephrem Endale
Contributor

Between you & me

'Done Deals' don't Work for everything!

Time to Take the bull by the horns! Especially the rather 'turbulent' holiday shopping days having already started it's indeed time to take the bull by the horns and see reality in the face; 'We're in economically very tough times!' That's it! Not a very romantic thing to say, wouldn't you say? Of course if you ask all those 'spiritual' or 'secular' motivational speakers, a term featuring quite frequently especially on the social media for the last several weeks. So when you talk about the economic dark clouds many would probably tell you that you're seeing only the black spot and not the white paper. Really! When you find it difficult to feed your family and keep the dishes on the table, when it's difficult to carry the burden of paying school fees so that your kids get what you think is the perfect qualitative, good healthcare because you couldn't afford the costs we talk about 'not seeing' the black spots. I don't have anything about trying to lift the sliding spirits of people. But, that here to it'd be great if they try to acknowledge the reality on the ground.

So anyone missing the fact that we're in economically tough times must be missing a lot of things upstairs; must living in some 'ivory tower' away from what the revolutionaries of times long gone called, 'The Masses.' It is not about the haves and the have-not. It's an about the indifference of greed-infested, only-me, the "After me the deluge!" times we're in.

Holidays might be 'happy' occasions most of the time. Despite the many problems might be

afflicting us there is this tendency of trying to make holidays as fine as they can be. Nothing wrong in that! But the process of trying to make the day a good one isn't the joy ride you'd have liked it to be. No way!

As you scurry from one noisy, chaotic market to another market bursting with many hundreds or thousands of people trying to purchase whatever you need for the special occasion you'd be pardoned to mumble all kinds of curses and not-so-nice words you could think of directed especially at the business people, merchants and shop owners who seem to be remote-controlling us. Now I'm not a fan of that particular crowd of remote-controllers. If you ever find me dancing waltz or whatever for their pleasure then that would be a sign of problems and just pick up your phone and call whoever you have to call;

"I think the guy isn't all right."

"What happened?"

"He's dancing for the pleasure of merchants and shop owners."

"What! That's a most dangerous problem. We'll be there ASAP! And don't you dare leave his side until we arrive!"

Now, I couldn't give you figures or things like that. But I always feel most of those people in the business world could beat any contestant in any competition of the 'Greedy of the Greediest' or something to that tune and give us a world title we'd certainly not be applauding.

There are people who believe that considering

the tough and belt-tightening times we're in maybe it is time we rethink about our holiday shopping traditions, very expensive traditions to be frank! Now, as we have talked a couple of times the fact that hundreds of thousands have been relocated to residential condominiums all over the city. As the very set up of the condos doesn't give people much extra space except the unit in which you live traditions of slaughtering sheep and chicken might be slowing down. So many of those traditions are slowly fading away. Well, hmmm! Are they? Are they really fading away?

The business oriented youth of the city have stepped in and do the slaughtering business. So our ladies go to places where such services are rendered and return home with chicken breasts legs and what have you tucked in small plastic shopping bags; meaning there might be little in way of cutting on the usual holiday expenses.

Take the brewing of tella, a very popular local alcoholic drink, is a very tasking undertaking taking weeks even months to come out with the best brew. But the most important factor is that it needs space. It's difficult even practically impossible to do it on the condo world. You know the various grains which go into tella have to dry out in the sun and later ground. (What the hell am doing here? Trying to act to give you some tella brewing recipe. If you think I've any right whatsoever to tell you what to do to come out with the best tella in town then I must issue some disclaimer in some media outlet.)

For most of us our only knowledge is that

when a hundred kilo of teff shoots up to thirteen and fourteen thousand birr the world must really be coming ever closer to the End Times. No business person in their right mind could believe that the greater part of the population would come anywhere close to footing such a bill. No! For many even the very tough would be enough evidence of a brain apparatus which started malfunctioning. I mean when the walls are sliding nearer on all sides and you get the feeling any facial 'oxygen' you might have. Especially during times when a certain holiday is nearing the message you might have been trying to avoid hits home, and hits home hard; "We're in economically tough times!"

I can tell you it isn't always a good experience trying to convince others to cut back on holiday expenses. Of course, you're doing it for their own benefits. But some people take it as some kind of an offence!

"Are you telling me my family shouldn't enjoy the holiday like others do?"

"No sir, I'm not doing that. Sorry, if you've taken it as offence." (Deep inside you springs that really nudges you umpteen times a day these days. "What's wrong with people anyway?")

Holidays come and go; you can be dead sure about that. Sad we can't say that when we come to the notes in our wallets. Yes they go in bundles. The only thing is their 'coming back' is not a done deal! Simply speaking, 'done deals' don't always work for everything!

Go it easy when it comes to holiday expenses!

Vows made, Vows Broken!

One factor which used to make the run up to the New Year more interesting was the "I'll stop..." rhetoric that pushes out almost every other agenda. In a way most of us must have believed inside us that we must throw our chips into the conversations with some, "I'll stop..." confession. But then in case you don't have some "I'll stop..." you'll have some "I'll start..." or something that sounds like that. "I'll start reading fiction books." "I'll start small business..." or things like "I'll buy car..." "I'll marry my fiancé..."

One can say there are serial "I'll stop..." commitment makers. Come a New Year and for the ninth time the guy tells you, "I'll stop drinking in the New Year." Of course he never sticks to his words it and you're so fade up with the give-and-take you wouldn't ask him, "Didn't you say you'd stop drinking?" It seems perhaps "I'll stop drinking..." and "I'll stop smoking..." consist the highest number of vows made and broken with almost immediate effect. Probably many of us would know some people we could put in the 'vowed and broken' basket.

Quite many years back I had this friend for whom heavy drinking was not about abuse of anything but a lifestyle. He really drank, that friend of mine. Just to give you an idea on Saturdays and Sundays he starts drinking midmorning in his favorite hotel and by the time he lives he'd have practically demolishes an entire beer case. If you think that would be

the end of the day's story thumbs up for your innocence. But the morning all-out offensive on beer is only the beginning. He then jumps from one watering hall for the remainder of the early night and by the time he finishes no one would know the volume he put into his system; not even him!

What still confuses me about him was that you never caught him red handed drunk! He was not your typical drunkard who tries to pull his pants over his heads or acts like some Mr. Bean. One thing about him was that he never went to the mid night hours or anywhere close to midnight. By eight or a few minutes later he was off to his home. Now you might bump into him as he heads for home and you two talk as if he hadn't a single gulp of anything alcoholic that day. You might even talk about school days and you couldn't help yourself admiring his memory. Come morning and you say to him something like, "Look, after we talked last night I've been thinking about what you told me."

"What are you talking about?"

"Don't tell me you've already forgotten about it! I'm talking about that project you say you have thought about."

"Wait, wait a minute here. "Are you telling me we two met last night?"

That's when you'd throw up your arms. "Better if he was visibly drunk last night. You wouldn't have talked anything serious if that was the case. Now I genuinely couldn't

remember how many times he vowed to stop drinking for good. Interesting was that he being a person who does or says things to make others happy he was serious as serious comes when he makes the vows; "I tell you this is the last time I'll ever smoke. I'll have no excuses." Of course you drop by his home late afternoon on New Year day and he has already done away with half the pack of his favorite brand. Having left for the US I wonder what he's doing with his life over there."

By the way when we talk about this drinking thing there is this situation which worries me and many people I know. Like elsewhere in the world we too have age limits as to who can and can't consume alcohol legally. From the little we know about the rest of the world in many places law enforcement bodies are serious in adhering to the rules. So while they are not places of 'the angels and angels only' and while in reality many of the youth drink like hell they at least don't do it in public. Seeing drunk teenagers in the center of town scaring the hell out of everyone two-legged creature with their aggressive actions isn't as bad as ours. Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying in other places the youth are blessed with some heavenly intervention but for what we here they keep themselves away for the major parts of the cities where law enforcement is at its strictest.

Here things are bad. Unfortunately we hear that there are many behind the curtain abused

with kids as young as fourteen and thirteen being allowed to drink as much as they like by greedy bar and restaurant owners. Sometimes you wonder how people can be so greedy as if they don't have children or relatives that have children. We're talking about a generation if we don't handle with care would go down the tube probably bringing much harm to the society as a whole.

It seems society has taken it for granted that there is nothing more difficult that getting the kids in line and make them realize respecting the laws and regulations of the land is not about choice.

"I'll stop ..." might be easy on the lips; but walking the talk is a whole different story. There was this other friend who smoke anywhere from five or six to anywhere to as many as fifteen and it laid heavily on his financial means. For years he vowed to stop smoking as it was also affecting his health. But as we said such vows were easily said than done. Then one day we were walking by a small bridge in the city and he had this half-smoked cigarette in his hand. Suddenly he lets out a lot of air and throws it down to a very unsightly body of water below. You might ask, "And...?" And it worked. He had very trying couple of weeks but after that he never looked back.

It's possible to walk the talk when it comes to the "I'll stop..." vows. Commitment and a little pain during the transition is what it takes.

In Pictures

PM Abiy handovers renewed homes for the needy

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) handed over renewed houses for the impoverished and elderly people in Aware area this week. The renovating program was started in early May as part of the annual homes-renovation program.

The residential building has been constructed in a speedy manner. It is completed in less than three months. The PM has just handed over keys for the beneficiaries. In addition to residential homes, the building includes shops for retailers. During the handing-over ceremony, PM Abiy said that "if we are united, there will be no room for poverty."



PM Abiy, First Lady Zinash Tayachew sitting with an elderly man who received a renovated house with fully furnished materials.

Ethiopia honors its champions!

The 19th World Athletics Championship was held in Hungary, Budapest August 19 to 27, 2023. By participating in different distance races, with a total of nine medals, The Ethiopian Athletics team was ranked sixth from the world and second from Africa.

Ethiopia secured Gold medals in 10,000 meters and women marathon. The Ethiopian athletics team bagged two gold, four silver and three bronze medals during the tournament. Up on arrival at Bole International Airport on Tuesday, higher officials from Ministry of Culture and Sport, From Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ethiopian Athletics Federation (EAF), Ethiopia Olympic Committee and other officials welcomed the team. EAF awarded the medalists by allocating over 1.7 million Birr prize.

