



# The Ethiopian Herald

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Photo : Dagne Abera

## Ethiopia observes Day of Sacrifice

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

**ADDIS ABABA** – The commemoration of Day of Sacrifice would be a stepping stone to ensure Ethiopia’s sustainable peace and

development and create a better tomorrow for its people, a high level government official said.

The “Day of Sacrifice” was marked yesterday with various ceremonies at the headquarters of the Ethiopian National

Defense Forces (ENDF) in the presence of high-level government officials.

Speaking at the occasion, Director-General of the National Intelligence and Security

*See Ethiopia observes ... page 3*

**HOME OF WINNERS 2023**

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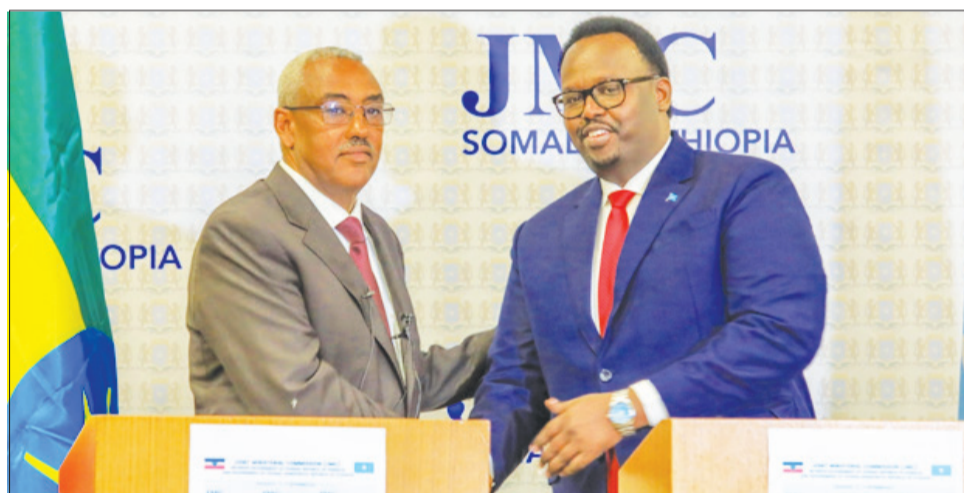
## Ethiopia to celebrate Benevolence Day reaching out to needy

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** – Several Ethiopians received caring services as the country marks “Benevolence Day” on the third of Pagumen, the thirteenth month of the Ethiopian calendar that has been observed in various benevolence activities.

A number of citizens in Gergesenon, Muday and Abebech Gobena charity organizations received a compassionate service, Founders and Officials of the organizations said.

*See Ethiopia to celebrates... page 3*



## Ethiopia, Somalia pledge to further strengthen cooperation

BY STAFF REPORTER

**ADDIS ABABA** - The First Ethio-Somalia Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) meeting was held yesterday in Mogadishu, Somalia.

The session was preceded by the Senior Officials meeting, which took place from 5 to 6 September 2023, according to Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

*See Ethiopia, Somalia... page 3*

## Ethiopia to employ right of reply on 55 agendas in UNGA: MoFA

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

**ADDIS ABABA** – The Ethiopian delegation will employ the right of reply (position) in 55 agendas and speeches in the forthcoming 78th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) disclosed.

At a biweekly press briefing he held here yesterday, MoFA Spokesperson Ambassador Meles Alem said the Ethiopian delegation will use the right on 55 agenda items in the UNGA which is expected to deliberate on 174 memos.

*See Ethiopia to employ... page 3*

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# News



## Ethiopia attracts 3.428 bln USD FDI in 2022/2023 FY: Commission

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

**ADDIS ABABA** - The inflow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) of the 2022/23 fiscal year, was said to be 3.428 billion USD which has shown 3.64% increment compared with last year's similar performance, disclosed Ethiopian Investment Commission.

According to the Commission's 2022/23 performance report, the commission has issued new investment license for 269 investors of which, 166 were foreign investors while 48 and 55 were joint and local investors.

Similarly, the licenses were issued for manufacturing, service and agriculture sectors led by countries like China, India and Kenya.

As per its plan, the commission has recruited and attracted several investors by conducting targeted promotion through virtual and zoom platforms.

Similarly, the commission has become member of international investment promotion agency so as to carry out international promotion activities and attract global investors.

As hosting events is one means of enhancing FDI, the commission has also organized "Invest and Grow in Ethiopia: The Land of Attractive Investment Opportunities" forum. And, over 1,000 previous and new investors comprised from 29 countries like China, Turkey, England, USA, Djibouti, Japan, among others, took part at the forum.

Apart from all the states and two city administrations as well as the 1,500 people who participated through virtual platform, IPDC, Ethiopian airlines, Ethio-telecom and Commercial bank of Ethiopia had hosted exhibition at the forum.

Thus, the commission was able to ink agreement with companies that showed keen interest to engage in investment worth over 1.6 billion USD investment. About 320 million USD worth agreement was made on the mining sector while 96.2 million USD Business to Business (B2B) investment agreement was signed.

As to the report, the earnings of both government and private industrial parks

were 148.3 million USD which has shown decrement compared with last year's similar period.

Through the support of the Britain government, 'developing countries trading scheme (DCTS) that improves developing countries FDI was also implemented.

During the 2022/23 FY, 269 projects were turned to implementation phase (135) and operation phase (134).

Internal and external conflicts, effects COVID-19 and the termination from African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), as well as lack of foreign currency were amongst the major challenges witnessed during the stated year, it was stated.

## Ethiopia retakes looted heritage of Mekdela Amba

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** – Ethiopia is still bringing back national treasures as it has repossessed a holy cross that was looted along with other heritages in 1868 at the Battle of Mekdela.

Ministry of Tourism announced that the nation regained St. Michael's Cross heritage that was plundered from Mekdela Amba, in the northern parts of the country, aftermath of the Battle of Mekdela that was fought between the British and Ethiopian (Abyssinian) forces.

Following the battle, the British forces had stolen numerous national heritages in which Ethiopia is retaking some of them working in cooperation with the British government, NGOs and influential persons.

The St. Michael's Cross which is presented



by Ruth Emanuel, is now restored at the Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage.

According to the information obtained from the Ministry, the handing over of the heritage held in the presence of notable Ethiopians

and friends of Ethiopia including Tourism Minister Ambassador Nasise Chali, Alula Pankhurst (PhD), Assistant Professor Abebaw Ayalew and Kumira Wakijira.

In his latest interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, National Museum Director Demerew Dagne said that a number of heritages were returned from various countries in different times.

He noted that some 20 heritages were returned from England, U.S.A, the Netherlands and Denmark in which all of them are exhibited at the National Museum.

By the same token, many looted artifacts including Emperor Menelik II's sword that he used to fight the Italian forces at the Battle of Adwa, and a wood cross have been returned to Ethiopia from the United States following a tremendous effort of Ethiopian Diasporas, it was learnt.

## UNFPA hands over ambulances to Oromia, Afar states

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

**ADDIS ABABA** - The UNFPA handed over five high-spec ambulances worth over 13.5 million Birr to Oromia and Afar State Health Bureau to help provide lifesaving services.

Speaking at the handing over ceremony on Wednesday, Health State Minister Ayele Teshome (PhD) said that this invaluable donation would undoubtedly save countless lives via providing vital assistance to those in need and the support portrays unwavering commitment to serve fellow citizens.

Mentioning the minimal numbers of ambulances merely covering 48% of the total demand in the country, he said that the nation needs more to meet the demand of all citizenry.

"During the northern conflict over 300 ambulances were damaged and looted; as a result, currently many areas are using

traditional means of health care transportation. Not only does the donation of these ambulances contribute to enhance emergency response capabilities but also demonstrates immense solidarity and care for community members," he added.

UNFPA Representative Koffi Kouame said that the ambulances would be playing a pivotal role in strengthening the referral linkages and addressing obstetric complications and other critical cases thereby making contributions in revamping the health system and services which were weakened in the conflict affected areas of the two states.

So far, the agency has been donating health kits, medical supplies and equipment and dignity kits for facilities restoration and emergency response services strengthening, he noted.

Acknowledging the support of the government of Sweden and other donors as it is critical to meeting the increasing demands for life



saving emergency sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence interventions in humanitarian situations, he reaffirmed commitment to continue partnering with the Ministry of Health and respective regional governments.

Ambassador of Sweden to Ethiopia Hans Henric Lundquist said that Sweden and UNFPA have a long-standing and good cooperation in Ethiopia and his country alongside UNFPA responds to the national priorities by the

Government of Ethiopia.

It was also indicated that the health system and services in the conflict-affected areas of the Oromia and Afar regions have been seriously compromised impacting access to sexual and reproductive health care and information.

The hand-over ceremony was attended by high-level officials from the Ministry of Health and the Oromia and Afar states as well as senior officials of the Embassies of Sweden and UNFPA.

# News

## University highlights technology contribution to distance learning

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** - St. Mary's University (SMU) stated that implementing technology supported system is quite decisive to realize the quality of distance education and produce adequate skilled human power in various disciplines.

Opening the 11th open and distance learning seminar (ODLS) conducted for half a day recently, SMU's President Office Head, Tsegaye Gebissa said that open and distance learning seminar aims at discussing the challenge and opportunity of distance education via using technology. This in turn helps expand education access. In a huge country like Ethiopia where access to formal education is not equally distributed due to limited resource, technology-backed distance learning is crucial. Distance learning has many advantages as it saves money, time,

energy, opportunity and capacity. However, distance education has some constraints regarding quality. Therefore, employing technology would play a significant role in bridging education quality gap in the distance learning program.

As to him, SMU strives to create educational access for disadvantaged learners, produce highly qualified and motivated human resource, and transfer advanced and relevant knowledge for socio economic development in the nation.

An initial discussion paper presented by Endalew Fufa (PhD), from Arsi University entitled "Ecological conformity of E-Learning to Teaching and Learning in Higher Education" has singled out the very significance of e-learning approach.

He said, "Arsi University is striving to provide technology based learning system for distance students with a view to realizing

proficient human power. However, some challenges such as power interruption, lack of skilled human power, and the likes are serious factor that hinder access to technology for students. Using technology would play a decisive role in realizing immersive approach in the field of distance learning."

He advised that adopting and expanding technology will be of paramount importance in increasing the capacity of the students. Besides, Universities pedagogic and information technology support and exchange centers must be reset and reestablished to help boom the delivery of purpose-oriented E-lessons, realize skill based e-learning training thereby making the distance learning fruitful.

Participants from various public universities across the country participated in the seminar and discussed the significance of technology in various fields of distance learning.

## Ethiopia observes...

Service (NISS) Temesgen Tiruneh said that Ethiopia is built on a solid foundation owing to the noble sacrifice its children have paid for freedom. As the number of people who pay sacrifices to Ethiopia's increases, its accession to development, growth, and democracy is inevitable.

"There are millions of Ethiopians who make sacrifices for their country's honor, sovereignty, and border protection. Ethiopian children are still making sacrifices in all directions and honoring their country.

According to him, sacrifice means giving the time, energy, money, social life, family, and most importantly life to accomplish a higher purpose. Immense sacrifices have been made to protect Ethiopia's sovereignty, to strengthen its government and to create a better system, as a country is one of the things that cannot last without sacrifice.

During the Italian invasion and at different times, the brave Ethiopians sacrificed themselves and repelled foreign and internal enemies. "We will achieve this long-standing mission of protecting the country by coordinating with our security forces."

For her part, Defense State Minister Marta Luigi noted that the security forces are paying heroic sacrifices by putting the country and the people first. The defense forces are also repelling the attacks in different ways so that the country and the people can have complete peace.

"What veterans teach us is not to violate the honor and dignity of the country. If we look at the struggles of every age, we will understand that there are many Ethiopians who accepted sacrifices to protect their country with absolute bravery."

The ministry has been taking bold steps to ensure a committed and disciplined army that has the ability to thwart provocation from enemy quarters and sustain the country's existence with noble sacrifice, the state minister remarked.

*Pagumen* Two was commemorated under the theme "A nation persists with sacrifices" in the presence of senior government officials and various countries military attaches.

## Ethiopia to...

Gergesenon Mental Rehabilitation Center Founder and Manager Melese Ayele told The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that celebrating the six days of the Pagumen month plays a big role in teaching people about honesty and compassion.

The third of Pagumen is the day when the society has moved out to assist and rehabilitate economically poor citizens as well as developing the culture of helping one another, he said.

Marking the day also helps citizens promote sympathy, love and unison, he added.

Muday Charity Association Founder and Executive Officer Muday Mitku on her part said that the value of helping the needy is increasing time to time.

She further stated that kindness would play a positive role in creating jobs and bringing a significant impact in the national development.

Muday expressed that various societies and the government are participating to help the needy through various mechanisms.

For her, such activities will encourage the people-to-people relationship more than ever before so that needs to be implemented regularly.

The benevolence activities that have done on "Benevolence Day" were crucial to help children to see a bright future, said Eshetu Arega, General Manager of AbebechGobena Charity Association.

The association helps a number of orphans through various ways such as feeding and providing other healthcare service. Besides, the association works on repatriated women through creating jobs and providing training.

## Ethiopia to employ...

MoFA and the Ethiopian Permanent Mission in New York have finalized the necessary preparations for the UNGA and the country will be represented by high-level officials in the Summit, he added.

A range of agenda items including the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals will be discussed during the sessions that will take place between 18 and 24 September 2023. Sideline meetings will also be held among world leaders and heads of international organizations and foundations.

Apart from taking part in the assembly, Ethiopia will use it as an opportunity to strengthen bilateral relations and promotes its national interests. The country will also act as the voice of Africans.

The spokesperson further noted that the first Ethiopia-Somalia Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC), which was kicked off in Mogadishu yesterday, will pave the way for meaningful relations in economic matters besides security and safety issues.

Attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen, the

Mogadishu discussion gave an opportunity to evaluate and see the status of the agreements reached in the last few years by the two countries.

According to Ambassador Meles; given the friendship between the two governments over the past few years, the significance of the deliberation is high. Ethiopia and Somalia have strong security cooperation and there is a growing desire for strong commercial ties.

"The meeting of the Joint Commission of Ministers is considered as a big transition for future cooperation and two agreements on trade and defense will also be signed. Holding the meeting in Mogadishu is also a big sign of solidity and enables the two countries' partnership to be deep rooted and strengthened."

The 78th session of the UNGA will take place under the theme of "Rebuilding trust and reigniting global solidarity: Accelerating action on the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development goals towards peace, prosperity, progress and the sustainability for all," it was learned.

## Ethiopia, Somalia pledge...

The meeting was co-chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen and Somalia's Deputy Prime Minister Salah Ahmed Jama.

In his opening remarks, Demeke thanked Salah Ahmed Jama for the warm reception and hospitality extended to him and his delegation and further commended Salah Ahmed Jama for convening the 1st session of the JMC.

Talking about the focus of the meeting, he said that it is to explore more opportunities to expand areas of cooperation for the benefit of the two brotherly peoples.

Demeke commended President Hassen Sheikh Mahmoud on the fight against the

terrorist group Al-Shabaab, as a critical step towards ensuring sustainable peace and security in Somalia.

He also mentioned the fact that Ethiopia and Somalia share language, culture, people and values that will always be an eternal bond between our two countries and pointed out that "enhancing our people-to-people relations by exploring various ways is a natural extension of this historic tie."

Demeke reiterated continued commitment of Ethiopian government to facilitate and promote all aspects of cooperation between the two countries.

Deputy Prime Minister of Somalia, Salah Ahmed Jama on his part said, this JMC is a historic moment for the two countries that

can benefit the two peoples.

"We look forward strengthen our longstanding relationship that is grounded by a principle of mutual respect and brotherly relationship," he added.

Moreover, he expressed that this JMC serves as a crucial platform for formalizing of our historic relationship so that we enhance the ties for mutual benefit of the two countries. Somalia will work together with Ethiopia to strengthen the longstanding cooperation, he elaborated.

Upon concluding the meeting, the dignitaries presided over the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on Trade cooperation and agreed minutes of the meeting.

# Opinion

## Rendering unreserved service for the motherland

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Unlike many other countries that relate to their country as the Fatherland, Ethiopians profile their country as The Motherland which they express through their songs, poetry and, drama and other forms of creative arts.

Service for the motherland is a legal, sociological, professional, ethical obligation of all citizens here and overseas irrespective of their social status, ethnicity, gender or any other socio-economic stratification. All citizens are constitutionally obliged to serve their country in any level of capacity they are called upon.

What exactly is serving one's country mean? It is an official or legal obligation to contribute to any sector level development undertakings be it in private or public institutions. It is delivering services that directly or indirectly contribute to the socio-economic development of a country. This also implies promoting the visibility, acceptability and recognition of a country among the international community of nations and in all international fora. Some tend to believe that military service is the only sphere of social service that a citizen can engage in. This is partially true but never inclusive as there are myriad of activities in which citizens can serve their country.

Serving one's country in any level of profession is indeed a source of pride for all citizens engaged. Service rendered today by the youth in this country which constitute more than 70 per cent of the population is not only a service for today but also working towards providing a better livelihood for the next generation of Ethiopians. This also shows that Ethiopia is endowed with a potential of huge population with highly productive age which could be utilized by the country.

Some think that only public servants are obliged to serve their country while others are no obliged to do so and some public servants claim that they are the only ones serving the people of Ethiopia. The author of this contribution thinks that both trends are wrong as service to the nation is an obligation of all able bodied persons and not only a fraction of the society. Ethiopians in CSO, professional associations, athletes, persons of arts are among the major contributors of uninterrupted service for their country. Indeed, service to their motherland is a sacred duty that is required of every citizen.

Unreserved service to one's country is not a matter of choice but a national civic obligation which is expected from every citizen worthy of the nation. The point is

where and why do citizens deliver their services to their country? A service to one's country is not limited to any profession or a specific location. Millions of citizens residing overseas are currently contributing to the development of their country without appearing here in person. Ethiopians in the diaspora are contributing to the development of their country by sending remittances too their kith and kin as well as by actively participating in voluntary social services in the areas of health and on the construction of various flagship projects in Ethiopia like the GERD.

Ethiopians working as public servants and those who labor from dawn to dusk in factories, service institutions owned by the private sector are caring for the wellbeing of their families while paying tax to the government to financially support national development efforts. The government is expected to provide all the necessary support under its capacity.

On the other hand, providing service to a country like Ethiopia entails caring for veterans and those who are on pension after they have delivered long years of service for their country. Much has not been done in this regard except for paying them their monthly pension allowance and limited level of medical services.

Here it is important to stress that service to one's country should never be measured by hierarchical status or level of remunerations or educational order. Every Ethiopian service provider here and abroad is important in contributing to the development of the nation which is grappling with poverty, inflation, various pandemics, climate change induced drought and all kinds socio-economic sabotages.

Service to this nation requires the fulfillment of a number of ethical standards and norms of behavior. Promotion of peace and harmony at the place of work and in the entire country, social and religious co-existence and discipline in social relations as well as upholding democratic unity instead of calling for ethnocentric exclusiveness are only a few of these standards and indicators for symbiotic social interaction and collectivism.

Rent seeking and theft on public coffers and assets, financial crimes like money laundering, illegal transfers are incompatible with providing clean and quality service to the public. Attempting to link public interest to individual interest is illegal and gross miscarriage of justice.

Special attention must be accorded to the service in the justice system of the country because the promotion of fair and equitable justice is a major component of safeguarding human rights and the rule of law.

This is important not only for defending democracy but also for ensuring sustainable peace in the country.

Rendering service to the nation must go hand in hand with recognition of selfless services that senior citizens have provided for their country in all spheres of services both in civil sectors and in the defense forces. Inclusive reward system needs to be given to those who made huge contributions in the defense of peace, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country.

Providing quality service entails putting in place transparent civil service recruitment system that is free from corruption and nepotism. It so happens that this area of service is being challenged with presentation of fake credentials that are prepared by thieves in every corner of the city. This has far reaching consequences on the quality of work and delivery of timely and efficient services for the public.

Social services are conducted by adhering to globally accepted standards that in most cases include valuing each service seeker as an individual, recognizing their strengths and abilities, respect and promote the human rights, views, wishes

and feelings of the people, balancing rights and risks and enabling access to advice, advocacy, support and services. Avoiding any form of discrimination while providing services, recognizing and using responsibly, the power and authority accorded in service delivery when working with people, ensuring that my interventions are always necessary, the least intrusive, proportionate, and in people's best interests.

It must be stressed that using culturally appropriate means of communication is of vital importance during all moments of delivery of services to the public. This matter because Ethiopians, just like any people across the world are very sensitive to the way we approach them in business communication. Many government offices officially post their ethical standards in the vicinity of their headquarters but the author is doubtful if the management and staff members provide their services based on the ethical standards they have openly declared.

Good public service demands putting the needs, interests, values and attitudes of clients into perspective. It must be noted that every service provider is an ambassador for the institute in which he or she works and must exhibit quality and impressive marketing standards and norms of behavior.

Given the fact that Ethiopia is striving to digitalize the entire economy of the coun-

try, providing quality and efficient service online is important not only because of the merits of the technology itself but too enable the country to be effectively compete in the world market and all global for a concerning the nation's relations with other countries across the globe.

Moreover, efficient service requires owning the tasks entrusted to every citizen in a spirit of full dedication, trustworthiness and honesty. As stated earlier, every citizen has the privilege to serve his or her country as a source of honor.

Any service delivered to enhance the development of this country requires to be innovative, creative and cost effective in every field of service including military, health and other social services.

At this particular period in which Ethiopia is striving to rehabilitate the war torn social services in the northern part of the country, providing efficient services to the IDPs and all other citizens affected by the war and specifically addressing the needs of children, their mothers and the elderly needs to be a service of top priority.

Loyalty to the implementation of the constitution of the country and upholding the laws of the nation is important to provide the necessary services to the people of Ethiopia. Enforcing the rule of law is a major legal precondition for the promotion of peace which is an important factor for providing sustainable and measurable services to one's country.

Moreover, by providing efficient services that is free from any bureaucratic red tape is possible to address public grievances and complaints that crop up. It is important to keep at bay any form of bribery, nepotism and parochialistic tendencies both in public and private services.

Many public servants in this country are challenged by their lack of time management in their service to the public. Many even dare to steal public business hours and days to address their own affairs with no care to ask for permission or approval. This is one form of corruption that needs to be avoided over time.

It must be noted that service to one's country requires owning the vision, mission and goals of the institution in which public service is provided. The rules and regulations of any organization must be respected and implemented to ensure quality service.

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

# Editorial

## Cultivating the culture of benevolence for immense benefit

'Benevolence' has been easing a lot of burden in our society. History has it that people who travel long distance for work or family visit sojourned in any ones house they come across. People were so welcoming to host and serve guests in their homes. It is our cherished culture to welcome newcomers because someone who serves a guest with due hospitality receives the return from God through similar hospitality when he or she also travels somewhere. People believe that good deeds are reciprocated.

Same things happened when a child is orphaned or a family faces disastrous accident on their property or livelihood. Members of a community used to think that such problems are in store for anyone, and they could also be victims of the same disaster any time sooner or later. So they contributed whatever they have to help such victims.

However such good culture of the people looks like to have dwindled with the introduction of modern life style or individualism. Indeed, modernization is very important. At the same time it is mandatory to maintain parts of our good culture and use them to address inherent problems in the society.

These days we see people who fall short of feeding themselves, children who have lost their parents, elders who have lost their close family members who could give them care as they become too weak to help themselves. Some people also lose their physical or mental health would be rendered helpless.

During such incidents the system in the society is the haves attribute their success or prosperity because of the society. Hence it is necessary to reestablish this strong mentality of sharing both the wealth as well as the problems of the society.

When we say the past culture of helping each other is on a decline, we can at least hope on the charitable actions of some citizens. Their actions have preserved the vestiges of such benevolent and generous culture of the people of the past. For instance, the long serving philanthropic woman, Abebech Gobena is recognized among every Ethiopian as the mother of the poor. She started raising orphans at her home with the meager income she had. Through time she ended up with one of the biggest orphanages in the country that had cared for thousands of children.

Biniam Belete is also known as the father of the poor. He ventured in one of the unusual types of charity to support the mentally and physically disabled called Mekedonia.

The government has also embarked up on important initiatives of mobilizing people to volunteer in helping people with difficulties. For instance one of the most remarkable interventions through volunteerism is the effort to rehabilitate old and ramshackle houses. The people have fallen short of renewing their houses and have to lead despicable life in their dilapidated houses that are so difficult to be called even a house. Those who have money, knowledge and time cooperate to rebuild such houses.

As the saying goes, Charity starts at home! And after getting matured it can be expanded and scaled up out of home. Actually Ethiopia has practiced such actions for centuries as evidenced in the history of Islam, as it hosted the Asahabas who were advised by Prophet Mohammad to take shelter in Ethiopia.

Recently too, Ethiopia has extended its hands to people in various parts of Africa during the outbreaks of fatal pandemics like Ebola and COVID 19. In addition perpetuating the legacy of hospitality and charity, Ethiopia's action of charity is also a reciprocation of the philanthropic support of friendly people and countries at times of adversity like drought and flood. This clearly demonstrates the value of benevolence. Therefore, the government, non-governmental organizations, religious institutions and other concerned intuitions should uphold existing initiatives of charity, benevolence to see a better world.



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# Opinion

## Wholeheartedly serving citizenry to build prosperous nation

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Not only does serving own nation and fellow citizens make immense contribution to the growth and prosperity of Ethiopia but it also provides the doer/civil servant with generous mental gratification. Serving fellow citizens and contributing what one can do to the nation is instrumental in coming up with prosperity as civil service is an unwavering pillar in that regard.

Hence, making the civil service modern is of paramount importance in paving the avenue towards creating a new nation. Bringing about real difference in all aspects in Ethiopia will thus be in the state of fruition if the civil servant develops sense of belongingness, hardworking spirit, courageousness and full integrity.

Services are expected to be fully and responsibly delivered to citizens so as to avoid rendering service delay, having Ethiopia devoid of corruption and corrupt individuals, overcoming red tapes in due course of providing citizens with proper and prompt amenity.

It is well recognized and undeniable hard fact that the advancement of a given nation predominantly depends on its citizens. Besides, every citizen has to comply with the law and order of the nation, as well as perform their duties as lucidly and dependably as possible to maintain harmonious co-existence thereby taking the nation steps forward.

The very question here is how can citizens take part in nation-building? What role can public service delivery play in state-building? Yes, citizens can contribute a lot to the development and progress of the nation by following socially acceptable behavior and running morally correct actions. Every citizenry should responsibly and dependably discharge responsibilities as such a telling move would help the nation bring about real change in all aspects.

So long as the civil servant is determined and willing to work hard to provide all citizens with a just, impartial and prompt service, the country would have ample opportunity to seize the proper boulevard for modification. Hence, it is timely and apt to invest in a range of service delivery sectors like goods and services provision, financial aspects, transport, a range of socio-economic facets, among others. Hence, civil servants must prioritize serving fellow citizens in particular and the entire nation in general.

In the context of rendering service, the civil servant and other segments of the society must be obligated to contribute their share to the betterment of the nation via shaping themselves morally and respectably.

True, it is the prime responsibility of every

citizens of the nation to be self-righteous and act fairly without compromising national dignity and citizens esteemed position. The less attention that has been paid to the proper public service has to be improved as it has played a crucial role in satisfying citizens with an invaluable public service.

Public services make the state visible to its citizens, often forming the principal tangible link between the government and the governed. Civil service diffuses the values of the proper service thereby contributing to the bonding between the state and citizens.

The creation of a common culture through the presence of similar and readily identifiable public services would play an immense role in developing trust and sense of belongingness among citizens. Unquestionably, civil services serve as instruments for dispute settlement and for the creation of administrative loyalty. Service provision becomes instrumental in binding critical elements of the population to the nation and one another.

Responsibly serving citizens would be of significantly useful in maximising social development and economic growth, integrating and co-ordinating as well as reinvigorating peaceful-coexistence. There can be no gainsaying the fact that there are serious challenges with regard to rendering service to the public. There can also be no denial that the nation-building is espoused by patriotic citizenry.

The civil service in the nation must be made modern and would target at rebooting nation-building as the civil servant can practically implement the principles of providing citizens with properly and responsibly run amenities. Such an audacious step is highly desirable at present when the trust index is low between citizens and the state, between industry and government as well as the nexus between civil service and other segments of the society.

Civil service should also be conceived as an instrument of transformation to ensure overall change in the country and address the dogged challenges of poverty, unemployment, violence, gender-based violence and the likes. In this regard, the civil service needs to be well empowered and contemporarily modified.

In a nutshell, comprehensively solving the quadruple challenges emanate from lack of proper service, dearth, redundancy and unfairness should not be left solely to the civil service as it requires an amalgamated effort of all, and public servants have thus to be encouraged to be open to continue rendering better public service towards meeting the ideals of the contemporary world. As civil service is not the sole competence of the country, it demands active populace to augment accountability, growth and transformation.

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

# Business & Economy



Modernizing the agriculture sector for better benefit – photo google

## Multi - dimensional benefits of modernizing agricultural sector

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Ethiopia is exerting its full-fledged effort towards modernizing and thereby maximizing production and productivity of its economic main stay, agriculture. Being the second most populous country in Africa, next to Nigeria, with more than 120 million people, it is a must do action for Ethiopia paying attention to the sector.

Though it is the largest sector in engaging almost 80 percent of the labor force, the agriculture sector has remained subsistence and rain fed. As a result, it is critically vulnerable to the climate variation. Be it is, practical measures have been taken to enable it withstand the climate impact and to maintain the sector's progress so that promising outcomes have been registered so far.

The Government has embarked on a ten-year economic development plan (2021-2030) where agriculture is on the top of priority sectors.

The sector is projected to grow at 6.2 percent per annum over the next ten years. Ethiopia's development plan has laid out enhancing agricultural production and productivity as one of the major strategic pillars. In addition, the ten-year development plan aims at boosting agricultural export revenues and substituting imports by reducing production costs.

To this end, the government seeks to leverage on developing huge unutilized arable land, modernizing production systems, and improving uptake of technology. Furthermore, the ten-year plan envisages on building a climate resilient green economy.

In this regard, Ethiopia is looking to expand development efforts to fight land degradation and to reduce pollution; reduce Green House Gas (GHG) emissions; increase forest protection and development; increase production of electricity from renewable sources for domestic use and for export; and focus on modern and energy saving technologies.

Demis Chanyalew (PhD) is an agricultural economist who has worked in the Ministry of Agriculture for more than 20 years and currently engaged in consultation work for various agricultural firms.

While recently approached by local media, he said that the Government has identified key priority intervention areas to increase productivity of smallholder farms and expand large-scale commercial farms. Under the current administration, the government has renewed its emphasis to develop the agriculture sector, ensure food security, and achieve import

substitution.

Among the top priorities identified by the government include: small and large-scale irrigation development, financing agricultural inputs, increasing productivity of crops and livestock, improving agricultural production methods using mechanization, post-harvest loss reduction, developing a research-based food security system, and natural resource management.

In addition, it is looking to the agro-processing sector as an engine to accelerate future economic growth.

He further said that with respect to increasing productivity, the government in collaboration with its international partners, has made interventions to support the development of the agriculture sector. These activities have contributed to higher yields and increased production of both crops and livestock.

According to Demis, attaining agricultural production progress without utilizing sufficient inputs such as fertilizer, pest and herbicides, new farming techniques and others is unthinkable.

As to him, though the utilization of inputs has continued for decades, the coverage of agriculture land by fertilizer could not exceed 30 percent yet. He further said that as compared to other sub Saharan African countries, input utilization can be said below the average level. Therefore, enhancing the area coverage should be the priority agenda to the government.

The volume of the importation of agricultural inputs is increasing from time to time. At the same time, the value and price of the transportation cost of inputs incurred the nation additional currency due to international economic crises.

On the other hand, Ethiopia is currently facing shortage of hard currency which in turn affects the import business. Therefore, as to him, other alternate mechanism to substitute the importation of inputs such as fertilizer should be staged as agenda.

He stressed that there are various minerals that can be used as inputs for fertilizer production particularly in the Illubabor zone of Oromia region and reinvigorating the mining project attempted in the past in the area should be underlined.

Some experts argue that though Ethiopia has huge potential in increasing crop production, crops such as maize and wheat particularly in the highland parts of the country are vulnerable to pests. Hence, supplying improved seeds which can resist pests to farmers should be strengthened.

The Ethiopian Agricultural Research Institute, since its establishment 50 years ago, has tried its level best in improving the qualities of seeds and disseminating to farmers but recurrently, new pests are seen which affect the productivity so that, the ongoing efforts in reaching farmers with better selected seeds must be strengthened.

On the other hand, to accelerate the country's agricultural development, the government established the Agricultural Transformation Institute In 2010 to address the systemic bottlenecks in the agriculture sector by supporting and enhancing the capability of the Ministry of Agriculture and other public, private, and non-governmental implementing partners.

Since long ago, agriculture played notable roles in the economy. It is the means of the livelihood of the 80 percent of the population; contributes about 75 percent to the export sector; supply inputs to the agro industries and food to consumers. Many also agree that the expansion of modern irrigation farm creates job opportunities for thousands.

Confirming the sector's production progress recently, Girma Amente (PhD), Minister of Agriculture explained that the agricultural sector has registered high production and productivity, created jobs and increased export trade during the past three years.

The mid-term implementation of the first phase of the 10-year perspective development plan and the second phase of the mid-term plan to be implemented from 2016-2018 were reviewed recently.

The Minister further said that the growth of the agricultural sector was planned to be 6 percent on average at the national level.

As a result, the agricultural sector has registered an annual growth of 5.5 percent, 6.1 percent and 6.3 percent in the last three consecutive years, he added.

The agricultural sector has therefore been able to achieve an average annual growth of 6 percent as per the perspective plan, the minister noted and adding there are promising conditions to continue the growth in the coming years.

According to him, the initiatives taken by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed have in particular played pivotal role in the achievement. Horticulture accounted the lion's share to the growth of the sector, Girma stated, crediting the growth to cluster farming.

The Minister pointed out that 6.5 million hectares of land were cultivated in cluster farming in 2023/24 production year, and this enabled the farmers to get technology, resources

and professional support.

Moreover, he said that the introduction of duty-free agricultural technologies and the provision of extension services and loans have enabled the farmers to use tractors and other machinery. About 2.9 million hectares of land was, for instance, plowed with tractors in the 2023/24 production year.

Following the above achievements, the nation has stopped importing of beer barley and wheat, and replaced over half of the imported rice.

On the other hand, production of fruits and vegetables has increased through the Green Legacy Initiative and avocado has been exported. The "Yelemat Tirufat" campaign, especially meat, milk, honey and fish production, has also registered a big change when compared with the previous production years.

The agricultural sector has in general recorded high production by increasing production and productivity, creating jobs, and increasing export over the last three years, he concluded.

Girma further elaborated that more attention will be given to the sector to make it continue being the backbone of the country's economy. In particular, the ministry will work to increase production and productivity by improving the supply of fertilizers and seeds as well as providing treatment to the acidic soil in the high land parts of the country.

In addition, the minister said that activities have been underway to cultivate 17 million hectares of land nationwide in 2023/24 production year.

As mentioned above, tangible results are witnessed in the sector in the past three years and scale upping the result is vital. Evidences show that Ethiopia has huge volume of water and millions of hectares of land which can be utilized by irrigation farm. But only 3 percent of the water resource is utilized for irrigation farm.

The ongoing dry season wheat farm activities through irrigation proved that Ethiopia, not only can be food self-sufficient, but also export and enhance its foreign currency garnering capacity.

Ethiopia aspired to transform its economy from agricultural led to the industry led. To that end, the government emphasizes the expansion of manufacturing.

Shifting the economic base from farming into none farming needs more hard currency and boosting agricultural export can serve to meet the objectives. Hence, the ongoing efforts which targets in rising agricultural production and productivity should be continued.

# Art & Culture

## *The pitifulness of the pitiful*

BY ALEM HAILU G/KRISTOS

*Before sunset  
In a bustling open market  
In buyers  
And sellers heart  
Seeking a place  
An emaciated old beggar  
With a weather-worn face  
Was pitifully collecting alms  
Putting on tattered clothes.*

*Soon in a tear-jerking  
And heart-wrenching manner  
A poor blind boy  
Playing a flute  
Singing a song strong  
Titillating everyone's heart  
Invoked sympathy with art  
'It was*

*On a cursed morn  
Blind, to a pauper family  
I was born!  
If given a steal  
Bread to eat,  
How could I  
Despise it? '*



*With no need for  
A second thought  
Deducting from what  
The hardest way he got  
Touched, the old beggar  
Gave the sight-*

*deprived boy  
A ten Birr note  
Though both were  
On the same boat!  
The pitiful have pity!*

*Is the lesson,  
among vendors and buyers  
The incident drove home  
Before draws nigh gloam!*

*It suffices to be a human  
For benevolence to be done.*

## *Alone (A short story)*

BY DESALEGN DAGNEW

Vexed she summoned him to the bedroom. He entered into the room shivering. She pulled her sleeves up. With her wide and thick palm that could cover the whole of his tiny face she dealt him a deadly slap. It was holding the table he saved himself from fully collapsing. An SMS message that read "my love" made his life to go from bad to worse.

"If you ask me for divorce, I don't know what I will do now, but If I hear this rubbish word on your lousy mouth," she paused her speech for a while fixing fiery eyes on his face. Grasping him under his armpit she helped him back to his feet. And she scooted him to the window, which was found on the 9th floor of their condominium. It was a burrow regarded the gate of hell.

"If I hear the disgusting word 'divorce' even by mistake, be sure you will suffer a free fall. I will escort you to the pit of hell," John was sure she would do it one day. Right away he nodded "yes" in dread. She went by Genet, which literary means heaven. The Amharic saying "angels make names" was disproved by her. Her name was the exact opposite of her characters. Her chocolate face darkened in a moment. His slaps-suffered face developed bruises, which made lines on his tomato face.

On the subsequent day, he was dealt three upper cuts for hiding five hundred birr from his wage. On another day he was flogged by belt coming home drunk. Tall and fat, Genet was domineering on him who was small and

thin. This unbalanced body mass made him an absolute docile. He was a henpecked husband. Rather as per the traditional mentality he was playing the role of a wife, while she was the other way round. Another month later, he said he didn't have money for his three children's school fee to spend the night kneeling.

She had a higher body mass and a house, but he possessed only one thing in his life, that is his job.

One day, he got mind-bending ideas from his friends. He then bought traditional medicines forthwith and went to a tavern. People sat on the bench were chatting, their voices ringing above the roof. He became alone in the bar with his problems; he was handing over his wages to her without deducting a little cent for years.

He is a hard worker in his offices, and genius academically, but his knowledge didn't cure him from being flogged, sometimes becoming physically fit or having a balanced body mass in marriage is a good thing according to his thoughts.

He laced his cup of Tella, which is a traditional Beer, with peers- prescribed herbal drug. He remembered he must have used the medicine for five days, but he added all once, and gulped it down. Then he went to the toilet feeling a little headache. When he got dizzy he thought the medicine began its works. He got the advice that the medicine is going to help him temporarily estranging him from his wife.

When he returned back, the tavern was empty.

He got a bit confused and entered in, there was no one there even the waiters. He got out from the bar feeling gee. He began walking from the heart of Addis to its outskirts in the northern part, no one was in sight in the roads, the shops or the bus stations.

"I am aloneeeee" John shouted loud raising his hands to the sky. "is there no one in the city?" he grimaced. Remembering his wife's rage, made him to ran on the asphalt like a rabbit that saw a fox. He gazed right and left, no one looked, after a while, he forgot his pasts.

"If I am the only man in this town, is it boring or cheery!" He said and laughed like a fool for himself. No one saw him and nothing was heard from the whole road he walked on.

"I don't think so, nor did I think so?"

John was ready to confide his whole problem to someone that he didn't see before. But no one came to his rescue. On the road no one was in sight as it was not midnight but noon.

When he came into the house with a big confidence to fight his wife for his glory, nobody was in the houses, he then went next door and knocked, but no one was there too.

He sang free as if he wore a bird on the tree and danced as if he were no longer in jail. He made some strange celebrations and spent the whole night in nightmares.

The next day, a bucket of cold water nudged him out of his slumber. His house was saturated with a crowd of people. The vengeful eyes of his wife seemed hungry of delivering a punch.

The neighbors were attempting to calm Genet whispering piece of advice into her ears.

"What happened?" John asked in gee. More than three male neighbors stopped Genet from surging towards him for a punch. He didn't mind anything that he did the day before.

A lot of eyes were scrutinizing him downward. Astonished they were looking at him with vacant stares. He knew very well no one will save him from Genet after the neighbors left. Her eyes assured him about his suspicion. Gradually, one by one, the neighbors left after trying their best to advise the couples to see to reason. When the last man dragged his last leg out, John followed him. But the man closed the door behind his back. Turning back John looked his wife's panicky.

Taking a seat he tried to endear himself to her but nothing happened.

"Stay put! No going out for some days," said Genet and headed to the kitchen to wash dishes. John went to the Sofa and sat cuddling his legs like a cat. He found himself in a conventional jail.

No going out, no asking how he spent the previous night, even no talking, and not asking for a bite he sat put. He tried hard to remember everything but nothing conjured up in his mind.

After entertaining many doubts, heading towards Genet he apologized "Sorry,"

He fell on the sofa suffering a smack for one thousand three hundred thirty nine times.

# Science & Technology

## Enhancing multi-sector cooperation to realize Digital Ethiopia-2025 strategy

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

Ethiopia launched the Digital Ethiopia 2025 strategy in 2020. Since then, during the past three years, Ethiopia is striving to accelerate the digitalization journey by increasing the investments in expanding the infrastructural development. To evaluate the midterm performance of the implementation of the strategy, Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MInT) jointly with other government stakeholders has prepared a midterm performance evaluation discussion last week. Launched three years ago, the Digital Ethiopia 2025 strategy, which comprises implementation of Digital ID, digital payments, e-governance, e-commerce and cyber-security, aims to accelerate the digital journey of Ethiopia.

As a country with fast growing economy, among the top foreign direct investment (FDI) attraction countries and ever-growing investments, Ethiopia is working in easing doing business and providing services using online platforms. Especially, following the launching of the “Home Grown Economic Reform Agenda” strategy in 2019, Ethiopia placed due focus on the development of digitalization and technology so as to support the economic development. As part of these efforts, the Digital Ethiopia 2025 strategy was launched to accelerate the digitalization efforts and the strategy in to action immediately. By giving due attention to infrastructural development in the Information Communication Technology (ICT) and promoting online services both in private and government sectors, the strategy strives to develop the role of digital technology in Ethiopia and to make the economic development inclusive.

The midterm evaluation of the Digital Ethiopia 2025 strategy aims at identifying the achievements, the gaps and the existing challenges during the implementation of the strategy so far. By doing so, the objective is to use inputs from the discussion to accelerate the next implementation period and to realize the strategy by 2025.

During the discussion, it was learnt that the strategy has registered promising achievements. The strategy helps in developing e-commerce, digital payment, digital ID and in enacting supportive proclamations and policies which help to create conducive environment for digital development. Attended by over 50 different government sectors, the midterm evaluation discussion is believed to find concrete solutions to the problems identified during the midterm implementation phase. And, by thwarting the major bottlenecks and developing the cooperation of all stakeholders, it would accelerate the next implementation phase.

During the discussion, Minister for Ministry of Innovation and Technology

(MInT), Belete Molla (PhD) said that an evaluation committee was set to collect data about the midterm performance of the Digital Ethiopia 2025 and the discussion aims to discuss on the major findings. The major objective of the evaluation is verifying the feasibility of the data collected by the evaluation committee and bringing about sound solutions to the identified gaps during the three years implementation period of the strategy.

Belete stated that Digital Ethiopia 2025 strategy focuses on the development of digital infrastructure. As to him, building digital infrastructure can only be achieved through concerted effort of all stakeholders. “Thus, MInT, apart from exerting efforts to realize the goal, it has been facilitating and coordinating the development activities,” he stated.

Belete further stated that Digital Ethiopia 2025 strategy has given due emphasis on sectors that can create more job opportunities and generate forex earnings. With this in mind, agriculture, tourism, manufacturing industries and information technology enabled services were identified as pathways for inclusive national prosperity. As the strategy aspires to create prosperous Ethiopia and build all inclusive society, he underlined that concerted and holistic efforts are expected from all concerned institutions.

According to Belete, the strategy gives due focus to change the livelihoods of the people and to the sectors which have the potential to create more job opportunities. Agricultural development, tourism, manufacturing industries and the ICT sector are among the top priorities of the strategy. As to him, the progress so far is promising and to increase the momentum, there is a strong coordination of all stakeholders in the field.

For his part, Abiyot Bayu, Advisor at MInT said that the discussion indicated that the evaluation committee that was organized three months earlier, has organized relevant information on the best performance, obstacles as well as the major gaps witnessed during the three years implementation of the strategy.

Presenting the draft midterm evaluation document, Abiyot highlighted that promising result has been registered in digital payment, e-commerce during the implementation of the strategy so far. However, he stressed that due focus should be given in making the developments to serve the rural population to make the changes inclusive. Moreover, final document would be launched once the draft evaluation is discussed, outdated information are omitted and updated by the stakeholders, as to him.

For her part, State Minister of Ministry of Innovation and Technology, Huria Ali during the conclusion of the midterm evaluation said that infrastructural development, creating conducive environment for



**Realizing the development of digital infrastructure, enhancement of digital financial services and digital ID systems, the strengthening of e-government services and e-commerce and electronic payments needs all actors' strong participation and collaboration**

digital development, promoting digital applications and digital activities are the pillars of the strategy. As to her, efforts continue to accelerate the implementation of the strategy so as to realize the vision.

But, as to her, to realize the Digital Ethiopia by 2025, there is a need for a strong collaboration and engagement of all government sectors and the private sectors' active participation in supporting the implementation of the strategy. In this regard, the role of government sectors strong engagement and collaboration on the implementation of the strategy is very crucial. Huria called on the institutions to team up towards the materialization of the strategy.

As stated during the occasion, agriculture, tourism, manufacturing industries entering the Global Value Chain and services to be implemented through information and communication technology are the priority sectors in the Digital Ethiopia 2025 strategy. Building infrastructure, creating enabling conditions, digital applications and creating a digital ecosystem are also said to be the pillars of the strategy.

Realizing the development of digital infrastructure, enhancement of digital financial services and digital ID systems, the strengthening of e-government services and e-commerce and electronic payments needs all actors' strong participation and collaboration. On the government side, efforts are continuing to create conducive ecosystem for the development of digitalization and digital transactions are expanding with government interventions.

Similarly, government is promoting digital transformation in the education, agriculture, health and tourism sectors. As part of promoting the digital transformation, the government is endorsing new regulatory frameworks and policies in the sector. Similarly, government gives due attention to building capacity of digital technology professionals and supporting digital entrepreneurs.



# Society

## Through volunteering, little things do great

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Today, Pagumen 3, in the Ethiopian calendar (September 8, 2023), is dedicated to 'Volunteer Day' with the aim to further strengthen the culture of volunteerism and appreciate individual volunteers, groups, and organizations that are working at home and abroad for their efforts and incalculable contributions to lessen the social, health and economic burden of fellow citizens. And Ethiopians are observing the day with various activities.

In fact, for Ethiopians who are known for their cooperation and generosity and they have already made volunteerism an essential feature of their day to day activity, every day is like volunteer' day. Ethiopians, be it in their time, resources and energy, and even counseling services, always extend a helping hand for fellow citizens not only in blue but also in good moments.

Most importantly, their age-old traditional social systems, such as edir and equb, associations that are formed to lessen societal burden through mobilizing resources, are showcases to their deep-rooted culture of supporting each other.

What is more, the various types of charity organizations that are established by individuals and/or groups with the spirit of this same target, also testify to this reality.

Just to mention a few, Binyam Belete,



*During house handover ceremony*

founder of the Makedonia Home for the Elderly and Mentally Disabled, Abebech Gobena founder of Abebech Gobena Children's Care and Development Association, 'Yewedekuten Ansu, a charity association for the destitute and abandoned people (CADAP), Sister Zebider Zewdie, founder and Executive Director of Mary Joy Development Association (commonly known as Mary Joy Ethiopia), Muday Mitiku, founder of Muday Charity Association among others are well known Ethiopians who sacrifice their lives to lessen

the social, health and economic burden of the less privileged segments of the community.

These volunteers can transform the lives of hundreds of thousands citizens, make a name for themselves and leave a lasting legacy.

Their selfless acts, unquestionably, have brought about profound effects not only on those people in need of support but also their respective families and the society at large.

Witnessing individuals who were once on the streets becoming productive citizens through the support of volunteers is like a miracle.

Once, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed after paying a visit to Makedonia Center said that Makedonia is an institution that gathers and helps those who lost their loved ones, those who were forgotten, and those who were left on the streets. When I saw this, I really understood how Ethiopians are considerate and caring for fellow citizens.

He also urged Ethiopians to further strengthen and cooperate in righteous acts because it is critical to save each other.

Apart from individuals, associations that are established by volunteer youths, professionals among others are working committedly to lessen the pressing issues of fellow citizens. Especially, by paying friendly visits and arranging care programs for less privileged elders, disabled, the poor, the sick, homeless and displaced people, they are providing the required support-meal, love, medical care, and discharging their societal responsibilities. Similarly, in the annual national voluntary service program, a number of success stories are registered. Solely, during this rainy season, some 20 million youth take part in the national voluntary service program, it was

*See Through volunteering, ... page 10*

## Through volunteering, ...

learnt.

In turn, it is possible to bring about considerable changes within the lives of disadvantaged groups and improve their living conditions.

Not only individuals and organizations, but the government, in its part, is undertaking various people-centered activities to betterment the lives of vulnerable individuals. Mainly, the Addis Ababa City Administration is executing extraordinary activities.

Ranging from school feeding programs to rehabilitating and constructing houses for elders, disabled and vulnerable groups, the Administration is transforming the lives of city residents.

Recently, the Administration handed over 1686 residential houses that were built by volunteers to the poor exposed to various social and economic problems and those individuals with noble personalities residing in all sub cities.

The houses, which have been handed over to beneficiaries in relation to the arrival of the Ethiopian New Year, are equipped with



Volunteers at Green Legacy Initiative program

the needed utilities.

Speaking at the handing over ceremony, Mayor Adanech Abebe said that the houses are delivered to those people with the aim to let them welcome the New Year with a new house, new hope and new dream.

She also extended her heartfelt gratitude to all kind hearted investors who supported

and contributed a lot to make this a reality.

“What is more thrilling and exciting than watching people of our city, who were pouring out tears for several years, delight in the New Year? I extend my congratulations to you again and thank you again to everyone who has contributed to this success,” posted Mayor Adanech in her

social page.

Apart from people-centered intervention, the contribution of volunteers in environment conservation was remarkable. For instance in the recent Green Legacy Initiative that the country set to plant 500 million tree seedlings, Ethiopia can exceed and break its own record by planting over 566 million saplings in 12 hours and making history. The success was the result of its volunteer citizens.

Incontrovertibly, extending a helping hand, sharing what we can and creating a sense of belongingness and understanding within those in need is one way that brings purpose and meaning in life.

Needless to say many of social and economic challenges are resolved by the involvement of volunteers which make the contributions of volunteers many-sided and irreplaceable.

And Ethiopians, when we mark ‘Volunteer Day’, we should be inspired to further strengthen our longstanding culture of volunteerism, sustain the achievements gained in various areas through volunteering as volunteerism yields multifaceted blessings.

## Kenya and Ethiopia agree to build 3000km Lamu - Addis Ababa SGR

A bilateral agreement to build a new 3000km electrified Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) from Lamu Port in Kenya to the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa has been signed by Kenya’s cabinet secretary for transport, Mr Kipchumba Murkomen, and his Ethiopian counterpart, Dr Alemu Sime.

The new line forms part of the project to develop the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia (Lapsset) transport corridor, centred on the new port of Lamu. From Lamu, the railway would run to Isiolo, 200km northeast of Nairobi, then divide into three branches running to Nairobi, Addis Ababa and Juba, the capital of South Sudan.

“We are currently working on the development of the railway line from Lamu to Moyale through Isiolo, with a link from Isiolo to Nairobi to connect with the Mombasa - Nairobi - Malaba SGR,” Murkomen said.

“We further agreed to establish a bilateral

steering committee comprising officials from Kenya and Ethiopia to fast-track the development of the Lapsset Corridor and its supporting infrastructure,” he added.

Construction of the new line is expected to start in 2025 and would cost \$US 13.8bn. According to Kenya’s Lapsset Corridor Development Authority (LCDA), the forecast internal rate of return for the project is over 12%.

Kenya and Ethiopia are now working together to seek funding for the project. Kenya is seeking \$US 9m from the African Union Infrastructure Fund for studies to determine the technical and economic feasibility of building the new line.

Three berths have recently been completed at Lamu at a cost of \$US 400m, and Kenya is keen to develop the new port to handle imported goods destined for southern Ethiopia.

Source: railjournal.com

## Russia seeks larger share in Morocco’s wheat imports

BY STAFF REPORTER

The Russian ambassador to Rabat said his country is ready to sell wheat at a competitive price to Morocco, a major wheat importer.

“Russia is ready to supply wheat to Morocco at reasonable prices,” Russia’s ambassador Vladimir Baibakov told TASS news agency.

“Morocco remains a key Russian trade and economic partner in Africa. In a geopolitical context marked by worsening energy and food crises, such a partnership is particularly important,” he said.

Russia’s interest in Morocco’s wheat market comes amid fierce international competition among wheat exporters to expand their market share in Morocco.

Last year, Morocco surpassed Algeria as the largest importer of EU wheat, notably of French origin.

So far this year, Morocco imported 1.7 million tons from France which by far outperformed Germany, Romania, and Poland.

Traders however expect France not to retain its significant market shares for long in view of high prices.

Morocco has also generalized subsidies for importers to cover all wheat origins, in a move that traders say would benefit Russia.

Wheat markets specialist Arthur Portier told French media Russia is lowering wheat prices as a diplomatic tool in its standoff with the West.

Meanwhile, L’economiste reported that Polish wheat exporters are also seeking to expand their market share in Morocco.

Source: THE North Africa Post



## At Africa Climate Week, climate justice was front and center

BY STAFF REPORTER

Climate finance, loss and damage and climate justice were the big themes emerging from Africa Climate Week and the Africa Climate Summit 2023 held in Nairobi, Kenya.

African heads of state, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres and Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Inger Andersen all spoke of the need for climate finance for Africa that is commensurate with the scale of the crisis facing the continent

Policymakers, business leaders and environmental campaigners came to Nairobi to find solutions for mitigation, adaptation and finance for Africa – the continent least responsible for carbon emissions but suffering its impact the most. Temperatures are rising faster there than in many other parts of the world, causing more frequent extreme weather events and prolonged droughts, leading to food shortages and loss of lives.

Africa Climate Week is one of four regional weeks held this year that will build momentum ahead of the UN Climate Change Conference in Dubai.

The Week is organized by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the UN Development Programme, the UNEP and the World Bank, with the support of regional partners.

Source: UNEP.org

# INTERNATIONAL

## African leaders back global carbon tax to pay for green energy in poorer nations

BY STAFF REPORTER

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African leaders have proposed a global carbon tax where major polluters pay more to help poor nations finance the roll out of green energy systems and prepare for the damaging effects of climate change following a three-day summit in Kenya. The Nairobi Declaration, signed on Wednesday, calls for a global carbon price on fossil fuel trade, shipping and aviation, as well as a global financial transaction tax. It also called for an almost six-fold in-

crease in renewable energy capacity across the continent, where hundreds of millions of people lack access to energy and clean forms of cooking. William Ruto, president of Kenya, host of the summit, told the Financial Times it was time for the international community to discuss a carbon tax, where all countries made a contribution. "What we are saying is that we want to pay. We do not want to say 'let those guys pay because they are the polluters', we are saying, 'let's all pay', and then let's have a mechanism where we invest these resources where we unlock the biggest value on decarbonisation," he said. The declaration said a carbon price was key to ensuring "affordable and accessible finance for climate positive investments at scale" and called for the "ringfencing of these resources and decision-making from geopolitical and national interests". The IMF has previously said a global carbon price would be among

the fastest and most effective ways to cut carbon dioxide emissions across the world, although the idea of a global carbon tax has struggled to gain traction among some countries. The Nairobi Declaration will be used by African leaders as a negotiating document at COP28, the UN climate summit due to take place in the United Arab Emirates at the end of the year. Rwanda's president Paul Kagame, US climate envoy John Kerry and European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen were among tens of thousands delegates who attended the Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi, which was a precursor for COP28. The event marked the first time the African continent has come together specifically to consider how to tackle the climate crisis, looking at both challenges and solutions. At the summit, Von der Leyen also called on international leaders to cooperate on formulating a plan for a global carbon price at COP28. African leaders called

for an investment of \$600bn to meet a renewable energy target of 300GW by 2030, up from the current 56GW. A total of \$26bn in funding and investments was announced for various climate-focused initiatives. The leaders also backed reforms of the multilateral financial system, arguing development banks need to increase concessional lending to poorer countries. The issue of how the World Bank and other multilateral development banks support countries to the finance efforts around climate change has become a key battleground in climate discussions. All countries will need to decarbonise power systems and take other efforts to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions in order to halt global temperature rises. But countries in the developing world receive just a fraction of climate finance and investments compared to western countries.

Source: *Financial times*

## From fatal allergies to heart attacks and cholera – the devastating health effects of global warming in Africa

BY STAFF REPORTER

The winds that whip the towns of the Eastern Cape in South Africa have the power to generate energy. But on a dry, hot day, those winds can gather up embers and dump them into tinder dry savannah and forest, destroying crops, fodder and homes, and taking lives.

Wild fires create their own weather systems, generating fire storms with devastating effects.

Global warming will increase the number of days of shimmering heat, creating the ideal conditions for fire. In the past months, southern Europe and North Africa have experienced record-breaking temperatures and fierce fires, and the terrible effects of both on human lives, habitat and environment. The southern hemisphere is next.

But heat, not fire, is the major cause of death worldwide. The extremes in Europe and the US augur future changes globally. Countries throughout southern Africa, parts of east Africa and Madagascar are all projected to face rapidly increasing temperatures to the end of this century.

I am an anthropologist and public health academic, working both in Australia and South Africa. Both countries are recurrently affected by the El Niño–Southern Oscillation and resultant sea rise, with floods, drought and higher temperature in its wake. Global warming and El Niño combined suggest that the years ahead will result in increasing, devastating impacts.

Heat, air quality and health

As is clear from reports from multilateral agencies such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and national bodies such as the US Global Change Research Program, high temperatures can be fatal, and vast populations worldwide are vulnerable.

High temperatures cause heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heart attacks, strokes and other cardiovascular disease.

South Africa will experience more heat waves, so more heat-related deaths are likely. People in informal settlements, and badly maintained and crowded buildings, are especially vulnerable to heat stress.

Cities are also hot spots. Heat absorbed by roads and buildings results in the urban "heat island effect", while increased use of energy for cooling adds to greenhouse gas emissions.

Less food, lower nutrition

On the continent food security is directly threatened by extreme events, but also more broadly by climate change and global warming. In South Africa, drought recurrently affects subsistence agriculture, livestock and commercial crops. This has already stimulated interest in local coping strategies faced with food insecurity.

The impact of drought on food and nutrition will be felt by the most vulnerable, including infants, small children and pregnant women and those who already live on or below the poverty line.

Large numbers of people across the continent live as subsistence farmers, and in the absence of food or water we are likely to see increased migration and humanitarian crises.

In South Africa, too, a large proportion of the population relies on subsistence farming or other small-scale farming. Crop failure and drought, combined with increased food costs associated with disruptions to global food resources, will affect every one of us.

Every drop counts

Drought and water shortages add to these risk factors. Humans require adequate hydration to survive, and the combination of increasing temperatures and water shortages heightens the risk of organ failure and death.

In addition, dependence on poor quality and contaminated water has an impact on household and personal hygiene, and intestinal infections.

Vibrio cholerae – the bacteria that cause cholera – is present in waterways in both high and lower income countries, and infection can be mild. But increased concentrations of the bacteria without rapid intervention to prevent severe dehydration can be lethal. The sharp increase in cholera and other diarrhoeal diseases worldwide is associated with rising temperatures and drought.

Neglected diseases

Other viral and bacterial infectious diseases, especially prevalent in Africa, are also likely to increase with global warming. Bundled together as "neglected diseases of poverty",

these include both parasitic and viral vector borne diseases such as Rift Valley fever, malaria, filariasis, schistosomiasis, dengue fever, chikungunya and influenza as well as arboviruses such as different influenza pathogens.

The ways in which climate change will affect different vector borne disease will vary. Sluggish and stagnant waterways and polluted water sources are one risk factor.

There is growing evidence of mosquito migration to higher altitudes, infecting people who have not been exposed before.

At the same time, there is growing evidence of vector behavioural change and resistance to insecticides in some settings, including the Ifakara region of Tanzania.

So where does this leave us?

When the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was established in 1988, we had a choice to interrupt climate change and slow global warming.

Globalisation, national politics and global capitalism have meant we have failed, and 35 years on we face an inevitable crisis.

This does not mean there is nothing we can do to halt the destruction of planetary life.

It does require that we urgently and radically change how we provide and use energy, how we live, and how we change living conditions for those who are, by the circumstances of their everyday lives, most at risk of the lethal effects of global warming.

Source: *The conversation*



# This is Ethiopia

## Ethiopia: The only country with 13 months

BY TEWODROS KASSA

Ethiopia is the only country that marks its New Year *Enkutatash* in the month of September annually. The country celebrates its New Year with splendid scenarios supported with its diverse natural endowments. The Ethiopian calendar is interrelated with the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, which follows its ancient calendar guidelines and beliefs. The year starts on 11 September in the Gregorian calendar or on the 12<sup>th</sup> in (Gregorian) Leap Years.

Having thirteen months of sunshine, sun set and sun rise is also a unique incident in the county. When the heavy rainy season *Kiremit* (summer) is nearing to conclude and the sunny, bright season, *Meskerem* (September) is coming, when flowers are blossoming and the field covers with yellow daisies, and the season becomes brighter, then Ethiopians prepare themselves to welcome the New Year. Aba Yohannes Worku, is Cheffe Ayat Saint Gabriel Church Gospel Sermon Head and an expert on Calendar systems. He is also a researcher on theologics and graduated with a Master's Degree in Theology.

He told this writer that the Ethiopian New Year counting system is based on the sun's circular motion on its space. "The Ethiopian Calendar system is based on astrology. The day to day activities of humans, climate, topography, climate, vegetation as well as culture and other similar matters are based on astrology.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church believes that for the sun it takes 365 days and a quarter day (six hours) to arrive at its starting point, in which its movement lasts for one year, he added.

According to him, there are three calendar systems in the world. These are solar, lunar and uni-solar. From these systems, Ethiopia follows a solar and lunar based calendar system that is based on the sunlight.

Aba Yohannes emphasized that the seasons in Ethiopia are related to astrology. The country enjoys four seasons with colorful sunshine overhead. Autumn, from March to May, winter from December to February, spring from September to November and summer from June to August, are the four seasons in Ethiopia.

According to Aba Yohannes, Egypt divides its year into three seasons, namely; flooding, harvesting and planting.

Aba Yohannes said that most of the nation's calendar system is based on the canons of the Bible. The calendar system has its own formula to calculate and know



holidays, major occasions and the days in the year. But, the calculation system is organized in a traditional way in which it might create confusions to understand the calendar system easily. The calculation system is based on forefathers' preaching and traditional knowledge.

"The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church identifies the years as a leap year or not is calculated through adding the whole years, BC and AD, 5500 era and 2010 respectively which is 7510 then divided by 28. Thus, while the final left days are 28 or zero the year will be a leap year. And while one or five days is left, the year will be Mathews, and six days are left for Mark. This year is identified as the year of Mark," he elaborated.

Asked, why the Ethiopian Calendar is seven to eight years behind the Gregorian calendar, Aba Yohannes underlined that during the period of Julius Caesar's domination, he pronounced to follow Gregorian Calendar but some Orthodox religion churches in countries like; Ethiopia, Russia and Egypt did not accepted it. Currently, Russia follows both Gregorian and its own calendar system. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church also follows its own calendar system until now by adopting some features from Julius calendar.

The Ethiopian calendar has 13 months. And Ethiopia is the only country with 13 months in the world. 12 months have 30 days and the short *Pagumen* (Intercalary) month with 5 or 6 days, depending whether it is a leap year or not. Ethiopian New Year is on September 11th, except in

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September 11 Ethiopian New Year  
 September 27 The Finding of the True Cross (Meskel)

leap years, when it is on September 12th. It is on the first of the Ethiopian month of *Meskerem* (September).

Aba Yohannes stressed that the absence of modern education in the area, no organized material, lower attention to the subject among others are the main reasons for the absence of information about the Ethiopian calendar.

According to chronicles, *Enkutatash* means "gift of jewels" in the Amharic language. The story goes back almost 3,000 years to the Queen of Sheba of ancient Ethiopia and Yemen, who was returning from a trip to visit King Solomon of Israel in Jerusalem, as mentioned in the Bible in I Kings 10 and II Chronicles 9.

*Enkutatash* is literally translated as "gift of jewels," a name that derives from the story of the Queen of Sheba. According to the Bible and other ancient texts, the ancient queen of Ethiopia traveled to Jerusalem to meet King Solomon, and

there she sent him a large quantity of gold and precious stones. Upon her return to Ethiopia, local rulers welcomed her with plentiful jewels.

The celebration of *Enkutatash* is both religious and secular. The eve starts by lighting wooden torches called "chibo" to symbolize the coming of the new sunny season. And the actual day begins with church services, extending best wishes followed by the family meal. Families visit friends, neighbors and relatives.

The day is also a special day for children. They gather in groups and go from house to house. They present pictures painted by themselves and decorated with flowers and images of saints to their family, neighbors and relatives. Girls play the Amharic song "Ababayehosh," meaning "I have seen flowers," carrying small hand drums. For children, the new attire from parents and gifts from family members, neighbors and relatives, are undoubtedly the most expected thing of *Enkutatash*.