



# The Ethiopian Herald

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## Ethio-UAE

### trade exchange hits 6 bln USD mark

• *Some 113 Emirati-owned projects go operational*

BY BILAL DERSO

**ADDIS ABABA-** Ensuring competitive quality and value-addition of agricultural commodities constitute Ethiopia's success in elevating the current six billion USD trade

exchange with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), an expert familiar with the issue said.

The UAE is one of the key trading partners of Ethiopia and the trade exchange has witnessed steady growth in the past few

years. The Ministry of Trade disclosed that the volume of trade exchange between the two countries amounted to six billion USD.

Diversifying exportable items and improving  
*See Ethio-UAE ... page 3*

## South Korean University to offer mayoral scholarship to Ethiopia

BY STAFF REPORTER

**ADDIS ABABA-** Ethiopia's delegation headed by Addis Ababa's Mayor Adanech Abebereached an agreement with South Korean flagship Kyungpook National University (KNU) to offer mayoral scholarship to Ethiopian students.

Adanech, who paid a visit to South Korea's

Chuncheon City, conferred with KNU President WonHwa Hong on issues of mutual concern.

According to the agreement reached between the two sister cities, the Mayor's Scholarship Program will be facilitated and the University has agreed to provide a free

*See South Korean ... page 3*



Photo: Berihun Tadele



Kebede Desisa

## GCS outlines Ethiopia's accomplishments ahead of New Year

• Nation to mark 13th Month's six days in various themes

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA -** The 2015 outgoing Ethiopian year is historical in which the country achieved major successes in different arenas including wheat export, signing of Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and BRICS membership, the Government Communication Service (GCS) said.

*See GCS outlines ... page 3*

**Awash E-School**  
Management System

AUTOMATING  
**YOUR SCHOOL**  
OPERATIONS

**AwashBank**  
Nurturing Like The River

# News



Ambassador Horiuchi Toshihiko

## Ethiopia to be center of excellence expanding Kaizen in Africa

BY ZEKARIAS WOLDEMARIAM

**ADDIS ABABA** - As Ethiopia champions in the implementation of Kaizen in Africa, Japan will use it as a center of excellence to further expand the philosophy to Africa and beyond, said Japanese Ambassador to the African Union.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Ambassador Horiuchi Toshihiko said that Ethiopia is a champion of Kaizen as it is one of the first countries to learn the method.

He further noted that he has visited the Horizon Addis Tire Factory which is one of the best examples in the implementation of Kaizen which he described as “I was really impressed by their implementation of the Kaizen”.

According to Ambassador Horiuchi, Kaizen is one of the fruits of the longstanding Ethiopia-Japan cooperation. As a result he indicated that “Kaizen was born in Japan and grew up in Ethiopia. Hopefully, it will be expanded to Africa and beyond”.

“Addis Ababa is the capital of Africa with many international organizations, diplomatic missions or institutions working with Africa for Africa”. Therefore, he said Ethiopia will serve as a center of excellence for the expansion of Kaizen in the continent.

## Ministry readying midterm digital Ethiopia 2025 strategy evaluation

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

**ADDIS ABABA** - Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MoIT) is preparing to come up with a midterm evaluation of the Digital Ethiopia 2025 strategy document.

It has held discussion with stakeholders on the draft midterm evaluation document yesterday.

During the midterm evaluation of the Digital Ethiopia 2025, MoIT Minister Belete Molla (PhD) said that the major objective of the evaluation is verifying the feasibility of the data collected by the evaluation committee and bring about sound solution to the identified gaps.

“The strategy focuses on the development of digital infrastructure. Building digital infrastructure can only be achieved through concerted effort. Thus, MoIT, apart from exerting effort to realize the goal, it has been facilitating and coordinating the development activities.”

He also stated that the strategy has given due emphasis on sectors that can create more jobs and generate forex earnings. With this in mind, agriculture, tourism,



manufacturing industries and IT 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.

By the same token, Advisor to MoIT Abiyot Bayu 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, he also highlighted that promising result has been registered in digital payment, e-commerce, however, he stressed that due focus should be given in making the serve rural-centered as well.

Moreover, final document would be launched once the draft evaluation is discussed, outdated information are omitted and updated by the stakeholders, as to him.

## Ministry stresses unleashing tourism potentials in job creation

BY MENGESHA AMARE

**ADDIS ABABA** - Ministry of Tourism stated that the country’s tourism has been contributing a lot to economic growth, but its potentials in terms of creating ample jobs for fellow citizens have to be unlocked.

Speaking at a two-day workshop for Ethiopian Hotel and hotel related service provider employers’ federation yesterday, Tourism State Minister Silesh Girma said that tourism and hospitality sector is highly contributing to job opportunity and economic progress.

As to him, the government has attached due emphasis to hotel and tourism with a view to helping the nation secure the benefit it deserves out of the sector such as bolstering image building.

On the occasion, Ethiopian Hotel and Hotel Related Service Provider Employers’ Federation President Fetch Woldeesenbet (PhD) said that human resource development especially that of hotel and tourism is of a significant factor to bring about socio-economic change.

He said: “We are capitalizing on the sector to make the nation much more beneficiary out of the tourism and hospitality sector. The tourism and hospitality industry has faced various challenges that are adversely affecting its sustainable development though the sector/industry in Ethiopia has been experiencing significant growth.”

As to him, security and safety concerns, limited access to loan services, low level of skilled works force development, absence of infrastructure and inaccessibility of destinations, among others have made the

sector exercise a sluggish pace for growth.

Labor and Skills state minister Teshal Bericho (PhD) on his part said that hotel and tourism industry can be made the backbone of the economy of the country if it has been given special emphasis as there are a number of indicators witnessed so far regarding the sector.

He said, “Human power elevation, infrastructure development, industry-TVET linkage, to mention a few, have to be capitalized on to hit the set target. We have planned to further reinvigorate the effort of creating job opportunities and economic benefit of the tourism and hospitality sector. It has also been our assignment to meet the shortage of skilled workforce thereby coming up with a vibrant hotel and tourism sector which in turn plays a paramount role in creating jobs and boosting economic growth.”

## Company eyes developing reliable e-commerce in Africa

BY TEWODROS KASSA

**ADDIS ABABA** - The Ashewa Technology Solutions S.C announced that it is developing state-of-the-art and reliable E-commerce system that eases business transaction through utilizing innovative platforms.

Ashewa Technology Solution S.C CEO Daniel Bekele said that the company prioritizes latest technologies applications

towards rendering effective transaction systems.

As to him, the conventional local transaction system should be improved so as to ease life and provide guarantee for products and services.

Moreover, the company is dedicated to alleviate transaction bottlenecks through developing smart solutions projects.

The smart solutions projects are undertaking

with more than 112 million Birr investment that sought to generate 7 billion Birr annually after its accomplishment within five years, he said.

Accordingly, the company also launches new special shares sale up to the next December targeting to embrace more shareholders.

Currently, the company has more than 1,500 shareholders, more than hundreds of thousands beneficiaries, and opened

its maiden overseas branch in Kenya, he noted.

The company announced that it is undertaking enormous activities to revolutionize African commerce by providing innovative e-commerce, e-learning, e-payment, commercial software and logistics to do business easily, affordably, efficiently, effectively and reliably at anytime, anywhere through cutting-edge technologies.

# News

## USAID's official visits humanitarian projects in Tigray state

BY STAFF REPORTER

**MEKELLE** - The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Ethiopia's new Mission Director Scott Hocklander traveled to Tigray State to visit USAID's lifesaving humanitarian projects in the State.

As to the Press Release issued for *The Ethiopian Herald*, Director Hocklander met with Chief Administrator of Tigray Getachew Reda and formally opened the Mekelle American Corner at Mekelle University and discussed USAID's long-standing partnership with the people in the state and across Ethiopia.

Director Hocklander emphasized USAID's commitment to assisting the state in post-conflict recovery and resilience, enhancing agricultural production, delivering quality public health services, and improving access to safe water supplies and basic



sanitation.

The USAID Mission Director visited Sebakare Internally Displaced Peoples (IDP) site, where USAID funds two child-friendly spaces that provide children with

safe environments in which they can participate in organized activities to play, socialize, learn, and express themselves as they rebuild their lives. These child-friendly spaces are implemented by Plan International, and each space engages

approximately 25 children per day, it stated.

The Director has also paid a visit the Monoma Health Center where USAID continues to provide life-saving nutritional supplements for children facing moderate acute malnutrition. These nutritional supplements are distributed by partners including World Vision and the World Food Program. In July 2023, USAID continued to provide these nutritional supplements across Tigray state for approximately 200,000 children for malnutrition treatment and prevention.

At Mekelle University, Director Hocklander was joined Fana Hagos(PhD), Mekelle University president, to jointly re-open the Mekelle American Corner, a U.S. government-funded center within Mekelle University that provides resources, programs, and discussions to improve young people's educational and economic opportunities, it was learnt.

### CBE launches gov't...

(GPC) to further facilitate digital purchasing.

At the launching event yesterday, CBE President Abie Sano said that E-payment transactions have been progressing in a short period of time in Ethiopia. The bank successfully completed the transaction of 3.3 trillion Birr during the last Ethiopian fiscal year. "This vividly shows rapid acceleration of digital transactions via different channels."

Despite encountering various challenges for a long time, digital transactions have been promising after the digital Ethiopia transformation strategy launched by the government, he added.

The implementation of digital GPC would facilitate purchasing and monitoring government expenditures. It is also designed to control and speed up the purchasing process. Some 170 public organizations have so far joined the e-payment transaction via CBE, he said.

For his part, Finance State Minister Eyob Tekalign (PhD) stated that the CBE and his ministry would work in concert to make the purchasing card efficient and successful. Realizing digital Ethiopia transformation is one of top priorities in home-grown economic reform. The government has been taking bold steps to realize digital Ethiopia.

According to Eyob, apart from reducing financial shock, implementing a digital payment system would improve the payment system. Furthermore, in due process, the service would be expanded to other banks via digital systems.

The government introduced a single treasure account to transact government expenditure through a digital system.

"Our demand is making all institutions join the digital purchasing system. The cash transaction is costly since it costs starting from money printing to its utilization"

quantity are also necessary tasks that enable Ethiopia to exploit the Gulf State's robust food market, Economic Analyst at the UAE's Embassy Fikru Deksis (PhD) told *The Ethiopian Herald*.

Due to unfavorable climatic conditions and low water supply, the UAE is reliant on food imports and secures the bulk of its food requirements from foreign countries. "Capitalizing on its huge potential and geographic proximity, Ethiopia therefore needs to prioritize trading agricultural products with the UAE."

Ethiopia's abundant livestock resource also enables it to provide fresh and halal meat to the UAE and other Gulf Arab countries. The country has indeed executed significant tasks to increase its competitiveness in the UAE's meat market in terms of expanding transport and building modern abattoirs.

The expert further noted that the various trade missions and discussions held with Emirati partners have played a big role in bolstering the business-to-business ties. Fikru in this regard hailed the outcome of the trade mission UAE held in Ethiopia in 2014 to create opportunity for the two countries' business community.

### Ethio-UAE trade exchange...

Representing UAE's private sector, the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry opened its Africa's first International Branch Office in Addis Ababa in 2013.

Concerning investment, the number of UAE investment projects in Ethiopia is estimated at more than 113. Most Emirati businesses have shown a tendency to engage in Ethiopia's agriculture sector, followed by hospitality, energy and pharmaceutical industries.

In recent years, Ethiopia has succeeded in attracting high profile Emirati investment including Julphar Gulf Pharmaceutical Industry, Al Ghurair Group's aluminum factory and Maaza Mango Bottling Company all set up in joint ventures with local firms. More investments are also in the pipeline.

Yet, the investment of UAE companies in Ethiopia is still low.

In its endeavor to make Ethiopia attractive to FDI globally, the government has made various investment policy amendments; and studies were also conducted to find out specific interests of Gulf investors.

### GCS outlines Ethiopia's...

In a press briefing he held here yesterday, GCS State Minister Kebede Desissa stated that the country has attained notable achievement in the outgoing year withstanding internal conflicts and other press challenges.

Many historical and unforgettable events have been recorded during the year and some of them reversed the challenge that was posed on Ethiopia's unity. For instance, the Pretoria Peace Agreement resolved the two-year-long war and thwarted enemy quarters' attempts to dismantle the country, he added.

Ethiopia has also attained a breakthrough achievement in multilateral diplomacy and its admission into the BRICS economic bloc is among the biggest successes in the country's recent history. It was also in the outgoing year that Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative got overwhelming acclaim from international partners. In the reported period, the country accomplished the first phase of the initiative and launched the second one.

"The government sets a plan of action for the next year to tackle the pressing challenges including the soaring increase in the cost of living and sporadic unrests."

The state minister further noted that as in previous years, the government decided to celebrate the six days of Ethiopia's iconic month of *Pagumen* in different mottos. Accordingly, *Pagumen* one will be the Day of Volunteerism (Service) and *Pagumen* two and three named as the day of Sacrifice and Benevolence respectively.

While *Pagumen* four is going to be marked as the Day of Industriousness (Productivity), *Pagumen* five and six are named as the days of Generation and Togetherness (Unity) respectively.

Awareness creation and ceremonial events would be organized by public and private organizations with respect to the name given to each day. All events would be organized to commemorate and celebrate service providers, public servants, the army, laborers and public figures among others, Kebede remarked.

### South Korean...

scholarship named by the mayor to Ethiopian students.

The initiative to secure scholarships from famous universities in Addis Ababa's sister cities will create good opportunity for Ethiopian students with best results to learn overseas, the information obtained from the Mayor's Office indicated.

In her twitter post, Mayor Adanech said she had a fruitful discussion with Chuncheon Mayor Dong Han on ways to improve the two cities' bilateral ties. "We reached agreement to work together on issues related to urban development, smart cities, education and training, and land management."

In connection with the two cities 19th anniversary of sisterhood relationship, Mayor Yook Dong Han and his delegation will travel to Addis Ababa in order to develop intercultural ties, she noted.

# Opinion

## BRICS: Africa's way to get UNSC permanent seat

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

In the global competition of securing the highest power, the acts of confrontations and alliances among superpowers have become a common scene. Multiple alliances among nations under the notion of securing economic and political power are one of the major strategies to end the era of hegemony. The power friction between the East and the West has been at its peak. Nations that support each side create coalitions to get the fruits of being an ally. It looked that the essence of 'survival of the fittest' has got its match in today's world economic and political power. Still, there are nations that favored pursuing multiple alliances over taking sides.

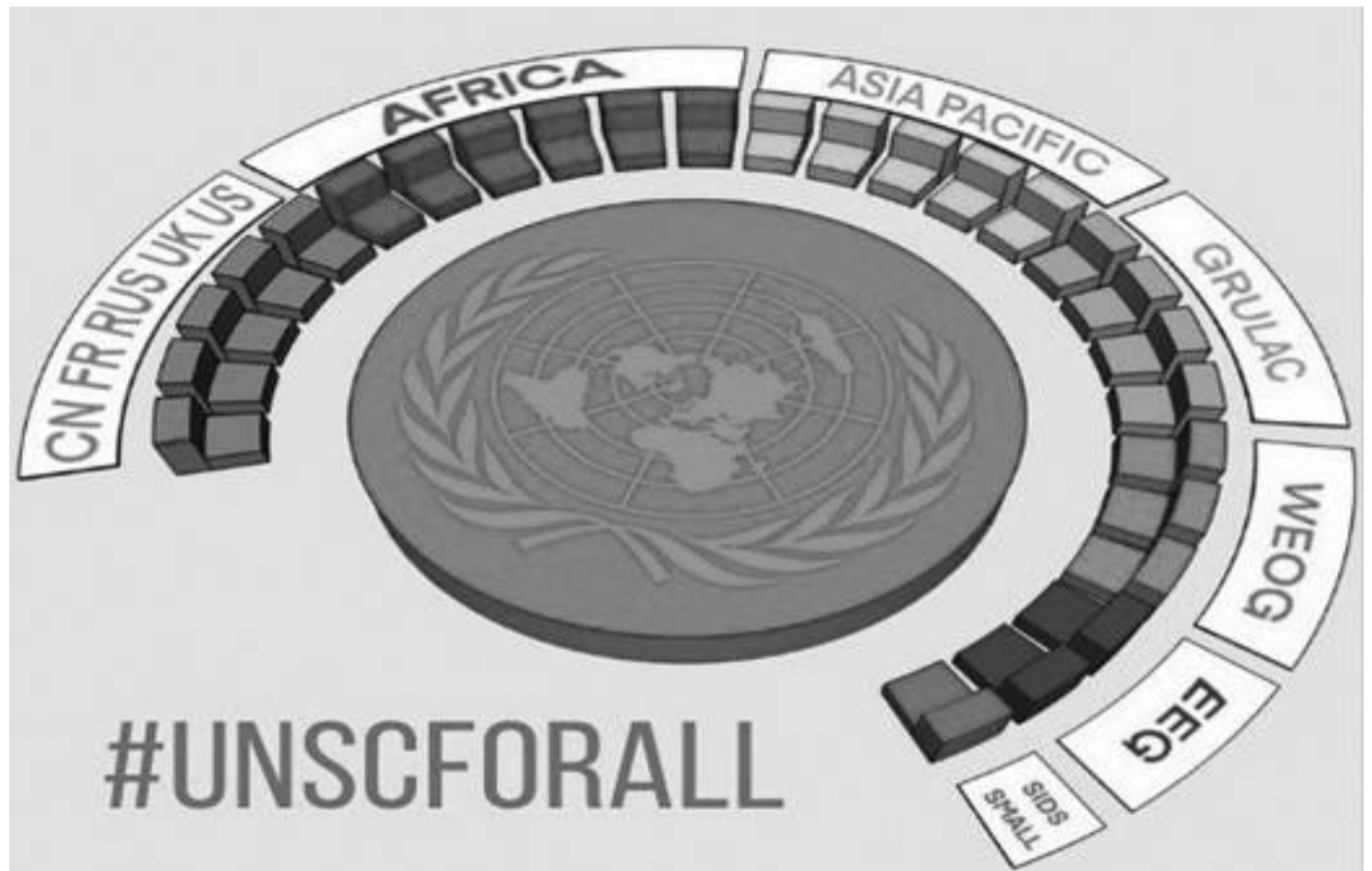
Again, coalitions are formed here and there in order to have a bigger spot in the world's highest power ranks. Similarly, some partnerships have become bigger and stronger by rallying nations behind a common cause. In this context, the BRICS bloc is one of most emerging influential group that is highly expected to midwife a better global order.

Unlike the previous international alliances, BRICS is eager to include nations for fair distribution of power. Bringing African nations into the group could be the ideal move to give Africans the voice they wanted for many years. The bloc recently added two African nations and increased the number to three as South Africa was already a member.

Documents show that the five BRICS nations own 42 percent of the world's population and grasp over 32 percent of the world's GDP. Such figure shows that the group is working on bringing change in order to shape the whole economic and political imbalance seen in the world.

Since its establishment, the bloc has been working on numerous activities even though the world has put less attention on its progress. After showing its influence, other nations started applying to be the part of the coalition so as to get the benefits from the bloc. More than 40 countries have applied to join the bloc in recent times. Some of the nations are: Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Algeria, Bolivia, Indonesia, Egypt, Cuba, Democratic Republic of Congo, United Arab Emirates, Comoros, Gabon, and Kazakhstan.

Lately, the bloc countries have held their 15th summit of Heads of States and governments in Johannesburg, South Africa from 22 August to 24 August, 2023. On the summit, the group of nations has passed a decision to incorporate some nations from those that applied to join the group. To this end, the bloc has added six more nations. Such decisions definitely have crucial aspect to increase the power and influence of the group. These nations are: Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Egypt, and United Arab Emirates.



The bloc nations have selected Ethiopia due to so many reasons. In fact, there are so many reasons that can twist the minds of those member nations to push forward to bring Ethiopia from the waiting list to a legit member of the bloc.

It is important to know that Ethiopia has numerous qualities to be part of the group based on its historical and current facts. Ethiopia is the non-colonized nation in Africa, and in many occasions, the nation is pictured as the representative of the whole Africa, on the climate issue and on the long-standing request to gain permanent seat in the UNSC, for instance. Besides, the nation played important role in the establishments of international organizations. Ethiopia is the founding member of the UN, and the OAU/AU. It was a member of the infamous League of Nations as well, to mention just a few. In good truth, Ethiopia is the fastest growing economy in Sub-Saharan Africa. Not only that, the nation is also the second most populous one in Africa after Nigeria. The country is also on the right track in achieving progressive economic development in the region and the continent.

Above all, joining the bloc may bring about a brighter future to Ethiopia and the whole of African nations. The continent Africa and many nations across the world have been asking for a fair distribution of power in the world as the globe is controlled and ruled by a handful of nations that can pass decision on nations who couldn't present themselves to the table.

In the past few years, Ethiopia has been going through a number of challenges both from inside and outside apart from the global pandemic and other issues. It is not far away to be recalled when some foreign powers had been meddling in the internal

affairs of the nation intending to pass unfair decisions. Fortunately, friendly nations stood beside the country and voted in favor of its interest at that moment and Ethiopia will never forget their benevolence. At that time, Ethiopia had almost no power to curb the decisions.

The affairs of most African countries are still decided by a few others at the UNSC for instance. In other multilateral financial institutions as well, a billion and plus people of Africa are just onlookers. Over half a century has lapsed since the majority of African countries championed their "political" freedom. Still, the people in various countries are living in blackouts, are suffering from lack of access to clean water and what have you.

The aforementioned and other many reasons made Africans and their organization, the African Union, to struggle for a seat in major organizations in the world. Although Africa is the major supplier of mostly industry inputs to the whole world, yet the continent has been struggling with negative advantages and consequences like climate change.

In the previous African Union meetings, Ethiopia coupled with the members of the union was crying for two important questions: finding African solutions for African problems and having a permanent representative or seat in the UNSC.

For the past many years, Africans could not find a place in a room that is controlled and dictated by the west. Those nations have been doing whatever they want to any nation who refuses their interest. Ethiopia's case during the two-year northern war could be a textbook example.

After the inclusion of three African nations to the BRICS, the question of having a

permanent seat on the UNSC should be the first priority. The world cannot leave 1.4 billion people behind. The coming of BRICS into light could be a gear shifter to Africans so that they could fulfill their long-awaited dream to have a representative in the highest security table.

The world that is ruled and dictated by the West may now own another power contender. The BRICS could appear as a counterweight to other blocs. As a result, its contribution to the creation of a reformed multilateral institutions will become inescapable.

Those member nations of BRICS that have permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council, namely China and the Russian Federation, should support Africans, Latin Americans, and other nations who have not been represented properly in the highest security table. The world should be a fair and favorable place for all people from all walks of life. The BRICS bloc should be a way to go up in the ladder of power representation in any international organizations.

As a diplomatic hub of Africa and a major player in the African Union, Ethiopia would continue being the mouse piece of Africa. The three African nations which are party to the BRICS, Ethiopia, South Africa and Egypt have now a better chance to work in concert for the good of the African people. Africans should take their matters into their own hands and the bloc would serve as an important instrument to shape a better Africa.

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

# Editorial

## Deepening toe in regional business

Ethiopia has been among the first signatories of the continental free trade zone, a solid testimony to the country's time-tested determination to integration and collective growth. Over the years, the country has been a champion of regional peace and stability. Despite some of the odds facing the country, Ethiopia's contribution to the Horn Africa region in all spheres is praiseworthy.

In addition to its positive engagements in regional sociopolitical issues, Ethiopia has been the main driving force behind infrastructural connectivity. From the LAPSEET program to other joint projects, the country stands shoulder-high in pushing for an integrated region. Its flagship projects like the Abbay Hydro Dam do carry a regional benefit.

The country has been keenly participating in bilateral and multilateral fronts, not to mention its unilateral initiative, to foster regional linkage through capitalizing on investment and trade.

There are now various joint projects under implementation that would benefit the entire communities in the region. Boosting investment and trade among regional nations would bring collective dividends to all. At the heart of such initiatives is Ethiopia's dedication and resolve.

The nation's biggest companies like the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia have been deepening their toe in regional markets laying a solid foundation for strong people-to-people ties. Sharing the same destiny, the Horn of African countries have been making extensive efforts to help address common predicaments and meet the growing infrastructural demand of the region.

Scaling up investments brings lofty economic opportunities to regional countries. An increased trade exchange means an increased transactions and cemented relations among the regional nations. Cross-region investment helps generate hard currency and create employment for the bulging youth population. Over and beyond, mutual interdependence of such sort has positive implications on peace and security of the region.

Over the years, Ethiopia witnessed a boom in the construction sector. The construction sector is receiving a huge amount of finance both from the public and private actors. Now the sector has expanded its capacity in all respects from technology, innovation to able human capital. The change is visible in the capital and other cities of the country. This presents the nation with experience worth sharing. In this regard, Ethiopia is also working to take the fruits of its investment to other countries in the region.

Lately, the Ethiopian Construction Works Corporation (ECWC) has announced to take its expertise and investment to other neighboring countries. In an exclusive interview with the Ethiopian Press Agency, the corporation said that it is expanding investment to Kenya and South Sudan.

ECWC CEO Yonas Ayalew noted that the corporation is undertaking several activities with the ambition of becoming a leading construction firm in Africa. Besides its Djibouti branch, the corporation is finalizing the legal process of two offices in Kenya and South Sudan. The plan is also set to open branches in Egypt, Rwanda, Equatorial Guinea, and other African countries.

"Though finding a construction agreement is no easy task, the Ethiopian Embassy has managed to find a construction company in Djibouti that has agreed to work with the corporation. We are now in a bidding process to work on a 60 million USD worth project together."

Also, the corporation is undertaking road projects that connect Ethiopia with neighboring countries. Efforts have been exerted to join forces with Asian and European companies that have large portfolios in Africa's construction industry. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has facilitated discussions for the corporation with ambassadors of different countries to seek ways of cooperation.

The Horn region needs collaboration of all kinds to achieve shared growth and the nations should explore every available way that enhances regional cooperation. Ethiopia in this regard continues to play a leading role. Economic integration requires the will and the ability of nations to invest in joint business. And, Ethiopia's increased appetite for regional integration and its concrete example are worth emulating lesson.

# Opinion

## Ethiopia's first year in Pakistan:

### A journey of friendship and growth

BY JEMAL BEKER ABDULLA

Understanding in fields spanning trade, science, and technology.

As the sun rises on this momentous day, we mark the first anniversary of the Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. With immense pride and gratitude, I share my reflections on a year that has been nothing short of extraordinary – a year of cultural discovery, economic promise, and an unbreakable bond of friendship and solidarity.

Subsequently, distinguished delegations from the health and textile sectors participated in various expos and exhibitions in Pakistan.

The business chambers of Pakistan emerged as pivotal players in fostering closer ties, organizing the "Ethio-Pakistan Business Forum" across key cities. This platform has magnificently facilitated a tighter integration of our business communities.

On August 29, 2023, I had the honor of presenting my credentials to H.E. Dr. Arif Alvi, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan as an Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the FDRE to Pakistan. His warm embrace of our embassy was embodied in his words: "We, Pakistan, welcome you with open-minded, open-hearted, and open-door policies." These words set the tone for the journey that followed, and I have witnessed the embodiment of this spirit in every engagement with Pakistani government officials, politicians, business community, dedicated civil society members, and above all, the wonderful people who have shown boundless affection not just to me, but to the entire Ethiopian nation.

In fostering people-to-people connections, the focus laid on the launch of Ethiopian Airlines operations in Pakistan. Beyond mere travel, this marked a gateway not only to Ethiopia but to the entire African continent. Pakistani universities extended a hearty welcome, planning to start a special quota for Ethiopian students, thus furthering the academic partnership.

In retrospection, I feel compelled to touch upon the avenues that remain unexplored. The economic landscape beckons the Pakistani business community to consider Ethiopia as a novel economic destination – a gateway to the vast expanse of Africa.

Ethiopia's demand for pharmaceutical, surgical, sports equipment, and construction materials perfectly aligns with Pakistan's expertise, while in return, Ethiopia's agricultural treasures, such as coffee, tea, pulses, oilseeds, and vegetables, beckon Pakistan.

Allow me to encapsulate this remarkable year. From the moment I assumed the role of Ambassador to Pakistan, my foremost priority was to build the image of Ethiopia in this country. With unwavering dedication, I directed my efforts towards enlightening the Pakistani public, business leaders, media, and civil society about the vast potential for business, trade, and investment within the FDRE.

Ethiopia's remarkable journey towards a double-digit economy is a testament to the transformative power of reforms initiated in 2018. With focused efforts to address bottlenecks in FDI, trade, and business services, progress is evident across pivotal sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, mining, tourism, and ICT.

Yet, I cannot emphasize enough the pivotal role played by Pakistani media and civil society. These dynamic forces have stood at the forefront, working to foster the Ethiopia-Pakistan friendship. Through an array of programs and events, they have illuminated the vast opportunities that lie in collaborative ventures between our two nations.

A shared commitment to combat climate change has united our nations. Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative, conceived by Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, stands as a beacon of hope and launched here in Pakistan by the FDRE Embassy. Having witnessed Pakistan's vulnerability firsthand during the devastating flood of 2022, I embarked on a mission to distribute relief items to affected regions, a memory etched forever in my heart.

Economic cooperation emerged as a vital avenue of exploration, for bilateral trade had been stood at a mere 78 million US dollars due to the lack of robust institutional ties. Identifying this challenge, I endeavored to bridge the gap by advocating for the establishment of strong institutional linkages.

The manifestation of our union is underscored by a mutual demand made by our heads of state at COP27 – a call for a climate fund that stands as a testament to our shared responsibility.

In February 2022, we celebrated a milestone as both nations signed a groundbreaking trade agreement, laying the foundation for the expansion of commercial and business relations.

In the realm of security, collaboration against terrorism holds immense promise, safeguarding not only our nations but the global community.

In the following month, a historic delegation of 75 Pakistani businessmen embarked on a transformative journey to Addis Ababa. This marked a watershed moment as the realms of business, trade, and investment were explored like never before.

Looking ahead, Ethiopia is resolute in advancing our bilateral relationship with Pakistan. The Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia envisions a future brimming with potential across various domains including the economy, education, tourism, and culture.

My heart swells with gratitude for the Pakistani business community, whose resounding response not only made this delegation a resounding success but also resulted in the signing of pivotal Memorandums of Understanding in the realm of trade and investment.

As I conclude, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the people and government of Pakistan for their unwavering support. Your solidarity during Ethiopia's non-permanent candidacy in the United Nations and your unwavering stand in the UN Human Rights Council reaffirms the strength of our bond. We stand by Pakistan, just as Pakistan stands by Ethiopia. Together, we shall tread the path of shared history, united in our resolve.

The momentum was perpetuated as a 50-member high-level delegation from Ethiopia graced Pakistan's shores, arriving on the maiden flight of Ethiopian Airlines. The gracious reception by the Sindh Chief Minister's Cabinet, in the middle of night, exemplified the sincere warmth and brotherhood between our two nations.

Ethiopia-Pakistan Dosti Zindabad!

Under the guidance of H.E. Ambassador Misganu Arega, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, these collaborative efforts culminated in the signing of multiple Memorandums of

Jemal Beker Abdulla is Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ethiopia to Pakistan

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



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# Business & Economy

## ICT dev't for sustainable economic progress

BY MENGESHA AMARE

It is crystal clear that information and communication technology (ICT) has been contributing a lot to economic growth. There has been an invaluable relationship between ICT and economic growth in developing countries like ours since the latter's discovery.

Recognizing the immense contribution of ICT to economic progress, *The Ethiopian Herald* recently approached Solomon Shiferaw, an economist graduated from Addis Ababa University and IT expert, too, to gather information about the correlation between ICT and economic growth. He said, "ICT is a dynamic area for investment and it includes ICT infrastructure, interpersonal communication, knowledge creation systems, infrastructure and support services for electronic commerce applications and others that can advance a country's digital economy and consequently growth and development."

He further said that the Information Communication Technology has, for instance, emphasized the role of ICT in protecting the environment without any sacrifice in economic output. Similarly, the Ethiopian government also relies strongly on ICT, not only to provide the economy with market competitiveness through technical innovation and global entrepreneurship, but also to enable transport, buildings, and industry to reduce their energy consumption.

He further said that for the ICT-growth nexus, a neoclassical aggregate production function including energy consumption and ICT investment need to be given due emphasis. For the ICT-energy nexus, a conventional energy demand function has to be developed and the government has emphasized the importance of introducing policies and institutions to stimulate additional investment in ICT.

"The ICT investment can also actually lead to a win-win lower energy use-economic growth situation, and investment on ICT is an absolute good for society as it helps boost economic growth. The relationship between ICT and economic growth can be measured with the rate of development of digital economy. As a consequence, the effect of Information and Communication Technologies becomes a support for the economic growth of many developing and developed countries," he said.

As to him, it is advisable to take into account the impact of ICT on economic growth. Besides, e-governance and e-commerce are important sources of economic growth as the importance of ICT in the context of strategy for economic development of the country.

The importance of knowledge, innovation and ongoing technological changes linked to the advent of information and communication technologies (ICT) have engendered intense public discussions over the past few years. In particular, there is increasing awareness of the fact that these



# ICTET

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATION-ETHIOPIA

elements strongly determine the way of economic development and social progress across the nation, he opined.

He also said that regarding the growing importance of ICT and the way it is transforming the country, many academicians and researchers have focused on cramming the impact of ICT on economic growth at the industry level, at the national level, and at the cross-country level.

He said that it is very important since it has been proven that new technologies positively and strongly influence economic growth by accelerating the development and adoption of innovation processes and fostering competition.

Solomon said that in the modern economic perspective, information and communication technology is seen as an important production factor by reason of knowledge-driven economy. A range of knowledge, innovation and technological changes become important factor for economic growth. The importance of ICT knowledge for economic growth is witnessed invaluable. Depending on this, investing on information and communication technology becomes more important.

According to him, the main purpose of intensifying ICT is to foster economic growth across Ethiopia. True, information and communication technologies are of paramount importance in bolstering economic growth.

He said, "The impact of information and communication technology on main sectors that effects growth is immense, indeed! This will provide a better understanding of impacts of information and communication technology on economic growth and ICT-sensitive sectors that effect economic growth for the country. Technology boosts economic growth especially through ICT sensitive sectors."

As to Solomon, the ICT revolution had caused concrete and serious changes on the real economy. In particular, it created a huge goods and services economy with strong forward and backwards linkages. A faster and better speed of technological change and product improvement is now widely witnessed. Besides, technological innovation in the ICT sector has important macro-economic consequences.

Development in ICT may affect not only economic growth but employment as well,

and economic growth and employment may affect ICT development.

ICT development may positively affect productivity and growth, which will eventually lead to a higher employment, as such economic growth will positively affect labor market. The two important channels by which ICT can have real effects on real economy: production of ICT and the use of ICT. Firstly, the ICT sector itself become an important industry at global level coincided with the growth of the service industries and ICT revolution has contributed significantly to the whole economy by rising productivity.

The overall move for the development of ICT is really paying off as the technology has been helping nations come up with better production and productivity, he opined.

In the modern era of globalization, information and communication technology (ICT) is the main sector that stimulates economic development. It also enables technical developments in global communication, manufacturing techniques, and contributes a lot to the economic growth and sustainable growth. Many economic activities, including international trade and foreign direct investment (FDI), primarily depend on various modern ICT approaches and feasible economic development. The dynamic relationship between FDI, ICT, international trade, and economic growth is indispensable in Ethiopia.

"Information and communication technology (ICT), population growth, gross capital formation, openness and inflation are frequently well-thought out as important drivers of economic growth in all countries especially for developing ones such as Ethiopia. The importance of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in economic and social development arisen dramatically with high impressing position since the starting of rapid growth of these technologies and their market nationally, regionally and even globally."

Solomon said the important role of ICT is enabling the government and organizations to transform information into knowledge as a robust driver in evolving lasting change in the economy and society.

The contributing role of ICT is not limited to real economic growth; the enormous infrastructure development related to ICT and other macro and micro upshot can also control the socio-economic and

environmental situation.

As to Solomon, primarily, technological infrastructure based on ICT improves utilization of energy consumption, while collecting, installation of machineries, and distribution of these machines and equipment to come up with production suitable to ecological system.

He said, "The information communication has developed rapidly in recent years, and the continuous spread of information communication drives development of the internet, helps financial institutions provide diversified financial services, makes people more willing to accept income, and promotes the continuous optimization of developmental services."

Information communication can significantly affect economic development and provide the public with efficient services thereby augmenting economic development and technological innovation as well as financial products and services.

Yes, he said the impact of information communication on financial and economic development has heterogeneous characteristics, including regional heterogeneity and heterogeneity in foreign investment levels.

Solomon further stated that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) plays a pertinent role in bolstering economic growth and development of Ethiopia. True, Ethiopia is a country of more than 120 total populations. So, from the development point of view, it has been the main focus of the government to provide all citizens with developed economic strata via providing better services of infrastructure, agricultural development, financial services and public health services etc. to the rural area of the nation.

All the decisions whether political, social, economic, cultural or behavioral today depends on the ability to access, gather, analyze and utilize information and knowledge with a view to reinvigorating economic development across the nation.

In a nutshell, exploring the ICT growth nexus in the framework of digital economy and innovation as a driver of economic growth across Ethiopia and the horn region needs to attract due attention. Yes, as national investment rate is important to promote economic growth, it has to be well backed by digital system, and it found that ICT has been making significant contribution to economic advancement.

## Art & Culture

# Recollections of a leading light of the Ethiopian print media

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

It is indeed painful to write reminiscences of one of the guiding lights of *The Ethiopian Herald* newspaper in the 1980s and 1990s because of the complexity of working in the Press Department at that time. As I was myself a member of the older staff of *The Herald*, I had to share the hectic life of newspaper writing, editing and producing every day of the week except on Mondays. I was also witness to the censorship and self-censorship that was so rampant at that time that journalists were more concerned about "political correctness" rather than professional competence. It was the time when ideology took the front seat and journalism followed behind and serving it faithfully.

I joined *The Herald* quiet accidentally. As a fourth year university student, I was often thinking about how to make of money to support my family until I finished my studies. One fine day, I walked the short distance from Sidist Kilo down to Arat Kilo where the Press Department was located and found myself in front of the Berhanena Selam Printing Press building. I asked people around the place where I had to go to speak to the concerned press officials.

I was told that the Press Department was located on the sixth and seventh floors. I took the left and landed on the sixth floor. Then, I accidentally or intuitively went to the Addis Zemen editorial office and spoke to the first person I met when I opened one of the office doors. He asked me what I wanted.

"I have written an article on the Iran-Iraq war and I wanted it to be published in the newspaper!" I told him, somehow maladroitly. The Middle East war was in full swing and an international hot issue. The man took the handwritten article and saw it at a glance. When he realized that it was written in English, he hand it back to me. He took the article from me and saw it and realizing that it was written in English, he told me to go to the *Herald* office and talk to one of the editors. I went to *The Herald* office and knocked at one of the doors. Narayan Eshwaran, the venerable Indian editor, was sitting at his desk and poring over a piece of writing. He looked up at me through his thick reading glasses and asked me what I wanted.

"This is an article I have written for the paper!" I said timidly.

"Give it to me!" He said and took the article and added, "Come tomorrow! I'll see it and will tell you whether it is publishable or not!"

Esuaran returned to his work and I left the office with a feeling of indescribable happiness. I did not know how I walked back to the first floor instead of taking the lift. My heart was pounding under my shirt. I felt that it was indeed a great deal to work for *The Ethiopian Herald* as I realized it later on. It was also the beginning of my career as a short story writer and a novelist. My time at *The Herald* was indeed a time of hard learning the crafts of putting words to paper in a readable way.



I had always wanted to write and see my name appear on the cover of a book or as a byline below the headline of an article in a newspaper or magazine. But, I never expected my wish to be realized in such a fast and mysterious way. I returned to Esuaran the following day and to my great surprise the article was accepted for publication. To make a long story short, that was one of the happiest moments of my writing career.

The important thing about my "accidental" beginning of a career in *The Herald* was amazing even to me. I often think back at the time when becoming a journalist at the newspaper office was a tough bet because the standards or the professional demands were high. People like the famous writer and editor Ahadu Sabure and the novelist Bealu Girma had previously served *The Herald* in various capacities and they had set the standards high as they were a few of the best educated writers the country has produced.

When I joined *The Herald*, Yacob Woldemariam had left *The Herald* as its first editor-in-chief and became the editor-in-chief of the quarterly English magazine known as *Yekatit* or *February*, so named in memory the month when the Ethiopian Revolution of February 1974 swept the country quite spontaneously.

I met Yacob for the first time one morning when I went to Kiflom Adgoi's office. Adgoi was the editor-in-chief at that time and the two were close friends as I realized as soon as I saw them talking to one another and laughing loudly. Adgoi, whom I was acquainted with earlier through Esuaran, introduced me to Yacob. He said, "This is the young man who has just joined us as a new writer!" Yacob flashed his characteristically broad smile and asked me a couple of questions about my studies and why I have joined the newspaper.

"I hope you'll do fine here!" he added still smiling and wished me a good time there. "I've just read his article on the Iraq-Iran war and its looks fine!" Adgoi added, saying that the man in front of me was the first Ethiopian editor-in-chief of *The Herald* and that he was still contributing articles now and then in addition to his role as a kind of unofficial

advisor to him.

In the following weeks and months, as I struggled with my work for the newspaper, Yacob was often coming and going, commenting on the articles that appeared on the paper. He told me that he liked my articles, advising me to write more so that I can mature on the job. I received his advice enthusiastically and my encounters with him were happy moments of learning from a veteran with such a rich experience and a flamboyant writing style. One day, he told me that he used to write to *The Times* of London in Britain and that his articles were regarded with high esteem.

That was not an act of boasting or arrogance on the part of Yacob. I went straight to the Press Library and read his older pieces and found them to be some of the best articles I had ever read even by Western standards. I decided to go to him often for advice and he was more than happy to give it to me and he treated me as "a promising writer" and I continued to learn from him on a regular basis. One day, he invited me to contribute to the *Yekatit* English magazine he was editing at that time. I gave him a short story I wrote in English, which was a story about the 1984-85 famine in Ethiopia, if memory does not betray me. He liked the story and published it for the next issue of the magazine.

What struck me about Yacob, besides his enthusiasm and his smiling face was his energetic comportment and his pride in his work and long life. "I'm 60 years young!" he used to say whenever he talked about his age. He walked so fast that one had the impression that he was not 60 but younger than 50. Although he often travelled in his old Volkswagen, he was not as overweight as many of his friends who used a car to commute between home and workplace. I never saw him with a glass of drink and or a cigarette for which journalists of the time were famous of indulgence. However, he once told me that he was a chain smoker when he was working on *Addis Reporter* magazine, perhaps the best publication in English that had appeared in the entire history of journalism in Ethiopia.

Whenever he wanted to write an article, Yacob

would rush to Kiflom's office and proclaim in his high-pitched voice, "Today I am going to write an article on the Ethiopian Revolution!" although he was not famous for being a revolutionary. In his informal discussion with colleagues and friends, he was known to be critical of the military government and even the revolution itself for this or that shortcoming. He liked to discuss issues with people and he was fond of listening to their points of views.

When the *Yekatit* magazine was terminated or folded sometime in the 1990s, he recommended me to take over him and made his intention official to the head of the Press Department. I was then transferred to the former *Yekatit* office, which was Yacob's office and found the privilege to sit on his chair and write my articles on his old typewriter. Soon, *Yekatit* changed its old name and became *Dawn* and I did a lot of work on it before I left the Press Department to join the then budding private press.

My recollections of Yacob Woldemariam are a mix of nostalgia and regrets as the old guards of Ethiopian journalism are leaving the scene one after the other. Yacob was the best writer in English of his generation. He was keen to promote new talents and always ready to nurture the promising ones. Personally, he inspired me to greater achievements and hard work; without forgetting that he was also sometimes haughty without being overly arrogant.

His transfer to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs back in the 1990s was a real blow to mainstream journalism. However, he used that moment to pen a book of recollections of his time as a journalist, shedding light on the nature of his work as well reflecting on the history and the state of journalism in his time. It is a pity that he spent the last few years of his life in seclusion and illness, unable to do what he must have wanted to do, deep in his heart. It is a great loss indeed whenever leading lights of the old guard journalism school are extinguished and that diminishes us a little, particularly when we know that it is hard, if not impossible, to replace them with new people of their calibers any time soon.

# Science & Technology

## Making it rain:

### Efforts to advance cloud seeding technology in Ethiopia

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

The government of Ethiopia is exploring different innovative solutions to tackle water scarcity and drought in the arid and semi-arid areas. As part of its efforts to tackle climate change, Ethiopia has set the ball of Green Legacy Initiative rolling throughout the country so as to plant billions of trees. For the past five consecutive years now the effort has been underway. By increasing the forest coverage of the country, Ethiopia aims to tackle drought and rainfall scarcity.

Introduced in 2021, Cloud Seeding technology is a very recent practice in Ethiopia. For many Ethiopians, it was a surprise and something like breaking news to hear about a downpour using cloud seeding technology in March 2021. While addressing the members of the Parliament at that time, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) briefed them about the government's activities in the technology sector and announced the first application of cloud seeding in Ethiopia.

In March 2021, PM Abiy said that the perks of cloud seeding technology were introduced in Ethiopia for the first time. As a result of the cloud seeding, a heavy shower was witnessed, which was the first of its type in Ethiopia. For many Ethiopians, it was a surprise entry into cloud seeding technology after hearing the news from the words of PM Abiy.

Last week, I visited the National Water and Energy Exhibition organized by the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Water and Energy of Ethiopia at the Science Museum here in Addis Ababa. The national exhibition organized with the motto "Water for Prosperity" aims at promoting activities, new technologies, research outcomes and innovations in the water and energy sectors in Ethiopia.

Cloud Seeding technology is among the products presented at the National Water Exhibition. During my stay there, I had a talk with an expert from National Meteorological Institute of Ethiopia (NMIE), who was briefing about cloud seeding technology to visitors of the exhibition.

Leta Bekele, a researcher at the National Meteorology Institute, said that though cloud technology has been practiced since its inception in 1946 in the developed world, it is new for Ethiopia. Introduced in 2021, the technology is a latecomer in Ethiopia. According to Leta, Ethiopia started the technology in 2021 by implementing it around the North West part of the country around the Abay (Blue Nile) River Basin areas. It was effective at that time.

For Leta, the rain-inducing technique, cloud-seeding technology has been in practice for over six or seven decades in the developed world. As to him, there must be a cloud to practice the technology and it aims at making the existing cloud give a rain. By adding a harmless iodized substance to the existing



(Drone technology demo for Cloud Seeding by INSA)

cloud, the process involves seeding existing clouds to give water droplets that cover the area. It allows the available cloud to form an ice crystal which helps the cloud to give rain. By harnessing moisture and pulling it to earth, the technology brings rain mostly in dry areas or when a drought occurs.

"It is making the existing cloud give rain during dry seasons," Leta said, adding that but to practice it, there should be a cloud in the atmosphere. Leta added that the technology was been used for different purposes since its inception in 1946 by different countries. As to him, since its inception, the technology was used for flight safety by clearing clouds for flights and for fulfilling multipurpose dams, mainly hydro-power dams. During dry seasons and others, it was used for melting ice in the clouds so as to control its effects on crops while it rained.

For these purposes and other activities by identifying the type of cloud in the atmosphere, countries applied the technology, though it is new for Ethiopia. Ethiopia introduced the technology in 2021 as a means of solving rainfall shortages during the dry season. For Leta, by using the technology at the right time, it helps an existing cloud give rain. "If a cloud happens in a dry area, the technology helps to give rain the available cloud. But all clouds are not applicable for giving rain; the cloud must be a convective cloud," he stated.

Convective cloud forms when a warm humid air rises through cooler surrounding air in the atmosphere. Using radar technology to read the movement of the cloud in the area and the humidity and identify the type of cloud and speed of the air in the area, it evaluates the features of the cloud in the area. After these assessments, by using the technology, it helps the existing cloud to bring rain to the area.

After identifying the type of cloud in the area and the wind direction and the speed of the wind, the interference needs to develop the cloud to give rain, the expert stated. By providing the necessary information about the cloud in the particular area, by flying in to the area, the pilots add an iodized particle which is sodium chloride or potassium chloride in to the existing cloud, he added. The iodine particle, according to Leta, by its nature gathers moisture. Through that way,



the technology helps the cloud to give rain or to increase the volume of the rain.

Leta stated that, in 2021 Ethiopia applied cloud seeding for the first time in North Western part of the country, mainly around the Nile River basin. The aim was to facilitate the Abay Dam (Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam) water reservoir process.

Since then, the technology has been applied in 2022 and even in 2023 in different areas of the southern parts of Ethiopia. Leta said that in connection with the drought in Borena and some parts of the south-eastern areas of Ethiopia, cloud seeding technology was applied both in 2022 and 2023 at different times when cloud was present in the areas.

Meanwhile, Information Network Security Administration (INSA) on Thursday reported that cloud seeding technology is scoring encouraging results in supporting in rain scarcity areas to get rain. INSA noted that efforts are underway to come up with encouraging outcomes in making cloud seeding project realistic in Ethiopia.

On Thursday, INSA launched a cloud seeding technology demonstration at home using three different methods: drones, ground generators and remote-controlled ground generators. All three tests, according to INSA, were successful. During the event,

INSA Director-General Solomon Soka said that cloud seeding efforts in rain-scarce lowland areas of the country bring notable outcomes in solving the rainfall scarcity.

Solomon reiterated that efforts are going on to expand the cloud seeding technology so as to expand the technology to cover more areas in the country. For her part, Minister for the Ministry of Irrigation and Lowland, Aisha Mohammed, said that as Ethiopia's agriculture is dominantly dependent on natural rainfall, lowland areas of the country are facing rainfall scarcity and drought, which affect the livelihood of the people.

Expanding cloud seeding technology would help to solve rainfall scarcity and to tackle drought in the lowland areas of Ethiopia. Aysha stated that Ministry of Irrigation and Lowland works with INSA in developing the technology and in providing support for the work of 60 ground generators necessary to develop cloud seeding.

Cloud-seeded technology is based on hydrological and climatological aspects of the atmosphere. By helping the area get rain or enhancing rainfall in the area by using the existing cloud, the technology helps make farming suitable in the area. Though Ethiopia has started applying the technology since 2021, it still uses rented planes from abroad as it has no planes for this purpose.



# Society

## Turning the tide of corneal blindness

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Visual impairment and blindness are one of major public health problems worldwide that can affect people of all ages and impact an individual's quality of life by making daily activities challenging.

The negative impact not only causes significant health problems on affected people but also caregivers and society at large.

According to WHO's latest report (10 August 2023), globally, at least 2.2 billion people have a near- or far-sighted impairment. In at least one billion of these, vision impairment could have been prevented or is yet to be addressed.

The leading causes of vision impairment and blindness at a global level are refractive errors and cataracts. Vision impairment poses an enormous global financial burden, as the report indicated.

When it comes to developing countries where there are not enough health care services and eye care treatment is still in its infancy stage, the challenge is more pressing. Every year, millions of people are exposed to visual impairments and blindness that could have been easily prevented.

To address the challenge and eliminate corneal blindness through providing integrated services at the health facilities, the Ministry of Health has been working persistently.

Especially, by establishing a responsible institute, the Eye Bank of Ethiopia (EBE) is striving to address the problem and eradicate corneal blindness by joining hands with local and international institutions. The prime task of the Bank is collecting corneal tissues, preserving and distributing to beneficiaries in accordance to set standards.

The Bank has been operational since 2003; and is providing services to communities in hinterlands and urban parts of Ethiopia.

Last week, EBE commemorated its 20 years establishment anniversary by organizing a number of informative events and acknowledging various institutions that have been supporting its effort to eliminate corneal blindness.

The event, including President Sahle-Work Zewde, was attended by senior government officials and health professionals.

President Sahle-Work also called on institutions and fellow citizens to support the EBE.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Blood and Tissue Bank Desk Officer Liya Tikabo said that corneal blindness is a major health problem. The national blindness study released in 2006 confirmed that not less than 300,000 Ethiopians went blind due to corneal scarring, and the figure will increase for sure.

Ethiopia needs more facilities that could provide services on eye health problems because it is one of the countries with the



highest rates of blindness (1.6 %) and low vision (3.7 %), of which more than 80 percent is either treatable or preventable cases.

Responding to the impact of the disease, she said corneal blindness is an eye disorder that changes the corneal transparency, causing corneal scarring and blindness. The leading causes of corneal blindness include infectious causes, due to bacteria, viruses, fungi, and protozoa.

"If it is treated early, it is avoidable; thus, the Bank encourages communities to bring affected fellow citizens timely."

She further noted that eliminating corneal blindness requires patient access to good-quality, affordable eye care across all stages; and providing integrated corneal health services into primary healthcare systems, and access to transplant tissue.

In this regard, the role EBE plays in regaining sight is indispensable. "We have eleven specialized medical doctors working in various parts of the nation; we provide them with tissue as per their request," she remarked.

As to her, the Bank dispatches tissues to Jimma, Hawassa and Adama through high standard transportation service.

It is also working along with local and international organizations to ensure quality services and provide technical assistance for nations in the process of establishing eye banks.

For instance, EBE has assisted Mali in providing training in its effort to establish Eye Bank of Mali. The Bank will keep on working along with African nations and local as well as international institutions.

"EBE has helped 3075 fellow citizens to regain sight since its establishment, and we would like reaffirm our commitment in providing quality services. It offers services through internationally certified standards and we will maintain it."

Bank's Public Relations and Communication CEO Alemayehu Tarekegn said that the Bank aspires not only to be one of the hubs of excellence in eye medical services and corneal tissue transplantation but also a center of excellence.

The Bank is providing medication services serving as a model for development throughout Africa via the establishment of the first eye bank in sub-Saharan Africa, which will utilize global best practices, ensure a steady supply of tissue to the country, and drive cornea health system policy enablers.

EBE is the only eye bank in the country engaged in the collection and storage of donor's cornea, and per annum, the Bank harvested about 130–150 corneas.

However, according to him, the amount of cornea harvested every year mismatches with the number of people waiting for cornea transplantation.

There is a wide disproportion between the demand and supply of corneal tissues; for the reason people are still reluctant to donate their cornea after death; the transplant activity is also reliant on the willingness of people to donate their cornea after death, he reiterated.

He further noted that lack of awareness and unwillingness to donate cornea is resulting in absence of corneal tissues in eye banks for various reasons including age, gender, and religion, among others.

According to Alemayehu, efforts are underway to bridge the gap and create an informed community towards what corneal tissue donation means.

Ethiopia is a pioneer country that collects tissues locally and provides services to the communities who are in need of the tissue.

To elevate tissue donation practices among the community, EBE is working along with media houses, school clubs as well as dedicated individuals targeting on awareness raising activities.

He also urged the people to donate tissue and support those in need of cornea rather than let it decompose, "Our donation could help to illuminate the life of individuals who are affected by visual impairment. If we stand in unison we can let thousands regain sight, eliminate corneal blindness," he concluded

EBE was realized in 2003 after a tripartite agreement reached between ORBIS international, the EBE and the Addis Ababa City Administration.

**E**thiopia is a pioneer country that collects tissues locally and provides services to the communities who are in need of the tissue



# This is Ethiopia

## The shining Ethiopian athletes' victory!

BY TEWODROS KASSA

According to the final medal table, the Ethiopian athletics team finished the championship ranked 6th at global level and 2nd from Africa following Kenya at the recent World Athletics Championships, Budapest Hungary 2023. Ethiopia has collected nine medals in the Athletics Championships.

The Ethiopian athletics team returned home after winning two gold, four silver, and three bronze medals at the 19th World Athletics Championship that took place in Budapest, Hungary, from 19–27 August 2023. Ethiopian athletes have showcased outstanding performance and made a colorful victory at the challenging medium, long-distance, and marathon racing. Their victory fascinates everyone across the country.

What is more, the successive victory of the Ethiopian athletes will have enormous potentials to expedite the country's tourism sector development. Participating and winning in such an international tournament is an important milestone to promote the country's various natural, historical, cultural, among others gifts in the world arena.

The Ethiopian athletes have built a good name enchainned with successive historical achievements of the world renowned marathon runner and first African gold medal winner Abebe Bikila. Ethiopian marathon runner Abebe won a gold medal and set a world record while running barefoot at the 1960 Olympic Games held in Rome, then bested his own record at the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo. Since then, Ethiopia has gained more attention from the international community and his victory also motivated international tourists to discover the country.

The female athletics team was more successful in the Budapest World Athletics Championship. Withstanding all the challenges the athletes wrote a colorful victory to themselves and the country.

The Ethiopian female athletes sweep the 10,000 meters medals. Gudaf Tsegay won the gold medal with an outstanding performance while Letesenbet Gidey and Ejgayehu Taye complete the all-Ethiopian podium, finishing second and third, respectively. This achievement showcases the team sprits of Ethiopians and sends a message of unity to become successful. The competition and the victory also made all Ethiopians residing at home and abroad dragged their full attention and compelled them to set their eyes and mind



Photo: FBC

Ethiopians swept the 10,000m Women's Race at Budapest World Athletics

on their TV screen. What is more, the competitions and the victories have shown Ethiopians unity and cooperation.

In his twitter page, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) tweeted that; "Proud daughters of Ethiopia raise the flag once again at the World Athletics Championship in Budapest. A sweep for Ethiopia in the women's 10,000m."

In his congratulatory message after the women marathon racing wrote; "Congratulations again to our female athletes at the World Athletics Championships Budapest 2023 who claim gold and silver in the women's marathon. Together we are destined to achieve many more great feats."

Recently, the Ethiopian athletics delegation has received hero's welcome upon arrival at the Addis Ababa Bole International Airport. The team, which registered an impressive results at the 19th World Athletics Championships, was welcomed by senior government officials including Culture and Sport Minister, Kejela Merdasa, Foreign Affairs State Minister, Ambassador Birtukan Ayano, Women and Social Affairs Minister, Ergoge Tesfaye and members of the athletics community.

The athletics team traveled through the main streets of Addis Ababa. The public also expressed deep respect and joy to the team chanting with victory songs. In doing so, the athletes' success motivated the youths and residents of the city to further victories.

During his media briefing, Culture and Sport Minister Kejela Merdasa told local media that the Ethiopian athletics team has registered an impressive achievement at the 19th World Athletics Championship in Budapest.



While Ethiopia's athletics delegation celebrating success upon arrival at Addis Ababa

Members of the Ethiopian athletics team who have taken part at the World Athletics Championship in Budapest, Hungary, deserve warm welcome, the Minister of Culture and Sport said.

He conveyed a congratulatory message to the people of Ethiopia, as well as to the sports loving families and the brave athletes for scoring a decisive victory in the 19th World Athletics Championship by making the country's flag fly high in the world square.

As to him, the victory strengthens a winning mentality among the new generation and motivate other athletes further strive and to become successful in the athletics field. A hero's welcome upon the return of the Ethiopian athletics team members to Addis Ababa was organized following the effective teamwork achievement at all racing.

Moreover, he pointed out that "our country, Ethiopia, is a country that has been registering impressive achievements

with its brave athletes from the 1st World Athletics Championship to the 19th World Athletics Championship."

Accordingly, having such an impressive reception ceremony to the athletes that made Ethiopia proud and built the image of the country at the international stage will have significant contributions to initiate the new generation to follow their footsteps.

Ethiopians and the sports-loving community encouragement to the members of the team at the reception were observed while the athletes share their joy with the people by touring major streets in Addis Ababa.

In sum, the victory of Ethiopian athletics team in such tournament will have significant roles towards effectively promoting the image of the country. Moreover, the success of the Ethiopian athletics team could be a great lesson to the new generations to fulfill their responsibilities effectively and strive to make own history.