



The Ethiopian Herald

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Ambassador Stephan Auer

Germany declares support for Ethiopia's post-conflict endeavours

BY EYUELKIFLU

ADDIS ABABA- Germany is ready to play a due role in supplementing Ethiopia's post-war recovery efforts including the rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants and the creation of job and economic opportunities, the country's ambassador said.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Germany's
See Germany declares ... Page 3

Ethiopia takes notable lessons from China's dev't: OPM

• Premier visits Chengdu's green city

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- Senior government officials led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) have drawn important lessons from China's infrastructural and technological development during their visits to Chinese

cities. The Office of the Prime Minister, Ethiopia (OPM) disclosed that the delegation has so far visited ports, technology centers and park in Chengdu and Shanghai cities of China.

The green city of Chengdu, which is the

largest city in the Sizchuan province of China has trade, education and medical cooperation with Ethiopia backed by the direct flight from and to Addis Ababa, according to OPM.

The premier visited the Tianfu New Area, the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding, and the Tianfu Agricultural Expo Park.

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Ethiopia's bid to sea access materializes via cooperation, concession

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia's pursuit to access to the sea would be materialized through cooperation and in a give and take approach with coastal neighbors, a researcher said, mentioning the former's appeal is not something strange.

Horn of Africa and Middle East Affairs Senior Researcher Belete Belachew (PhD) stated that Ethiopia's quest for sea access is not something surprising and other landlocked African countries have similar demand. "Of course, Ethiopia's demand seems vigorous when compared with other African countries."

Ethiopia's aspiration to seaports would not be realized through force and the issue

See Ethiopia's bid ... Page 3



Ambassador Tefera Derbew

Ethiopia, China lift ties to new heights: Amb. Tefera

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA –Ethiopia and China have been exerting joint efforts to deepen the socioeconomic and security sector cooperation and to lift the bilateral relationship to new heights, Ethiopian Ambassador to China said.

Approached by EBC, Ambassador Tefera Derbew expressed his belief

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News



Bloomberg
**Africa
Business
Media
Innovators
2023**

South Africa to host ABMI forum

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA - The sixth edition of the annual Africa Business Media Innovators (ABMI) forum will be held in Cape Town, South Africa between October 30 and November 1 in the presence of participants from media, business, government, technology sectors and community leaders from across Africa, the USA and beyond.

In a statement about the forum, Bloomberg Media CEO, M. Scott Havens said, "Against the backdrop of a fragmented global media landscape and challenges to business models at both a local and global level, this forum provides an opportunity for fresh approaches, ideas and solutions to building sustainable media business models in Africa and beyond."

Matthew Winkler, Editor-in-Chief Emeritus at Bloomberg News on his part said that ABMI comes at a time of growing optimism around Africa's economic potential and aims to act as a platform for action to catalyze investment, growth, and development by contributing to the strengthening of business and financial reporting on the continent.

Leaders at this year's convening will examine innovative business solutions re-shaping and contributing to the future of media and journalism both in Africa and globally.

The gathering will provide a unique, forward-looking platform for actionable dialogue and peer-learning as media leaders in Africa prepare for journalism in the digital age.

This year's convening focuses on the opportunities and challenges shaping the future of media in Africa. Key themes to be explored include the impact of new technologies, AI, and the future shape of work in newsrooms, along with a focus on the sustainability of legacy media across the continent against the backdrop of increased global competition.

There will also be analysis of the current state of the media landscape in Africa and globally, it was learnt.

The annual event is a component of the Bloomberg Media Initiative Africa (BMIA), a pan-African program launched by Michael R. Bloomberg in 2014 designed to advance business journalism in Africa and accelerate development of a globally competitive media and financial reporting industry.

Ethiopia plans to cover 3mln. hectares with irrigated wheat

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – Plan set to cultivate wheat on about three million hectares of land in irrigation and to produce 117 million quintals in Ethiopia's main rainy season (June-August 2024), the Ministry of Agriculture disclosed.

Briefing the media yesterday, Agriculture Minister Girma Amante (PhD) stated that activities including input supply and land preparation were finalized to attain the goal of irrigated farming in different parts of the country.

The ministry purchased one million 397, 552 metric tons of soil fertilizer for the 2023/24 harvesting season and distributed it to farmers through state unions and associations. It also planned to purchase some 23 million quintals of fertilizer for the 2024/25 harvesting season. "Among the stated amount, one million 327, 574 metric ton was purchased."

According to him, the country managed to cover 92, 786 hectares of land with improved seed multiplication in the current harvest season. In the 2022/ 23 spring harvest season, the country managed to produce over 48 million quintals and cover



Girma Amante

2.7 million hectares of land.

"In a bid to boost agricultural product and productivity, the country covered 17.5 million hectares of land with seed in 2023/ 24 fiscal year, of which some 8.6 million is covered with cluster farming."

Girma further stated that Ethiopia succeeded

in fully controlling the Desert Locust infestations by traditional and modern mechanisms, especially through aircraft insecticide spray and chemical pesticides. Also, the ministry has been working to manage and prevent crop damage that has been caused by flock birds in Amhara, Oromia, and Central Ethiopia states.

Somalia lauds Ethiopia's commitment to combating terrorist Al-Shabab

ADDIS ABABA (ENA)- Somalia Ambassador to Ethiopia, Abdullahi Mohamed Warfa, has lauded the dedication and commitment of the Government of Ethiopia in eliminating Al-Shabaab.

Al-Shabaab is a terrorist group that has been trying to destabilize the Horn of Africa region, notably Somalia.

Ethiopia, in collaboration with other countries in the region, has been a key player in the fight against the group to maintain peace and security in Somalia.

In an exclusive interview with the Ethiopian News Agency (ENA), Ambassador Warfa lauded Ethiopia for its contribution in the fight against militant Al-Shabaab by paying huge sacrifices.

"The Ethiopian government has mobilized its forces to combat terrorism and stand alongside Somalia in the fight against the terrorists who have been trying to destabilize the region."

The ambassador further explained the existing cooperation between Ethiopia and Somalia in various fields, including economic and education.

According to him, bilateral relations between Ethiopia and Somalia are witnessing remarkable development and sustainable partnership.

"The economic relations are witnessing remarkable development and a sustainable partnership between the two countries, with the skillful leadership of the two countries aiming to strengthen ties and cooperation in the political, economic and security fields, which makes the two countries more



Abdullahi Mohamed Warfa

cohesive and closer."

There are various areas of cooperation between the two countries, the most important of which is security, trade, cultural and economic cooperation, Ambassador Warfa noted.

The ambassador pointed out that the memorandums of understanding in areas of economic and security cooperation which were signed in Mogadishu last September between the two countries through the high-level ministerial committee are a clear indication of the desire to strengthen relations between Ethiopia and Somalia.

The trade balance between the countries has reached approximately 4 million USD last year. Ethiopian exports included

dairy products and commodities such as vegetables and livestock, while Somalia exported fisheries, it was learned.

Moreover, Ethiopia is providing educational support for Somalia in addition to the economic cooperation, the ambassador said.

Stressing the need for strong solidarity among the countries in the region to fight Al-Shabaab and other terrorist groups that have been exporting terroristic activities in all neighboring regions, Ambassador Warfa urged all the pertinent actors in the region to intensify efforts to combat and eliminate the terrorist movement in the region.

"The terrorist Al-Shabaab is dangerous to national security of all countries in Africa, and East Africa in particular. We must join hands to fight this terrorist group and completely annihilate it from the Horn of Africa and East Africa," he said, adding that "the group does not have a specific geography, but rather extends its terrorist activities in all neighboring regions of Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, etc."

According to the ambassador, the Government of Somalia has also been carrying out large-scale operations to fight the group, in collaboration with countries in the region.

"Efforts are (also) underway to weaken this group by drying up its financial sources," he revealed.

Ambassador Warfa finally praised the role played by African governments in supporting the stability of Somalia in order to help the nation take up its place in continental and international arenas.

News

Nat'l Career expo improves disabled graduates' employability

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA - Graduate students with disabilities expressed their belief that the 2023 National Career expo has improved their employability as it brought employers and job seekers together.

Gezahagn Tolla who graduated in Chemistry from Addis Ababa University told The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that such type of expo has numerous advantages for disabled graduate students as it saves time, money in due course of searching for job.

Though the expo is a golden opportunity for graduate students enabling them easily apply to the companies for jobs, he noted.

As to him, searching for job in Ethiopia



Gezahagn Tolla

is difficult as a number of students are graduating each year. In this regard, disabled graduate students are facing problems, but such type of expo would play a significant role in finding jobs at a specific place and



Mesefin Ketema

time.

Sounding the above statement, Addis Ababa University School of Journalism and Communication disabled graduate

student, Mesefin Ketema on his part said that the expo would have numerous benefits in helping disabilities get relevant job and proper information.

This admirable activity should be encouraged so as to open chance for fresh students to be hired and reduce job related challenges across Ethiopia.

Such type of expo is not enough as compared with the number of graduates in the nation. Therefore, the Ministry of Labor and Skills should continue addressing challenges facing a number of disabled community members through a combined effort, the participants suggested.

It is to be recalled that the National Career expo 2023 was opened on Wednesday by the Ministry of Labor and Skills together with Dereja.com and Master card Foundation.

Ethiopia, China...

that the historical relation of the two countries has reached a new height due to a joint effort of the respective governments. The blossoming Ethio-China diplomatic partnership has not been reversed in the contemporary world; rather it would advance to a strategic level.

Mentioning the two countries' age-long and all-weather strategic cooperation, which is based on cooperation rather than competition, the ambassador said the partnership would lay ground for robust

inflow of investment, trade, tourism and technology. Furthermore, the cooperation also encompasses social aspects that includes people-to-people ties and military and other security issues.

"The current engagements are aimed to push the two countries holistic cooperation a step forward and ensure mutual benefit. Besides, it aims to transform the party-to-party cooperation into regional and global arenas."

According to him, Ethiopia stands at the forefront not only in Africa but also in the globe in pursuing robust economic and political partnership with China that would have a profound significance for the latter's development aspirations. Evidently, the two countries have been enjoying a comprehensive strategic cooperation in various fields including politics, economy, trade, investment and education as well as people-to-people ties.

Ethiopia's strong partnership with China

is of great significance in propelling its development aspirations and the cooperation in military, security, people-to-people and other frontiers is believed to bring an excellent opportunity to the East African country, Ambassador Tefera remarked.

Ethio-China relation has shown momentum which was manifested by high-level visits by officials of the respective countries, signing of various agreements and of flow of investment and trade among others.

Ethiopia takes...

Speaking with FBC, OPM Press Secretariat Head Billene Seyoum indicated that the visit to Shanghai stock market was essential in view of experience sharing as Ethiopia is developing economy and more importantly, the two countries share a lot in common.

Given the fact that Shanghai stock market is one of the leading stock market globally, having to see the technology and the system they have built was a significant experience considering the coming in to force of the Capital Market Authority (CMA) and securities exchange in the country recently,

she underlined.

Huawei's Shanghai, the other company where PM Abiy paid a visit to, has different project and investment in the country especially its contribution in the Telecom sector is worth mentioning, as to her.

The company has done a great deal in undertaking various activities that consolidate with Ethiopia's Digital strategy 2025.

Mentioning that the premier visited center's latest technologies, she reiterated that

the company could contribute more in the realization of nation's digital transformation plan.

Besides the fruitful bilateral discussion with Chinese Communist Party (CCP), experience sharing event was held given Shanghai is an ancient city that shares a great deal in the global economy with the capital, Addis Ababa.

Moreover, the leaders of the two countries held talks on how Shanghai and Addis Ababa could work together putting the way forward.

The Primer had also visited Yangshan Port which is situated in Shanghai is the largest port in China that can serve up to 2,000 containers.

The visit to the port, which is said to be part of Belt and Road Initiative and equipped with latest technology, was vital in which the country has drawn a significant lesson, as to her.

It is to be recalled the Ethiopian delegation arrived in China a few days ago to attend the 3rd Belt and Road Forum for international cooperation.

Ethiopia's bid...

requires the implementation of a plausible approach that would ensure the benefits of coastal neighbors in the Red Sea. "The issue of port should not be the source of conflict and strained relations in East Africa; it would rather serve as the means of cooperation and expand the horizon of partnership among member states."

As Ethiopia's foreign policy centers on cooperation, the current government's attempts to reduce dependency on a single port and diversify outlets is something laudable. Until the country secures a direct access to port, the incumbent should stick with the port diversification strategy.

Access to the sea is a matter of sovereignty and security for Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea regions have become the venue to

superpowers' rivalry for geopolitical, geo-economic, and geostrategic interests. Hence, Ethiopia's engagement in the Red Sea is timely and reasonable, Belete emphasized.

Meanwhile, Petroleum and Energy Authority Director-General Sahrela Abdulahi told local media that Ethiopia has been facing a petroleum shortage due to lack of sufficient deposit capacity in the port. The situation has been challenging the overall economic performance of the country.

Ethiopia has been working to diversify neighboring ports by signing agreements and the country considers securing access to the sea in a win-win approach, Sahrela remarked.

Germany declares...

Ambassador to Ethiopia Stephan Auer expressed his country's desire to contribute share in the creation of social cohesion and help Ethiopia to resolve internal conflicts amicably. "War and conflict could not be the solution to Ethiopia's current and emerging challenges and it is crucial to address them through dialogue and negotiation."

Germany has a firm belief that the current problems that Ethiopia has been facing would be resolved through dialogue and political bargain. All disputing parties involved would prioritize a political solution, as military confrontation is an inadequate approach. "I have confidence in the political parties' ability to engage in dialogue and seek peaceful resolutions."

Commended the enactment of the Pretoria Peace Agreement, Ambassador Auer stressed the speedy implementation of the accord to achieve sustainable peace and stability. Constructive peacebuilding has played an immense role in the reconstruction process and delivering

tangible benefits for peace. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP-Ethiopia) and Germany's recent agreement for delivering aid for conflict victims was seen as a crucial step in demonstrating the positive impact of peace to the people.

He further highlighted the significance of transitional justice mechanisms, claiming that they encompass more than just truth telling and reconciliation. "Accountability was identified as a crucial aspect, particularly for the victims seeking justice."

Regarding the two countries bilateral relations, the Ambassador mentioned Germany's unwavering support and friendship, even during the two years of conflict in north Ethiopia. Germany has refocused its aid strategy to ensure direct access to the affected community. "This strategy is instrumental to curtail aid diversion and to ensure that aid reaches those in need."

Ethiopia and Germany have enjoyed longstanding diplomatic relations.

Opinion

Cherry-picked report never undermines Ethiopia's effort on humanity

BY HIZKEL HAILU

A week before, the International Commission of Human Rights Experts issued a report on the humanitarian situation in Ethiopia. However, Ethiopia, in a statement issued by the Permanent Envoy of Ethiopia to the United Nations has announced that it would not accept the report which is untrustworthy. Indeed, the report seems like having an axe to grind with a hidden agenda that can influence the country.

According to the Ethiopian government, the charges in the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE) study has not properly investigated the reality on the ground, and the data was collected remotely from unreliable sources. As a result, the report's findings are no longer accurate statement to the situation in Ethiopia. It is also crystal clear that such cherry picking reports are always biased.

The commission did not follow the proper investigation process and did not consider the current situation on the ground in Ethiopia. The statement by the Permanent Envoy of Ethiopia to the UN, which recalled the signing of the Pretoria Agreement in South Africa to end the war in the northern part of the country, raised the possibility that silenced the guns in that area.

Following ICHREE's report, Ethiopia's Permanent Mission to the UN has expressed regret over the UN Under-secretary General's irresponsible statement regarding the situation in Ethiopia. According to the statement, the charges in the report has not been properly investigated on the ground, and assembled remotely from unreliable sources. As a result, the report's findings are no longer accurate or reckless statement to the situation in Ethiopia.

"The government is determined to ensure the full implementation of this (peace) agreement (with the Tigray People's Liberation Front)".

Undoubtedly, the Ethiopian government has consistently demonstrated its commitment to the implementation of the Pretoria Agreement and the establishment of peace in the country. Various steps have been taken to ensure transparency and accountability in the process. Despite the challenges posed by conflicts in certain regions, the government has remained committed to resolving these problems peacefully through discussions and negotiations for the benefit of all Ethiopian people.

Current situations in Tigray are very far from the content of the report. Efforts to restore normalcy and stability in the region are well underway. The establishment of the interim administration and the gradual resumption of key services such as agriculture, health, education, banking, power supply, and telecommunication indicate tangible progress. The federal government and the interim administration of Tigray are working diligently to ensure the full restoration of these services, reflecting their commitment to the well-being of the region's residents.

Mentioning that Ethiopia is in the final stages of formulating a Transitional Justice Policy to ensure accountability and justice, the statement further queried the Special Advisor to retract the inaccurate statement that stands contrary to the consolidation of peace in the country.

Moreover, the Ethiopian government has actively engaged in providing aid and support to internally displaced people, despite the immense challenges it faces. Recognizing the limitations of its capacity, the government has appealed to the international community for assistance in providing relief to those in need. These efforts demonstrate Ethiopia's dedication to addressing the humanitarian crisis and ensuring the well-being of its citizens.

Rather, it is trustworthy valuing the right deeds underway by the government in law enforcement and sustaining peace across the country despite conflicts in some parts. Moreover, the government's endeavor regarding conflicts in Amhara and Oromia regions is to come to the solution in a peaceful way through discussions for the benefit of the entire people. To this end, the government has started practical activities through the National Consultative Commission and is in the final phase of preparing a transitional justice policy and putting it into operation.

However, it seems that the cat has got ICHREE's tongue to witness government's efforts. And issuing such report is good for nothing except to harm the reputation of the government.

Apart from this, Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has condemned the inaccurate report by ICHREE, emphasizing that it undermines the government's efforts to establish peace in the country. The government's commitment to peace is evident, and it calls for the silencing of voices that disseminate hatred and unfounded news, as such actions only perpetuate further suffering and harm to the people.

On the contrary, it is time to silence voices that disseminate hatreds among the peoples especially those reside in the overseas. They are adding fuel to the fire by reporting unfounded news. In keeping up their destructive way, they can do nothing beneficial except aggravating death, loss of property and pain of the people.

Cherry-picking reports, which involve selectively choosing information or data to support a particular viewpoint while ignoring contradictory or unfavorable evidence, have several disadvantages in a nation's path towards prosperity. From the scratch, such reports lack objectivity and can be biased. By selectively presenting only information that supports a specific narrative or agenda, these reports fail to provide a balanced and comprehensive view of the subject matter. This can lead to a distorted understanding of the situation or issue being reported.

Apart from this, important context and relevant facts may be omitted or downplayed when cherry-picking occurs. This can result in a distorted representation of reality and a skewing of the overall picture. The selective presentation of information can mislead readers or listeners and prevent them from forming an accurate assessment of the situation.

It can also damage the credibility and reputation of the government. Organizations or individuals associated with these cherry-picking reports may suffer reputational damage. Being associated with biased or misleading reporting can lead to accusations of dishonesty, lack of transparency, or manipulation of information. Such negative perceptions can harm the standing and trust in those responsible for producing or endorsing the report.

Henceforth, it is important to critically evaluate information from multiple sources and seek a balanced understanding of issues to avoid the pitfalls associated with cherry-picking reports. It is thus, crucial for the international community, including organizations like ICHREE, to acknowledge and support these efforts, standing alongside the Ethiopian government in its pursuit of peace, stability, and progress it is making in applying the elements of the Pretoria agreement.

The Ethiopian government's dedication to the nation's prosperity and the pursuit of peace is unwavering. It is actively working across various sectors to overcome the challenges posed by conflicts and strive towards sustainable development. Ethiopia has also embarked on a nationwide dialogue to address past and present grievances and

to forge a peaceful future for all Ethiopians through the National Dialogue Commission.

By focusing on constructive dialogue and inclusive processes, Ethiopia aims to address the root causes of conflicts and promote reconciliation among different communities. The government's commitment to peace is evident in its efforts to restore normalcy in conflict-affected regions while providing aid to internally displaced people. However, because of the widespread nature of the problem and bulk number of people that need aid; the government badly seeks immediate assistance from the international community.

It is essential to recognize the progress made by the Ethiopian government in implementing the Pretoria Agreement and its dedication to resolving conflicts through peaceful means. The establishment of an interim administration in Tigray and the restoration of vital services demonstrate government's tangible steps towards stability and the well-being of the region's residents.

Furthermore, Ethiopia's full-fledged engagement for the fruitfulness of the effort of the National Dialogue Commission and the formulation of a transitional justice policy showcase its commitment to accountability and justice. By addressing past grievances and promoting reconciliation, the government aims to ensure a peaceful and inclusive society throughout Ethiopia.

Cherry-picking reports that are normally done through selectively presented information can hinder the pursuit of peace, stability, and prosperity. It is crucial to approach information critically, considering multiple perspectives and seeking a balanced understanding of complex issues. Ethiopia's commitment to peace and its efforts to address conflicts through providing humanitarian aid, and promoting reconciliation should be acknowledged and supported by the international community as the nation strives for a better future for its people.

All in all, it is of paramount importance to keep up smooth relation between the government and the human rights commission providing unbiased and fair report about every activity that has been held in Ethiopia or across the world. Besides, it is not fair to paint a one-sided picture as it favors a particular viewpoint while ignoring or downplaying the other side's perspectives.

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

Editorial

Strategic cooperation for mutual benefits

Ethiopia and China have enjoyed a long-lasting diplomatic relationship for more than half a century. The diplomatic relations played a significant role in promoting economic and diplomatic cooperation, people-to-people relations and international cooperation. Bilateral relations between the two countries have been strengthened considerably and moved to a level of comprehensive strategic partnership, reflecting the close ties that have advanced the socio-economic, political and people-to-people connections.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed along with his delegation has paid an official visit to China this week to attend the 3rd China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) forum and discuss bilateral issues with Chinese high level officials including President Xi Jinping.

Truly, the visit is fruitful for the reason that Ethiopia achieved ample of successes. To mention but a few, leaders of the two countries have signed 14 new agreements and exchanged views on ways to bolster the existing cooperation in economic and environmental issues.

According to Zemedeneh Negatu, an economist and the Global Chairperson at Fairfax Africa Fund, Ethiopia should capitalize its privileged membership of the China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the BRICS economic bloc to foster its trade and investment portfolio. The BRI is a very crucial Chinese investment worth over one trillion USD intended to connect strategic partners on land, sea and other mediums through funding and developing infrastructure. "It is vital to Ethiopia's economic development as it increases trade and investment as well as tourist inflow," he said.

Sideline with attending the BRI forum, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed held a bilateral meeting with the Chinese President Xi Jinping.

During the bilateral meeting President Xi congratulated the Prime Minister on Ethiopia's accession to BRICS and announced the elevation of partnership between the two countries from Comprehensive and Enduring Strategic Cooperative Partnership level to an All Weather Strategic Cooperation Partnership level. He further commended Ethiopia's achievements through the Green Legacy program citing its alignment with China's green development policy and affirmed it will an integral part of a green belt and road.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed indicated the importance of Chinese investments in Ethiopia's economy and encouraged more investments into the five key pillars of agriculture, manufacturing, ICT, mining and Tourism.

The two countries are working in collaboration on several sectors like investment, infrastructure development, education, trade exchanges and tourism among others. Ethiopia is highly benefited from China's investment. It can generate foreign currency from the export items Made in Ethiopia by the Chinese investors.

Besides, Ethiopian job seekers entertain the opportunity by working in the industries and infrastructural development works. Above getting employment, Ethiopians are privileged by acquiring knowledge and upgrading their skills while working with the Chinese professionals.

Ethiopia can also be benefited by capitalizing on the Belt and Road Initiative since the purpose of BRI is to secure trade and supply chains for China and to create prosperity via trade.

Through this initiative, Ethiopia can extend its relations with the countries incorporated in the initiative. It can strengthen its ties economically, politically and people-to-people relations. Further, the initiative can augment integration among African countries regionally and continentally and with other continents in the route.

Moreover, China's bilateral relationship with Ethiopia is one of its most prioritized in Africa and China believes Ethiopia is particularly significant in peace and security within east Africa.

Thus, capitalizing on the elevated all weather strategic cooperation partnership benefits both parties to keep up their relations lasted for decades and Ethiopia should do its level best to secure more benefit from the partnership.

Opinion

The need to support African youth, women entrepreneurs to transform Africa

BY STAFF REPORTER

African countries have been urged to promote gender responsive and inclusive policies to support women and youth entrepreneurs to accelerate trade development in Africa.

Speaking at the 14th African Congress for Women Entrepreneurs and 4th COMESA Federation of Women in Business Forum, the Principal Regional Advisor for Regional Integration and Trade Division at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Brendah Phiri-Mundia, said women and youth, have revolutionized entrepreneurship in Africa and they are better positioned to boost trade through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The Congress ran under the theme, Economic Empowerment and Entrepreneurship Promotion for Women and Youth and support of MSMEs for realizing Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and Regional Integration in line with Africa's Agenda 2063 and UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The congress took stock of progress on tackling challenges in accessing economic opportunities faced by women and youth across the African continent.

Ms. Phiri-Mundia noted that the AfCFTA which came into force in May 2019, could advance the global and continental goals on gender equality and women empowerment.

According to the ECA, the full implementation of the free trade area will increase the value of intra-Africa trade to US\$195 billion by 2045 compared to US\$113 billion recorded in 2020 which is the baseline.

Women have made an undeniable impact in the entrepreneurial landscape with research indicating that Africa alone has more entrepreneurs than other regions for both females and males. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rate of female entrepreneurs globally with approximately 26% of female adults involved in entrepreneurial activity.

The ECA's 2021 Women's Entrepreneurship Report estimates that reducing gender inequality will boost African economies by US\$316 billion.

Ms. Phiri-Mundia stressed that Africa's youth is a potent force for innovation and economic development with incubators, accelerators and government initiatives

helping young entrepreneurs turn their ideas into reality.

Recognizing the potential of women and the youth in business development, the ECA is providing support to Member States across the continent in the development of gender-responsive and inclusive policies and context-specific interventions to drive women and youth empowerment within the continental integration agenda.

"Support is being provided for gender mainstreaming in national and regional AfCFTA implementation strategies, capacity building of women's business associations and MSMEs to ensure they also take advantage of the opportunities under the AfCFTA," said Ms. Phiri-Mundia.

However, the challenges faced by both women and youth entrepreneurs cannot be ignored, Ms. Phiri-Mundia added, acknowledging the access to start-up financing, skills development, mentorship, promoted by various Women Business Associations and development partners to overcome the challenges faced by women and the youth.

The ECA has also stepped up its efforts to contribute to addressing the complex issue of collecting gender disaggregated data to support better policymaking and evidence-based advocacy across the African continent, said Ms. Phiri-Mundia, who represented the ECA Deputy Executive Secretary and Chief Economist, Hanan Morsy.

These efforts include a joint project with UNCTAD and the UN Economic Commission for Europe to "develop a coherent approach to measuring the impact of trade on gender equality using official statistics and building on the existing statistical data and capacity of countries".

She called for collective action to amplify collaboration in initiatives that address multiple barriers faced by women and youth which finance literacy and digital finance, apprenticeships especially in male-dominated sectors, digital skills training and profitability information across sectors.

The ECA is keen to deepen its partnerships and work towards a future where every woman and youth entrepreneur in Africa not only achieves their aspirations but also transforms their dreams into impactful, sustainable enterprises Ms. Phiri-Mundia said.

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

Art & Culture

Understanding vaccine hesitancy in the COVID-19 pandemic: *A research study in a high school community*

Conducted by *Blen T. Zewdie and Bitaniya T. Engidaw,*

Primary authors *Bitaniya T. Engidaw and Blen T. Zewdie*

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on communities worldwide, with our own high school community experiencing a significant increase in the number of COVID-19 cases. Over 1500 students in our high school compound, our particular school-Lideta Catholic Cathedral School-aiming to prioritize the health and safety of its staff and students, it implemented a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy. As one of the first few schools to take such a proactive stance, it had hoped to set an example for others. However, despite their best intentions, our school faced numerous challenges due to prevailing stereotypes and circumstances. As two students in this school, and as a part of the community, we embarked on a research study to explore the various beliefs within our community that contribute to vaccine hesitancy- outside our curriculum.

The primary objective of this research study was to investigate and understand the reasons behind vaccine hesitancy among students within our high school community, by exploring their beliefs and concerns surrounding COVID-19 vaccination, we aim to identify potential barriers and misconceptions that may be contributing to low vaccination rates.

To achieve our research objectives, we employed qualitative research methods such as interviews and surveys. Out of 50 students in 9th grade, only 10 had received the vaccine. Similarly, in 10th grade, out of another 50 students surveyed, only 8



were vaccinated. The numbers improved slightly for 11th graders with 12 out of 50 being vaccinated. Finally, among the senior class of 12th graders, only 14 out of another set of 50 had received their vaccinations. Landing on 8% of unvaccinated students out of the total 1500+, Even taking the staffs, more than 400, only half of the number remains vaccinated, despite the mandatory regulation to be vaccinated so. The large number of this trend was a fire-starting question on why so many people were choosing to land on the negative aspect of it. Through another survey conducted among the unvaccinated, we obtained 37.83% of the survey is not unvaccinated through religion prohibition. In being unaware of the vaccine at all and fearing the side effects resides the next reason why more than 24% of them are not vaccinated. Out of the 166, family persuasion takes the 26% and doubts on the effectiveness of the vaccine the remaining of the percentile on the negativity spread in the COVID-19 stereotypes.

Our research aimed to investigate the reasons why students in our high school have been hesitant to take the COVID-19 vaccine. Through a comprehensive analysis of survey responses and interviews with fellow students, we have identified several key factors contributing to this hesitancy.

Firstly, misinformation and lack of accurate knowledge about the vaccine were found to be significant barriers. Many students expressed concerns about potential side effects and questioned the effectiveness of the vaccine. This highlights the need for improved communication and education campaigns by both the government and the school administration. It is crucial that accurate information is disseminated to address misconceptions and provide reassurance regarding the safety and efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Secondly, peer influence played a substantial role in shaping students' decisions. Our findings revealed that some students were

influenced by their friends or social circles that held negative views towards vaccination. This emphasizes the importance of fostering a positive vaccination culture within our school community. Encouraging open discussions, organizing informational sessions, and involving influential student leaders can help dispel myths and encourage vaccine uptake.

Furthermore, logistical challenges were also identified as a contributing factor. Students mentioned difficulties in accessing vaccination centers or scheduling appointments due to conflicting commitments such as extracurricular activities or part-time jobs. Addressing these challenges requires collaboration between the government, school administration, and healthcare providers to ensure convenient access to vaccines for all eligible students.

To rectify these issues, it is imperative that both the government and school administration take proactive measures. The government should invest in comprehensive public health campaigns targeting young individuals specifically, addressing their concerns through clear and accessible information channels.

In conclusion, our research underscores the urgent need for concerted efforts from both governmental bodies and educational institutions to address vaccine hesitancy among high school students effectively. By providing accurate information, fostering a positive vaccination culture within schools, and addressing logistical challenges, we can work towards increasing vaccine uptake rates among students in our high school community. Only through collective action can we ensure a safer environment for everyone during this ongoing pandemic.



Like a cigarette

BY ALEM HAILU G/KRISTOS

Bro, tell me please
To your heart's content
Enjoying a French kiss
In squeezing out
The nectar of their lady-hood
Not remiss,
Are the lasses
A cigarette
For a while you keep
By your chest
To burn them to ashes
And ignominiously
Squash them down
Under your heels?

Soaring with wings of success

BY ALEM HAILU G/KRISTOS

"When we hand down
This flag to posterity
Paying prices of life
To the country's
Age-old sovereignty
It is with a word of caution
'This generation
Should accord due attention
To handing down
To the coming generation
A new Ethiopia
To fruits of development
A cornucopia!'"

"Yes, grandpa
Working day and night
We shall take Ethiopia
To a new developmental height!

Once Ethiopia was great
How could we that forget?

The country's renaissance



Firm we shall advance!

For common growth
Resources we

Shall harness,
Allowing the region
Soar with wings of success!"

Law & Politics

The crucial role of Transitional Justice in building sustainable future

BY EYUEL KIFLU

Through dialogue, mediation, and community engagement, different factions within Ethiopian society can come together to address past grievances and work towards a shared vision of a peaceful and prosperous future. By fostering understanding, empathy, and forgiveness, transitional justice process can facilitate the rebuilding of trust and unity among diverse communities.

Transitional justice plays a crucial role in addressing and mitigating the challenges faced by Ethiopia. Like numerous other nations, the country has witnessed periods of political turmoil and conflict. However, through the implementation of transitional justice measures, the country can effectively confront these predicaments and work towards a more stable and harmonious society.

Transitional justice can support the reintegration of former combatants or individuals involved in conflicts back into society. By providing opportunities for rehabilitation, education and employment, these initiatives can help individuals transit from a life defined by violence to one characterized by productivity and positive contribution. This can contribute to the overall stability and development of Ethiopia.

As a matter of fact, this process fosters a sense of validation, acknowledges victims' suffering and helps to break the cycle of violence. Transitional justice fosters societal healing and psychological well-being. Through various forms of support such as counseling, mental health services, and community-based initiatives, the process seeks to address the psychological impact of past violence and trauma. This enables individuals and communities to rebuild their lives, restore their dignity, and find closure.

In a similar vein, by engaging in open dialogues and inclusive processes transitional justice initiatives can promote understanding, empathy, and solidarity among different ethnic groups. This can foster a sense of shared responsibility and ownership over the healing and reconciliation process leading to greater social cohesion.

By holding perpetrators accountable, fostering healing and reconciliation and promoting human rights and institutional reforms, transitional justice initiatives can help Ethiopia move towards a more inclusive and just society. By embracing these mechanisms, the country can build a future where the mistakes of the past are acknowledged, learned from, and never repeated.

Transitional justice initiatives can contribute to breaking the cycle of violence and division. This can pave the way for a more inclusive and united Ethiopia where the mistakes of the past do not hinder



progress but serve as lessons for the future. By documenting and revealing the truth about past atrocities, societies can ensure that future generations are aware of the consequences of such actions and work towards preventing their recurrence.

It is common knowledge that numerous countries around the world are grappling with conflicts that arise from issues such as ethnic identity, religion, color, and resources. This leaves governments, elites, and other stakeholders with the arduous task of addressing the conflicts and finding ways to resolve them. One of the ways in which conflicts within a country can be resolved is through the implementation of transitional justice. This involves providing justice to victims who were affected during the conflict and holding those who inflicted harm or made mistakes accountable for their actions.

When initiating the transitional justice program, the Ministry of Justice highlighted four main reasons why its implementation is crucial nationwide. The first reason cited was that there has been a rampant violation of human rights within the nation leading to instability, strife, and civil war. This has resulted in people being exposed to various forms of harm such as physical injury, death, and displacement from their homes. Secondly, it was noted that effective transitional justice is essential for the development of the state. Through the program previous transgressions can be corrected and measures put in place to foster reconciliation, promote positive interpersonal relationships, ensure accountability and undertake other critical tasks geared towards creating a stable environment.

The implementation of transitional justice is a necessary step towards achieving a society where human rights are respected and people can coexist peacefully without fear of harm or displacement. The third justification is that there cannot be a democratic transition or enduring peace in the absence of a successful transitional justice process. The last compelling reason is that transitional justice is critical to upholding human rights.

Since collecting policy options for transitional justice has started, the expert group is working on pre-policy consultation

with different stakeholders. The collection of inputs for the policy is done through consultation regionally and in the two city administrations. The group is now in the process of making abstracts that help with the policy and they are organizing documents they collected from their consultations with different participants, according to Kalkidan Dereje, a member of the Transitional Justice working group and an expert.

Kalkidan told The Ethiopian Herald that one means of Transitional Justice success is a victim-focused approach. Regarding this, the Ethiopian Transitional Justice expert group is taking this as a lead principle and working on it.

She went on to say the group is also taking 60 % of the participants from victims as a principle and it was consulting with different victims in different areas. The expert group also consulted with victims who were in Amhara, Tigray, and Afar regional states during the northern Ethiopian conflict.

She added that with the cooperation of UN Women and other international organizations, only consultations with women survivors from the northern conflict were held in Bahir Dar and Mekelle. Almost all the consultations that the expert group held were victim-based. Government bodies are supportive of managing the place so that it is secure for participants and the group.

Kalkidan emphasized that the government has not interfered with their work which has been instrumental in ensuring their autonomy.

The objective of the expert group is to gather input that will shape the transitional justice policy. Consequently, they have been discussing the policy options presented during the consultation forums.

She elucidated that in this process, in addition to collecting inputs, there was also empowerment. In such a process, our society was creating a feeling of empowerment and a sense of ownership by talking about the idea from the very beginning. Therefore, we see this process as paving the way for the policy. Also, having consultations and being able to talk about transitional justice is a big achievement in itself.

Moreover, it has paved the way for implementation. The group is promoting political and social commitment. It is also laying a solid foundation for future transitional justice implementation work. As a group of experts, the group found stronger ideas and perspectives than we thought possible. The policy will be prepared based on the ideas conducted.

The next task of the group is to properly document inputs and then prepare them for report writing. As a matter of fact, the group is working on that. In addition, the inputs will be written in detail, and the group has received feedback beyond the consultation forums. This means that the report feeds the policy, Kalkidan said.

Looking ahead, the expert group anticipates conducting three more consultations. They plan to commence the subsequent phase of work as a group in the coming days. According to the group preliminary schedule, it is expected that the report will be completed in the near future. Report writing makes the policy-drafting process much easier, she said.

Kalkidan expressed her perspective on the acceptance of the transitional justice idea by the people stating that the consultations which initially faced scepticism eventually generated a sense of ownership among the participants. People openly shared their thoughts expressing their concerns and seeking reassurance regarding the implementation of the proposed measures.

The expert group has effectively conveyed the benefits of transitional justice to the community explaining its significance and emphasizing the group's independence. Consequently, an agreement has been reached with the community acknowledging that transitional justice will contribute to the country's welfare.

The Transactional Justice initiative in Ethiopia reflects the country's commitment to addressing internal conflicts, promoting reconciliation, and ensuring accountability. Through consultations and stakeholder engagement, the expert group aims to formulate a healthy policy that will pave the way for the implementation of transitional justice, ultimately contributing to sustainable peace and the upholding of human rights and the rule of law.

Africa is considering EVs as technology that will help it leapfrog to zero emissions

Gerhard Muller

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Cities in developing countries are plagued with multiple problems such as congestion, pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, and road accident. Air pollution, has been a preoccupation of policymakers and researchers over the years and it is attributed mainly to increase in population, and car dependency for travel. Increasing vehicle ownership, decreasing non-motorized transport usage, the presence of aged vehicles and inadequate maintenance of vehicles pose serious challenges to policymakers and government agencies responsible for maintaining good air quality.

It is evident that vehicle emissions are problematic not only for the global environment but also for human health and road safety. CO₂ specifically leads to climate change and other vehicle emissions contribute to air pollution, causing negative health effects for the world's inhabitants. It is generally acknowledged that a logical way to reduce these negative impacts would be to decrease vehicle emissions. Many support the view that a reduction in the number of vehicles on the road is an appropriate strategy to curb vehicle emissions. To that end, the increasing trend of private vehicle ownership could be replaced by increased reliance on public transportation.

The use of public and non-motorized transport and reduction of private car ownership especially for trips in urban areas are common trends in many countries that seek to reduce air pollution. The benefits of shifting from private to public transport are well known. For instance, a reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2,180 kg per year could be achieved if a person who commutes alone by private car for a 32 km round trip switches to public transport for the same trip.

A number of studies on vehicle emissions have been undertaken in Ethiopia. This is important in the context of analyzing the environmental impact of used vehicles. In this regard, imported second-hand vehicles constitute 85% of the country's vehicle fleet. The average age of vehicles in the country is 20 years, suggesting that public transport vehicles in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital city, are old and their emission levels are significant and beyond the expected environmental standard.

In Addis Ababa, while the fleet of public transport vehicles is less than 15% of the vehicle population, it contributes almost one-half of the hydrocarbon emissions and more than 27% of the carbon monoxide emissions by vehicles in the city. This implies that exhaust gases from public transport vehicles are major pollutants of the city's air, with improperly maintained vehicles contributing significantly in that regard.

Today's, guest of the Ethiopian herald



Digitalization and transformation into automated and emission-free vehicles hold great promise for making transport ever safer, cleaner and more sustainable

is, Gerhard Muller, president of The International Motor Vehicle Inspection Committee (CITA). In the brief stay we had, he raised a range of issues directly or indirectly related to vehicles contribution to affect the livelihood of the people through emitting carbon. Have a nice read!

Lets us start with the purpose and goal of CITA's establishment?

CITA is the international association of public and private sector organizations actively involved in mandatory road vehicle compliance. It was founded in 1969, Ostend, Belgium. CITA is dedicated to improving road safety and protecting the environment and to developing best practice on mandatory vehicle compliance activities. It is also an international forum for exchanging information, experience and expertise related to vehicle compliance and it recognized by the European Commission, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the World Health Organization, the Global Road Safety Facility of the World Bank and other international stakeholders for its expertise about vehicle compliance.

CITA has defined its Vision as enabling its members to play an influential role in the development and implementation of policies for safe and sustainable road usage.

This vision will be supported by CITA's Mission to provide the forums to create assess and promote best practice, ensuring safe and compliant vehicles throughout their life cycle. This will allow all members to play a leading role in shaping the future for sustainable Roadworthiness Inspection & Enforcement in all regions of the world.

Could you tell us CITA's continuous commitment to create safer roads?

The year 2023 and 2022 were dominated by global crises. However, goals and measures to increase road safety and avoid traffic-related environmental pollution were high on political agenda around the world. The reason for this is that the global vehicle fleet will continue to grow rapidly and consequently the number of road accidents and the environmental impact. It is estimated that by 2050 there will be over two billion vehicles, many of which will still have an internal combustion engine.

This also increases the challenges for road safety and traffic-related environmental pollution, especially in urban regions. The demands to make transport more sustainable for a better quality of life are increasing: less noise, cleaner air, less congestion, better roads, and a lower risk of accidents.

Digitalization and transformation into automated and emission-free vehicles hold great promise for making transport ever safer, cleaner, and more sustainable. At the same time, however, these new technologies also create new risks that need to be controlled. With currently more than 250 million independent and valid vehicle inspections per year, CITA members make a significant contribution to addressing these major challenges.

Once again, CITA, together with its members and partners, successfully undertook many activities in the past year in order to develop solutions for these new challenges: We prepared recommendations and position papers, held conferences in Africa, Asia, North America and Europe, organized a large number of webinars and events, regularly exchanging views with all relevant stakeholders. All with the aim of increasing road safety worldwide and reducing the environmental impact of vehicles.

With the CITA Roadmap 2030, we are on the right track and well prepared for the challenges ahead. This was confirmed by the excellent results of the member survey conducted at the end of 2022, which gave additional motivation to the CITA association. This great achievement is due to the good and committed cooperation of the CITA secretariat and CITA members and I am personally very happy about it!

How do you explain the relations that your organization has with African countries?

Continued to Page 9



Africa is considering...

Continued from Page 8

African countries should set the minimum standard of vehicle inspection that enables them to reduce carbon emissions. Over 25 % of African countries are without a vehicle inspection system. I would be happy if every country would have a vehicle inspection system and they could agree on the minimum level. CITA's goal is to improve road safety and emission behavior of vehicles. So, we want to help African countries improve road safety with better vehicles and reduce emissions from vehicles.

Our organization is recommending vehicle inspection procedures to prove vehicles further requirements so that vehicles are keeping safety over the whole life cycle and vehicles are keeping the safe emission standard over the lifecycle. So that they are not polluting much more than they are allowed to. If vehicles are not inspected properly, nobody cares about the emissions they release. So, the countries need enforcement, clear descriptions, and educated inspectors.

In 2021, in the frame of the "Safer and Cleaner Used Vehicles for Africa" project, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) just released the first two CITA reports. In this regard, CITA participates in the activity by providing its experience and knowledge on whole-life vehicle compliance in general and vehicle inspection.

The first report is an analysis of information sources, reference and benchmarks, and a proposal for an information-sharing system at the conceptual level. A review of best practice and sources of information has been carried out with the main focus on light duty vehicles. Principles, in general, are applicable to other types and categories. To improve the situation with a safer and more environmentally friendly vehicle fleet in African countries, requirements on the technical status of imported vehicles in the respective countries are essential. As support of these import regulations, it is also important to set up exporting countries' rules.

The second report comprises the findings of the UN Road Safety Project "Safer and Cleaner Used Vehicles for Africa" project and establish a used vehicles inspection and monitoring framework and implementation compliance systems. In addition, the key results and recommendations of "Establish used vehicles information sharing system with data support", of the same project, are also given in this report.

In order to improve the situation with a safer and more environmentally friendly vehicle fleet in African countries, it is essential to impose requirements on the technical status of imported vehicles in the respective countries. In support of these import rules, it is also essential to set up exporting countries' laws.

Most of the time second hand vehicles are now emitting the environment. In this regard what do you advise developing countries in general and African countries

If vehicles are not inspected properly, nobody cares about the emissions they release. So, the countries need enforcement, clear descriptions, and educated inspectors

in particular?

Transportation stands as a pivotal pillar within modern civilization, serving as both a catalyst for economic progress and a generator of employment opportunities. Yet, despite its undeniable significance and the advantages it brings an alarming reality: the transportation sector emerges as one of the largest and swiftest contributors to carbon dioxide emissions, accounting for a substantial 16.2 % of the total global CO2 emissions in 2020. This disconcerting trend exacts a toll on human well-being and the environment.

In response to this pressing challenge, the necessity of addressing air pollution concerns and reducing the overreliance on crude oil for road transportation. Achieving this transformation necessitates the adoption of innovative mobility concepts aligned with principles of sustainable socioeconomic advancement. On an international scale, countries grapple with the imperative to curtail carbon emissions originating from the transportation sector. Alternative energy sources have emerged as promising candidates to supplant fossil fuels, which currently power nearly 92 % of



transportation fleets/vehicles.

Electric cars, also known as Electric vehicles (EVs), possess a smaller ecological footprint compared to traditional internal combustion engine vehicles (ICEVs). While certain aspects of their production may have comparable, reduced, or different environmental impacts, they have the advantage of emitting minimal to no tailpipe emissions. Furthermore, they help reduce reliance on petroleum, decrease greenhouse gas emissions, and mitigate the health effects caused by air and environmental pollution.

Pure electric vehicles are being seen by most African countries as the technology that will finally help them leapfrog to zero emissions thereby reducing the carbon footprint. They believe this will help them meet some of the sustainable development goals on clean environment.

In March 2018, about 52 out of 55 African countries signed on to the continental free trade area agreement with head office in Ghana. Standards will need to be harmonized across the continent to facilitate free trade, especially in vehicles. Most African countries have no standards on fossil fuel vehicles and electric vehicles. Current vehicle standards also need to be reviewed to enhance the attainment of the sustainable development goal on climate

action.

Indeed, Electric vehicles save emissions so that they have a huge impact when compared to combustion engine vehicles, I really would like to encourage African countries to make it possible that more electric vehicles will be registered in the future. But you also need the infrastructure—the charging point. So this needs a lot of investment. But I think you should do both. You should try to become zero-emission vehicles as well as make sure that combustion engine vehicles do not emit more than they should.

CITA helps build such a system because we have many members who have been rocking in this field for decades. So they can share experiences, and we can share recommendations. CITA members also, for example, implemented a completely new system in Turkey 20 years ago, so we have experience with how to build up a vehicle inspection system. African countries could benefit a lot from CITA experiences.

CITA's work in supporting electric charging in Africa and this is the perfect opportunity to provide clean transportation to organizations, businesses, and drivers across the region.

Thank you very much!

It is y pleasure!

Society

Addressing regional challenge via coordinated effort

BY STAFF REPORTER

The Horn of Africa is one of the most instable part of the world where conflict, civil war and draught are frequent. For this reason, incidents of displacement and mass migration across the region are common and some countries are seen exerting their utmost effort to protect the safety of refugees. Ethiopia has an advanced regime for the protection of forced migrants and has been hosting a significant number of refugees, and the country hosts hundreds and thousands of refugees, making it one of the countries with the largest refugee populations. What is more, as part of its readiness to protect the need and interests of refugees, the government has invested in capacity building, training personnel, and establishing efficient administrative systems to effectively manage and process refugee cases.

The Ethiopian government, in collaboration with international organizations and humanitarian agencies, provides essential services to refugees, including shelter, food, healthcare, and education. As part of its commitment, Ethiopia has established a legal framework that outlines the rights and obligations of refugees, based on international and regional legal instruments such as the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. The country has also implemented standardized procedures for the reception, registration, and documentation of refugees and asylum seekers, ensuring consistency and fairness in their treatment.

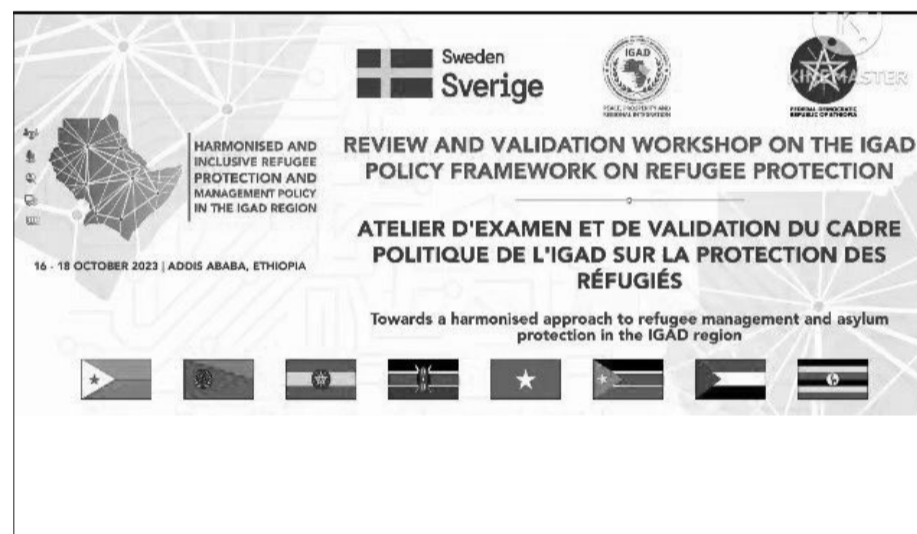
IGAD Policy Framework on Refugee Protection, which is a regional mechanism developed by IGAD to address the challenges and enhance the management of refugees in the region is part of Ethiopia's commitment towards harmonized approach to refugee management and asylum.

Lately, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), in partnership with Sweden government and United Nation Higher Commission for Refugee (UNHCR) has held the Regional Review and validation workshop on the draft policy framework on refugee protection, under the theme of "Towards a harmonized approach to refugee management and asylum in the IGAD region." The Main objective of the workshop was to provide member States technical experts to review the updated draft, discuss its provisions, and validate the Policy framework and the Report on the Status of Refugee Management in the IGAD region.

On the workshop, experts from Sweden and UNHCR and seven IGAD member States reviewed and provided important inputs to the various provisions under the eleven priority areas in the IGAD Policy Framework on Refugee Protection and IGAD Secretariat has incorporated the agreed reviews into the draft Policy Framework. Subsequently, the updated



Participants of Regional Review and validation workshop



As part of its commitment, Ethiopia has established a legal framework that outlines the rights and obligations of refugees, based on international and regional legal instruments

document was presented to delegates.

Speaking on behalf of Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, Executive Secretary of IGAD, Fathia Alwan, Director for Health and Social Development at IGAD Secretariat, highlighted the significance of the Draft IGAD Policy Framework on Refugee Protection in the IGAD region.

She expressed that IGAD's commitment to member states goes beyond the policy development. "We strive to continue efforts to mobilize technical and financial support through the IGAD Support Platform towards a regional approach to the implementation of this policy and other forced displacement responses."

She also further emphasized that the IGAD seeks to build on the gains of the Nairobi processes and support its Member States in harmonization of refugee protection and management policies, legislation and practices in the region for fair, predictable and gender-responsive asylum procedures through this policy framework. "Our plan is to present this Policy Framework to our Ministers in-charge of refugees for endorsement during the upcoming Nairobi Stock take meeting in November 2023 in Mogadishu." Madam Fathia stated.

Deputy Director General, Refugees and

Returnees Service (RRS), Bruhtesfa Mulugeta, on his part disclosed that the Policy Framework on Refugee Protection will augment and consolidate the achievement of the on-going IGAD-led processes by promoting comparable and predictable mechanisms for refugee management across the region, which will strengthen the sharing of experience and best practices across different contexts as well as transfer of technical capacity between IGAD Member States.

Regarding Ethiopia's stance on the policy framework, he said, "Ethiopia believes that IGAD's Policy Framework on Refugee Protection seeks to address multiple and interlinked concerns, manage the rising number sustainably and find durable solutions within."

Speaking on behalf of the UNHCR Regional Bureau for the East Horn and Great Lakes of Africa, Director Mamadou Dian Balde underlined that the validation of the IGAD Policy Framework on Refugee Protection is indeed a remarkable achievement for and by the IGAD region.

"IGAD through the formulation of this comprehensive policy has taken an important step of anchoring the centrality of protection and a rights-based approach to asylum as a core part of its work." He stated.

In addition, he described UNHCR has supported the formulation of the IGAD Policy Framework on Refugee Protection from its very inception as it has the refugee management policy of the East African Community and the elaboration of a regional solutions strategy in the Great Lakes.

Since 2017, IGAD Member States have made concerted efforts to seek sustainable solutions for displaced populations and their host communities through the Nairobi Declaration and various thematic declarations on Education, Health, Jobs, Livelihoods, and Self-reliance.

Verbatim and Caption

Ethiopia's 150 million populations can't live in a geographic prison

Today, Ethiopia's population is over 120 million and by 2030 Ethiopia's population is projected to reach 150 million. A country with a population of 150 million can't live in a geographic prison.

Owning a port in the Red Sea with give-and-take principle with the neighboring countries is quite important for Ethiopia. Even, it is a matter of survival. Given geographical, historical, economic backgrounds, Ethiopia has the right to have access to sea through peaceful means.

The right to claim access to the Sea

Ethiopia's neighbors are always talking about the Trans-boundary Rivers that flow from Ethiopia to the respective countries, but it remain a taboo to talk about access to sea outlet for Ethiopia. Ethiopia's legitimate need for adequate access to sea was incorporated as an agreement in the UN charter.

Ethiopia is surrounded with waters but remains landlocked. The issue of water in general and the Red Sea in particular is vital for Ethiopia. Whether we like it or not, Red Sea and Abbay River determines Ethiopia's fate. We have to remain alert and active on the issue.

Access to the sea is a matter of survival for Ethiopia not a luxury. We are ready for deals and bids for give-and- take with our neighbors and our neighboring countries should be also ready to deal for mutual benefits.

Peace and joint utilization of resources

Ethiopia gives fresh and potable water for its neighbors. But, though all its neighbors have ports, Ethiopia remains landlocked. Eritrea has Tekeze, Sudan has Tekeze and the Nile, South Sudan has Baro, Kenya has Omo, Somalia has Wabe Shebelle and Genalle Dawa Rivers flowing from



Ethiopia. They all are takers and they deserve it.

Ethiopia will continue giving fresh water to its neighbors. It is a natural resource and we are sharing it. It is morally and legally right to claim Ethiopia's resources. If our neighbors want to live together in peace, maintaining the equilibrium is a must for all of us.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD)



Raising the port issue should not be politicized. Ethiopia's neighboring countries that have access to the sea should offer bids to benefit from Ethiopia. Ethiopia needs access to the sea and cooperation is the great option among the countries of the Horn.

Port issue determines the security of any country and called on Ethiopia's neighbors to exercise genuine political and diplomatic approach to satisfy Ethiopia's aspiration to a reliable sea access.

Dareskedar Taye (PhD), Senior Policy Researcher and Asia-Pacific Affairs Director General at the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA)



Ethiopia's quest to have access to the sea is natural. It is vital for Ethiopia and neighboring countries to explore a win-win approach.

Securing access to sea is mandatory for Ethiopia's growing population to foster development. Ethiopia should continue discussing and negotiating with its neighbors to find access to ports through peaceful means.

Ethiopia has to establish an institution of experts who will make a scholarly bargain with concerned bodies. Ethiopia and its neighbors in the Red Sea shares the same people and enjoy similar culture, securing sea access needs a win-win approach and cooperation. It could be applied through a give-and-take mechanism

Ayele Bekrie (PhD), Historian and Researcher



Ethiopia's quest for access to the sea is based on international law and aims at ensuring mutual benefits. United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea signed in 1982 in Jamaica allows landlocked countries to use ports located in other countries and to utilize resources in sea.

The idea raised by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed regarding access to the sea is based on the principle of give and take as well as on shared interests. Ethiopia has accordingly the right to negotiate in partnership with the neighboring countries to secure access to the sea based on shared benefits.

Ethiopia's quest for port access to the sea needs to be addressed in accordance with Resolution No. 390/5 passed by the United Nations in 1952.

Atkilt Atnafu, Political Science and International Relations analyst told ENA