



The Ethiopian Herald

Vol LXXX No 0019 3 October 2023 - Meskerem 22, 2016

Tuesday

Price Birr 10.00

BRICS offers Ethiopia avenue to grow fast: Scholar

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA-The sheer fact that the BRICS member states have strong economies and are well-equipped with technology, it would allow Ethiopia to expand trade and investment, so remarked a Scholar

Haromaya University Economics Lecturer Assistant Professor Habtamu Legesse told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that

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Experts applaud Ethiopia's 'inclusive diplomacy'

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- Appreciating Ethiopia's inclusive diplomatic approach, experts urged government to sustain the growing trust with all global partners.

Speaking to Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Institute of Foreign Affairs Researcher Tesfaye

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Photo by Agape

Ethiopia eyeing tourists, investors to exploit untapped resources

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Dawro – The Government Communication Service (GCS) exhorted tourists and investors to visit mesmerizing places and unleash untapped resources in Ethiopia.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, GCS State Minister

Selamawit Kassa said Ethiopia has a huge tourism and investment potential in which the government is facilitating infrastructures under the leadership of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD).

Over the past two weeks, a crew of journalists has visited tourism destination development activities including those being carried out

under the 'Dine for Nation' projects initiated by the PM.

Among these projects found Halala Kela resort encompassing historical and natural attractions located in Dawro Zone of South West Ethiopia State. In addition, the dam that built in the state has also

See Ethiopia eyeing ... page 3

State expects bumper harvest

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA –Oromia State Administration announced that it is expecting bumper harvest during this Meher season thereby increasing export and stepping up import substitution efforts

The State Chief Administrator Shimelis Abdissa expressed that his administration is achieving a remarkable result in ensuring food security, creating jobs, boosting export items and import substitution.

He said the State is undertaking a wider range of activities to boost coffee, rice and

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News



Organization says working to create conducive environment for vulnerable children

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA—SOS Children's Villages in Ethiopia stated that it is working hard to help orphan and street vulnerable children have a productive life.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, SOS Children's Villages Addis Ababa Programme Director Lijalem Baileyegn said that the organization has been focusing on working to fulfill basic needs of orphans, take care of them and make them productive ones and self-reliance thereby solving social and economic problems in the long run.

He said: "Through this program, about 10,000 children have benefited, and they have got full services like education, health, and training program in Ethiopia especially in Addis for those children who are vulnerable to street and which have social and economic problem thereby fulfilling their needs and open other alternatives."

Moreover, humanitarian aid is given to citizens especially in drought affected areas such as Tigray, Amhara and eastern part of nation, he noted.

When a citizen reaches at the age of 16, they move to one of the three SOS youth facilities, where they are taken care of by a youth leader with different facilities and make them to be independent throughout their life.

SOS Children's village does have seven centers or programmes operating in Ethiopia such as Hawassa, Bahir Dar, Gode, Addis Ababa, Mekelle, Jimma and Harar.

In these all programme locations, SOS Children's Villages is providing an alternative child care, family and community development, education and training, as well as medical interiors in which children can receive all medical treatment throughout a year, he said.

SOS Children's Villages started working in Ethiopia in 1974.

Addis readying to host 1st IWCA convention in Africa

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA—The international coffee bazaars and exhibitions are instrumental in exchanging experiences, knowledge and value-addition worldwide, Women in Coffee Ethiopia (WiCE) said.

WiCE Chapter Board Chair, Sara Yirga said the first International Women's Coffee Alliance (IWCA) convention in Ethiopia would be a tribute to the generations of mothers that have been carried out coffee culture and traditions since the discovery of coffee in Ethiopia which is both the origin and hub of coffee.

Having said coffee is a lifestyle in Ethiopia, she remarked that the event would play a significant role in exchanging ideas, boosting knowledge and solving problems. She further emphasized that such continental and international conventions would be weapons to leverage and promote our unique cultures.

"Four partners such as ARDENT, DAHAB, METAD and Mocca Plantations Coffee have made the necessary preparations for the event to showcase their specialty coffee products situated in different parts of the country," she stated.

Over 250 international coffee communities and leaders drawn from 33 countries 'chapters' are expected to take part in the event, she added.

It is indicated that the event would provide a platform for industry professionals



Sara Yirga

including international scholars, researchers and experts to help them engage in meaningful discussions, share insights, and foster business partnerships.

International Women's Coffee Alliance (IWCA) Board President, Sharon Riechers on her part said that this is the first and historic convention in Africa and it is a testament to the growth and impact of the organization of the coffee industry in the country.

Sharon said, "The platform would forge a path toward greater empowerment, collaboration, success for the coffee industry and contributions of women in the coffee value chain."

The president further indicated that a wide



Sharon Riechers

range of activities including thought-provoking panel discussions, coffee cuppings featuring coffees from producing chapter members, an expo hall showcase innovative products and services.

Moreover, origin trips to experience the birthplace of coffee, cultural activities highlighting Ethiopia's rich heritage, and other constructive panels will take place.

The International Women's Coffee Alliance and Women in Coffee Ethiopia in partnership with the Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority has prepared to host the first coffee convention in Addis Ababa from 16-22 October 2023 under the theme "20 Years of IWCA, power of the past and force of the future."

Ministry toiling to reinstate tourism in Tigray

• Plans to renovate Emperor Yohannes IV palace

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA—Ministry of Tourism stated that the government is working to restart as well as expand tourist service as promptly as possible in Tigray state.

The ministry further stated that the government is also toiling to renovate the palace of Emperor Yohannes IV and reopen to the public; it has been planned to go Axum airport operational and restart the previous service soon.

Speaking to Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) Tourism State Minister Silesh Girma recently noted that renovation of tourist attraction sites/destinations is being done in the states that were damaged during northern conflict. "This will be done in collaboration with the Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage."

As to him, efforts are being done along with various private institutions as well as tourism stakeholders have been provided with a range of trainings and these efforts will continue till the state's tourism revived.

Moreover, collaboration and coordination is being done with neighbor Amhara and Afar states to revive the state tourism and help it operate well. On the other hand, the



government is working on completing Aksum Airport reconstruction and helps it restart rendering service. In the meantime, visitors are invited to visit Axum using Mekelle and Shire Airports, as to Silesh.

, Additional endeavors have been applied with the involvement of so many stakeholders in Mekelle city with a view to attracting tourists towards the state.

According to him, various works are being done in collaboration work with humanitarian organizations and officials and various communities are going to be invited to visit Axum in the upcoming week.

He further said studies are being done to know to what extent heritages and infrastructure have been damaged by war and other related aspects.

News

Ethiopia to hold ITU regional dev't forum for Africa

ADDIS ABABA (ENA)- Ethiopia will host the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Regional Development Forum for Africa which will be held from 3 to 5 October, 2023 here.

The Forum, which is organized by ITU, will take place under the theme "Digital transformation for a sustainable and equitable digital future: Accelerating the implementation of the SDGs in Africa through digital transformation".

The Regional Development Forum for Africa provides an opportunity for the exchange of views between ITU Member States, Sector Members, partners and other stakeholders.

It will provide an opportunity for matchmaking regional as well as country specific priorities and partners' pledges as announced since the launch of the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition at the World Telecommunication Development Conference in Kigali, Rwanda.

The overall aim is to convert pledges into concrete commitments that will result in the implementation of concrete impactful projects in accordance with the priorities adopted and contained in the Kigali Action Plan (KAP) including Regional Initiatives, according to a statement from ITU.

The forum also provides an opportunity for the ITU's Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) to report on

the progress that has been made towards the implementation of the outcomes of the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2022 (WTDC-22), including the four Regional Initiatives for Africa.

ITU's global membership includes 193 Member States as well as some 900 companies, universities, and international and regional organizations.

Founded in 1865 to facilitate international connectivity in communications networks, ITU allocates global radio spectrum and satellite orbits, develop the technical standards that ensure networks and technologies seamlessly interconnect, and strive to improve access to ICTs to underserved communities worldwide.



BRICS offers...

due attention should be given in eliminating areas that hinder trade and cooperation among the states.

For instance, ensuring peace, fighting corruption and bureaucratic red tape should be the priority areas in a bid to acquire the necessary benefits from the BRICS bloc, he added.

BRICS covers over 42 % of the world population; and with the recently included five countries, total population reached to 47% of the global population. Similarly, their economy which used to account for 26% of the world has become 30% now. Thus, joining this bloc would open doors for the country in various areas, he said.

He reminded that BRICS's new development bank mainly finances new sustainable development projects as well as assist infrastructures, adding that it has financially assisted over 90 projects so far.

"Since the countries that have recently joined the bloc have also strong economic foundation, they are likely to influence the economic and political movement of the world. It would significantly enhance Foreign Direct Investment(FDI) and trade," he underscored.

Noting that Ethiopia's total land area cover coupled its huge population size served the country as opportunity to join BRICS, he mentioned that the fact that changing the western currency dominance is top agenda of the bloc, it could solve the challenge that come along with shortage of foreign currency for the country.

In the same manner, he underlined that joining BRICS is not necessarily mean that the end of the relation between Ethiopia and international financial institutions. Unless they do not interfere in internal issues, the nation could use opportunity as some members states do.

It is to be recalled that Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have all been invited to join BRICS during their 15th summit in Johannesburg recently.

Experts applaud...

Bizunch (PhD) said that Ethiopia's inclusive diplomacy is bearing fruits in economic, political and social affairs.

Global economic and political organizations are building trust on the country's inclusive diplomatic approach so that the nation needs to preserve this status quo to benefit from all sides, Tesfaye indicated.

Inclusive diplomacy allows maintaining balanced relationship that can save the country from conflict of interests, he stated.

Likewise, foreign direct investment and credit opportunities can be generated from all alternatives just through inclusive diplomacy, he noted.

"Taking some group of blocs as mere partner may not be guaranteed to get all needed supports. Accordingly, the government should strengthen its relation with all blocs,"



Tesfaye Bezabih (PhD)

he advised.

Researcher and Lecturer of Political Science at Ambo University, Solomon Tefera on his partsuggested that the government should consider Ethiopia's political and geographic position.

Ethiopia is one of epicenter of the global politics, he said, adding the country has many political and economic causes capable



Solomon Tefera

of pulling all rival blocs.

"It has membership in several global institutions. On the other side, it has been hosting various international and continental institutions," he mentioned.

Therefore, Solomon recommended that the government has to avoid all scenarios that could invite contention of global powers on Ethiopian soil.

Ethiopia eyeing...

added a new perspective to develop the area for tourism purposes, Selamawit said.

The spot also has natural resources and wildlife which includes about 1000 African elephants as it is situated close to Chebera Churchura Park that sheltered numerous wild animals, she noted.

She called on the international community to come to see how people are living in harmony with nature, mentioning that people on South West Ethiopia are strongly attached to their environment which contributes a lot for the preservation of natural resources.

The State Minister further said that the

area is also rich in various minerals such as iron ore, coal and gold among others. "It is not merely for tourism but also in the business side, there is an ample potential that can be utilized for the betterment of our country," she said, while urging investors to utilize the opportunity that the government facilitated for local and foreign investors to create wealth in such a conducive business environment.

She mentioned that the government has been endeavoring to make easy to do business in the area by improving road and energy infrastructures.

"We as the communication service are

working to promote these untapped resources in the past week bringing 11 media practitioners here and trying to show how beautiful and rich the country is. I believe that will make some changes in the future as it will at least be a wakeup call for the international community and local investors interested in making business here," she said.

Moreover, the Dawro community is known for its hospitality for the international community to come and recognize a well preserved history dates back to centuries which is a huge potential for tourism and other investments, she indicated.

State expects...

and wheat export and potentially reducing import volumes.

The State has planned to harvest 45 million quintals of rice product from more than one million hectares of land. The recent rice development initiative will have a huge contribution and effect in realizing food security at national level, he added.

Similarly, various development activities have been undertaken in the State to increase coffee production. Accordingly, some three

million hectares of land has been cultivated so that the State is expecting to harvest over 11 million quintals of coffee products this fiscal year, the State Chief said.

The increment of coffee coverage resulted in boosting production volume, he said, adding the cash crop covers a total of nine million hectares of land in the state.

Ethiopia's coffee export would be doubled or tripled in a short period of time as the nation is striving to boost productivity while

managing quality gap during harvesting time, Shimelis noted.

Meanwhile, the efforts that have been exerted in wheat production are paying back since the country is witnessing a remarkable increment in productivity, he indicated.

"Summer wheat production is heading to exceed the winter production for the first time in Ethiopia's history which attributesto wheat development initiative. We will harvest more than current production if

we manage water properly," the chief administrator noted.

He pointed out that the country would accomplish harvesting more agricultural products through utilizing technologies and hardworking farmers.

The country cultivates over two million hectares of land cereals which was not more than 300,000 hectares of land in the previous years, he underlined.

Opinion

Ethiopia's efforts to meet the UN objectives

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Ethiopia is one of the founding members of the United Nations after the end of the World War II in 1945. Since then, it has been actively participating in the UN general assembly and committed to the fulfillment of the objectives of the organization.

The main objective of the UN is bringing peace to the world. However, due to the rampant injustice, inequality, poverty, ignorance, political instability and other factors; attaining peace is still not realized.

After the establishment of the UN, the war which brought the division of the country between North and South broke out in Korea in 1950. During the war, Ethiopia was among the 15 countries dispatched their military forces for peace keeping mission in that country under the auspicious of the United Nations. The Ethiopian forces named as 'Kaginew' diligently accomplished its mission with minor sacrifice. The monument for the fallen soldiers is built here in the capital by the cooperation of the Ethiopian government and the Republic of Korea.

Even though the war is ended, the Korean peninsula is still a place where thousands of troops are deployed in the last 70 years and highly volatile. North Korea, which owned nuclear power, has launched ballistic missiles repeatedly on the peninsula and Japan Sea by violating the UN rules. On the other hand, South Korea, in order to defend its territory from aggression, prepares itself by conducting military training jointly with the USA forces. As a result, attaining peace in the peninsula seems reaching for the stars.

In the 1960, when civil war broke out in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopian troops under the auspicious of the United Nation were dispatched again to ensure peace and stability. The war broke out that time has continued for the last six successive decades and many civilians lost their life.

Currently, there are thousands of troops from 15 countries deployed there for the peace keeping mission under the UN command. Congo Democratic Republic is one of the richest countries in terms of natural resources such as gold, cobalt, magnesium and other resources which have strategic value. But, due to the absence of peace in that country, the resources are not fully exploited. As a result, 70 percent of the population is living under the poverty line. The involvement of foreign forces in the internal affairs of Congo, the problems of the country have been very complicated and the resources are illegally exploited.

Ethiopian forces also are deployed for peace keeping mission under the UN command in the neighboring countries such as Sudan and South Sudan in the places known as Darfur and Abiye along with other countries' troops.

Ethiopian troops also deployed in Somalia

Ethiopia is one of the founding members of the United Nations after the end of the World War II in 1945. Since then, it has been actively participating in the UN general assembly and committed to the fulfillment of the objectives of the organization.

for peace keeping mission under the command of African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Ethiopian forces together with other East African countries' troops engaged in peace keeping mission for the last decade and a half by fighting the terrorist group known as Alshabaab. But terrorism and War have been continued to be a threat to the world peace. At least 10 countries in Africa are suffering from civil war and political instability and some of them are reduced in to failed states.

In the Middle East, the conflict between Israel and Hamas, the Palestinian nationalist movement; the sporadic war between Hezbollah, a Lebanese Shia Islamist political party and militant group, and Israel have been continued to threaten peace of the world. The sporadic conflict between India and Pakistan because of the territorial claim in Kashmir region made the region one of the turbulent areas in the world.

The ongoing war between Ukraine and Russia has brought a catastrophic outcome. Thousands lost their life; infrastructures are destroyed and changed into rubble; millions are forced to leave their country and took refuge in the nearby countries. The war also brought negative consequences on the world economy. Frightened by the war, the number of ships go to the area is reduced. As a result, the price of goods such as fertilizer, edible oil, wheat and other industrial inputs is increased. Currently, most African countries suffer from the brunt of the effect of the war.

Side by side with engaging in peace keeping mission, Ethiopia strives in fighting climate change and global warming, poverty reduction , expanding

education and exerting efforts for attaining Sustainable Development Goals /SDG/.

The green legacy initiative started by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) through planting billions of tree seedlings annually all over the country played crucial role in reducing soil erosion; increasing the amount of underground water; increasing the forest coverage; and in carbon sequestration which has a global effect.

To reduce poverty, the government has tried its level best and enabled thousands of youth to get employed. In addition, to those who organized for self-employment, it facilitated loan and provided working places. The construction of infrastructure such as roads, health centers, educational institutions, industrial parks, airports and hydro power plants are playing their own role in supporting the nation's development endeavor.

Currently, the 78th general assembly of UN was held at its head office in New York. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, delegates from all over the world attend the meeting and made discussion on more than 100 agendas. The Ethiopian delegate under the leadership of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Demeke Mekonen attended the meeting.

Attaining peace, fighting global warming and eradicating poverty and structuring the UN are the most issues discussed on the general assembly.

Leaders from African nations have echoed collective stance stressing on the need for a reformed multilateral institutions and international financial systems and for attaining peace in the world.

In their messages, African leaders who participated on the assembly have echoed several issues critical to the peace and development of the continent including the impacts of climate change, unfair global financial system, poverty and conflicts. They have asked the UN to reform itself by identifying its shortcomings and demanded for permanent seat for Africa at the UN Security Council.

The current AU Chairperson, Comorian President, Azali Assoumani said that the UN needs to undertake deep structural reform noting that Africa has the right to equally participate at the global decision making bodies.

He pointed out that Africa has the potential to play key role in the effective implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) citing the fact that the population of the continent is alarmingly increasing and this necessitates Africa's fair representation at international venues.

"Africa wants to make efforts with a view to protecting its rights by having permanent seat at the UN Security Council as this is the issue of equity and realizing the effectiveness of multilateralism," he stressed.

In this regard, Assoumani also lauded members of the G20 nations for including the African Union in their bloc. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen said that reforming the Security Council is not a choice, but an absolute necessity which requires the politically and morally justified allocation of permanent seats to Africa, demanding reformed and representative security council that is fit for purpose.

"A new global collective security system that respects the sovereignty of member states and prevents conflict is vital. As a long time champion and active participant in the UN mandated peacekeeping operations across the globe, Ethiopia underscores that reforming the UN Security Council is not a choice, but an absolute necessity. We need a reformed and representative Security Council that is fit for purpose," he underlined.

Demeke has also stressed the need for the United Nations to provide adequate financial support to African peacekeeping missions and the necessary capacity building to enhance law enforcement activities in individual countries.

He said that Ethiopia believes that unilateral sanctions and inappropriate economic measures imposed on developing countries should be lifted without any preconditions noting that such moves are against the principles and procedure of the UN.

As mentioned above, the main objective of the establishment of the international body is attaining peace but it is still untouchable. Most developing countries are characterized by political instability, conflict and poverty. The developing countries' economy is still in its low level. Mostly, they rely on rain fed agriculture with less input utilization and less output.

They export most of their agricultural products in its raw form with no value addition which in turn reduces its competency in the world market. Agricultural products of the economically advanced countries supplied to the world market in a relatively low price put the products of poor countries in disadvantageous position in the market.

On the contrary, poor countries import capital goods with very expensive price which again indulge them in debt. Currently, poor countries' macro economy suffers from unemployment, inflation, devaluation of local currency against foreign currency, and debt service. As a result, people in these countries are coerced to live in the vicious circle of poverty for generations.

The youth in these countries also become desperate due to unemployment and can easily be recruited by armed groups to ignite conflicts which in turn destabilize the countries and in such a situation attaining peace will be a night mare.

Therefore, countries should give priority for poverty reduction so that it paves the way for attaining peace.

Editorial

Recording superb progress amid challenges

Ethiopia is advancing towards growth and prosperity via well exploiting its untapped resources, agricultural sector as well as the tourism realm though there are instability concerns in some places. Besides, the country has been endeavoring to get even the continent of Africa benefited out of a range of resources and tourism bases. The production of rice, coffee, avocado and others is rising, and agricultural undertakings and tourism activities in the country have shown good performance, too.

A range of projects in Jimma zone, Oromiya state are a living proof in this regard. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) has recently visited the progress of projects. His visit has confirmed that the country has trekked on the proper boulevard in terms of registering change and progress accompanied with challenges. This simply portrays that Ethiopia has definitely had potential to get prospered and bring about progress despite challenge in relation to peace at present.

A ray of hope has been glimmered in Ethiopia as it has been working hard to deal with defies in relation to peace, security, climate change impacts and other related circumstances.

Yes, the sporadically happened internal security concerns in Ethiopia need to be overcome as soon as possible. A lot has to be done regarding peace and security since all activities have highly demanded serenity and calm atmosphere.

Hence, the issue of peace and security needs to be well resolved to help the nation attain its set target—to see off poverty for good. Notably, Ethiopia is working towards addressing the impacts of climate change through various green development projects recently initiated by Premier. The economic and agricultural development in various states like Oromiya are promising indeed! The government has now embarked on ensuring peace and development as this move helps the nation smoothly run projects targeting at boosting agriculture and tourism. Of course, the country has been registering remarkable outcomes in relation to economic growth and development amid some setbacks. It has also devised a number of mechanisms to bring about peace and serenity across all regional states.

Recognizing the fact that the nation has to frame means to ensure peace, the government is working hard to make Ethiopia a more stable one. That is why the government is working to record robust change degree in the years to come.

The consistent growth of the production of the aforesaid yields in the country, such as Jimma Zone, has shown the untapped potential the country owns. As conflicts in some parts of Ethiopia have a potential to undermine the economic and social development progress, urgent measures have to be taken by the concerned body.

Ethiopia seeks to chart a development path that is sustainable and inclusive in order to accelerate poverty reduction and boost shared prosperity. Significant progress in job creation and improved governance is badly needed to ensure growth and equitable resource share across society. Achieving these objectives will also require addressing key challenges like conflicts, poverty, drought and other related socio-economic difficulties.

Addressing the incidence of conflict has to come to the forefront especially these days. Undeniably, the country possesses a growing workforce and unexploited resources to make change and growth real.

In sum, the most important agriculture and tourism sectors have contributed a lot to income generation, employment, and foreign-exchange earnings. Hence, these sectors have to be given due emphasis across the nation. Most importantly, the best experiences drawn from the places visited by the Premier have to be well duplicated in various parts of Ethiopia to help the nation be a much more prosper and stable one.

Opinion

GERD Shaping the future of Ethiopia

BY SOLOMONN DIBABA

Statistics indicates that the world's 263 transboundary lake and river basins cover nearly half of the Earth's land surface. A total of 145 nations include territory within international basins, and 21 countries lie entirely within international basins. The Nile River is one of the longest transboundary rivers in the world gashing through 11 riparian countries. GERD built at the edge of the Blue Nile has been commissioned by the people and government of Ethiopia as a powerful indicator of self-reliance.

The total size of the artificial lake formed by GERD will be more than double the size of all natural lakes across the country and the volume of water it holds will equate to double the volume that all lakes in the country currently hold.

Magnetically perched at the foot of Guba Mountains with exquisite scenery, GERD is finally shaping up for Ethiopia after 12 years. As the saying goes, better late than never. By completing the filling of this flagship dam, Ethiopia has been able to save billions of birr that could have been expended for filling the dam over the next several years. The question now is what is in store for this country once GERD is completed?

The writer of this article divides the outputs from GERD into five categories including. Self-reliance, regional peace and security, transfer of knowledge and technology as well as introduction of new social services. All five are relevant not only to Ethiopia but to the African region at large.

GERD is one of the major indicators of efforts on national self-reliance, what does self-reliance imply in relation to GERD? The first point that comes to the mind is self-reliance in clean, cheaper and sustainable hydroelectric power for the nation and countries of the Horn of Africa.

Here it is important to note that hydropower is not the only renewable energy resources for Ethiopia and Africa. The 12 river basins of Ethiopia have a potential capacity of producing 954 Tera Watt Hour while the nation has a potential of geothermal power source of 10,000 MW and 1.3 million MW from wind farm as well as 60,000 MW from solar energy sources. GERD is only a fraction of what the country could produce over time.

First, Ethiopia's self-reliance is not limited only to the generation and distribution of hydroelectric power. Moreover in terms of economic development with particular emphasis on agriculture, a huge potential of lakeside farming along both sides of the huge lake from GERD will be an excellent location for investment in agriculture. This includes the development of fishery which will diversify the food habit of the local population in Benishangul Gumuz State and development of agro-industrial complex producing canned fish and other food items.

The 70 artificial lakes created on GERD will

The total size of the artificial lake formed by GERD will be more than double the size of all natural lakes across the country and the volume of water it holds will equate to double the volume that all lakes in the country currently hold.

become tourist attraction centers for tourists from Sudan and Egypt, USA, Europe, the Middle East and Asia. This would not only boost Tourism Ethiopia but will help to create a stronger sense of friendship among the people of Ethiopia and visitors from these countries.

GERD will certainly be instrumental in markedly reducing the effects of climate change not only in the areas where the dam is located but all along the countries of the Horn of Africa. This would mean that GERD is a multi-purpose development infrastructure that will benefit most of the countries of the Horn and lower riparian countries.

The expanse of this great lake will provide a maritime transport system for the local people and tourists who wish to enjoy excursions on the lake. The entire economic activities surrounding GERD will be part of the economic integration in the region by using Ethiopia as a center of power hub.

On the other hand, economic integration, cooperation and investments on the various projects to be created by the government in the environs of GERD will be instrumental in promoting lasting peace through use of joint ventures that are mutually beneficial for Lower Nile riparian states.

Joint agricultural investments in cooperation with the lower riparian countries which possess huge amount of arable land will certainly increase the level of food security in the region and also produce more food for exports in value added form to the countries of the Middle East, Europe and the Persian Gulf.

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



The Ethiopian Herald

Established in 1943

Published daily except Mondays

By The Ethiopian Press Agency

Office of the CEO

Tel. 011-126-42-22

Fax. 251-011-156-98-62

email- epa@press.et

Advertisement and Dist.

Department

email: etpresspromotion@gmail.com

Tel. 011-156-98-73/011-811-13-15

Telegram :- 0976084707 - press

Editor-in-Chief: Worku Belachew

email- workubelachew@press.et

Address- Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-city

Woreda - 05, House No----

Tel- +251 111 26 41 98

Managing Editor: Wakuman Kudama

Email: wakuma220@gmail.com

Deputy Editors-in-Chief:

Alem Hailu

Elizabeth Mengistu

Zekarias Woldemariam

Desta Geberehiwot

Daniel Beyene

Website: www.press.et

email: ethiopianherald@press.et

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The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy



Irreecha celebration: one of tourist attractions in Ethiopia

Religious, cultural tourism for immense economic return

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Owning a range of mesmerizing gorges, valleys, mountainous landscapes, lakes, astonishing water bodies, among others, Ethiopia has not so far been in a state of reaping the benefit it deserves out of all these natural and man-made assets through well exploiting the tourism sector. Undeniably, the country should devise a number of mechanisms and takes a number of steps to make itself greater recipient out of the tourism sector.

Cognizant of the fact that Ethiopia is widely endowed with a number of tangible (The Lalibela Rock Hewn churches, Gondar Castle, Sof Omar Cave, Jimma Aba Jiffar Palace, many national parks) and intangible heritages (Meskel, Irreecha, Fiche Chembelala, Timket, Gifata etc.) that can potentially attract tourists and be source of foreign currency, The Ethiopian Herald had a stay with Muluaem Derese, a hotel and tourism expert working as a tour guide, to have a piece of information about the tie-up between the tourism sector and economic progress.

She said, “Our recklessness and spirit of overlooking what Ethiopia does have at hand has battered the nation a lot. There are many countries in the African continent and across the globe like for instance, Tunisia and Colombia, have converted what they have had into a spellbinding scenes thereby attracting tourists and reaping foreign currency from tourism. This means countries can benefit a lot from creativity and work hard even if they are devoid of tourist attraction sites and other potential income sources.”

According to Muluaem, not only is economic growth secured from manufacturing, industry and agriculture but it would be also out of the smokeless industry—Tourism. For instance, whenever people hear about agriculture, what automatically comes to their mind most of the time is the case of tilling or cultivating acres of land using oxen, horses or donkeys for the purpose of crop production.

However, agriculture incorporates a range of sectors like, apart from crop production and raising animals, Seri-culture, apiculture, aquaculture and poultry.

As to her, Ethiopians have to think out of the

obvious and business as usual trends to get their country prospered.

She further stated that mentioning the miraculous contribution of tourism to economic growth is not undermining the role of agriculture in bolstering the national economy as it has been considered as the mainstay of the national economy. However, this sector and others have to back one-another to well swell the economy of the nation. Religious and cultural tourists may peculiarly have different degrees of satisfaction with festivals/events because of the extent of other tourism motives. True, she said themed public celebrations, known as festivals, that explore and promote different aspects of local culture contribute significantly to the economic and social well-being of regions.

“Honestly speaking, it is shame and unfair to talk about poverty and unemployment in tourism resource rich nations like Ethiopia. Unless it is named otherwise and projected to lack of collaboration, hard work and weak tourism sector administration, no reason can be given to the low level of national revenue out of the tourism sector,” she opined.

According to Muluaem, the role of agriculture in the process of economic growth has framed a central question in development economics for several decades. As mechanisms through which agricultural productivity increases might contribute to structural change in the economy, it has long been theorized that advances in agriculture can promote shifts in labor to higher productivity sectors that offer higher real incomes.

When such a promising step is supported by a lucrative and harmless sector, the tourism one, the growth of the nation would undoubtedly be fueled right. Religious tourism is one of the oldest forms of tourism and plays an important part in the history of tourism development, she said.

She added that tourism is one of the world’s major industries, and people have been travelling for pleasure since the dawn of time. It has become one of the fastest expanding sectors of the global economy in recent years in general and Ethiopia and other developing nations in particular. Yes, she said tourism arose as a result of modernization and significantly contributed to shaping the experience of

modernity.

Economic growth and tourism development are intertwined, according to her; therefore, an increase in the general economy will support tourism development. Additionally, according to Muluaem, tourism receipts have an upward link to Ethiopia’s economy and can thus aid in economic growth. Developing tourism business would foster economic growth over time, supporting the economy more than anticipated.

Some of the processes by which tourism contributes to socioeconomic development including creating jobs, decreasing unemployment rates, and introducing of new tax income streams, she added.

“The relationship between tourism spending and economic growth in Ethiopia and other nations of the Horn has been discovered as the two inextricably linked spheres. Tourism exerts a positive impact on economic growth. It also creates employment opportunities, enlarges the consumer markets, promotes export trade and generates foreign exchange earnings. As tourists usually spend more money in urban or cultural destinations as well as holidays, all the religious, cultural and other tangible and intangible heritages have to be well promoted and nurtured to excellently attract many more tourists across the globe,” she said.

As to her, more specifically, high-income countries’ growth is impacted by tourism to a larger positive degree than lower income countries’ growth is. This is due to the greater presence of tourism-related eco-system in high-income countries that could effectively attract inbound tourists, especially religious and cultural tourism subsectors.

Tourism undoubtedly creates jobs, strengthens the local economy, contributes to local infrastructure development and can help conserve the natural environment and cultural assets and traditions as well as reduce poverty and inequality, she opined.

“True, tourism helps culture in a few ways. One is through the support of artisans who sell their wares to visitors. Markets and shops are a draw to many tourists interested in souvenirs for people back home or as a way to remember their trip. Tourists also often visit cultural sites and watch religious rituals, local music, dance, theater, and other performances. These

sustain intangible culture, which gives regional states their unique identity and protects the multiculturalism of Ethiopia,” she remarked.

According to Muluaem, people have to know how tourism affects the economy, climate change and culture. There are many benefits to traveling if a person is privileged enough to do it. Tourism boosts the revenue of the economy, creates thousands of jobs, develops the infrastructures of a country, and plants a sense of cultural exchange between foreigners and citizens. Tourism creates a cultural exchange between tourists and local citizens. Exhibitions, conferences, and events usually attract foreigners.

She further stated that not only are religious and cultural tourism a great opportunity for foreigners to learn about a new culture but they would also create many opportunities for local citizens. It also allows young entrepreneurs to establish new products and services that would not be sustainable on the local population of residents alone.

According to Muluaem, mass religious events like Meskel and Irreecha are often unprecedented tourist opportunity. “Religious tourism plays an important part in the history of tourism development. People visit religious sites with different motivations.”

As to her, the Ethiopian government increasingly uses cultural and religious festivals as a means to promote tourism and stimulate the regional economy due to the added value that festivals offer. The potential to reinforce local economies, encourage the conservation of festival-themed commodities, sustain and preserve local identities, and create opportunities for tourists to engage with local cultures and people.

Similarly, said Muluaem, folkloric beliefs, rituals, and ceremonies in Ethiopians’ tradition express deity reverence and have been practiced for several hundred years. From the perspective of a social-functional interpretation, an efficient religious festival also helps regional religions and cultural developments. The general acceptance of a religion stems from religious organizations and their followers, who claim that participation in religious activities is voluntary. True, festivals are a type of cultural event, highlighting the unique features of a destination or theme.

In the Sphere of Diplomacy

Unleashing tourism potential through collaborative regional efforts

BY STAFF REPORTER

Collaborations between different regions in the tourism industry not only lead to economic benefits but also facilitate diplomatic communication and relationship building. By sharing tourism potentials and identifying common goals and interests, regions can initiate discussions that go beyond tourism concerns.

Regional cooperation is crucial for harnessing tourism potential. It enables the sharing of resources, promotes unity and solidarity, attracts investments, strengthens cross-border cooperation, enhances cultural exchange, spurs innovation, boosts resilience, and fosters diplomatic relations.

Each region may have its own unique attractions and offerings but by collaborating they can leverage their collective strengths and provide visitors with a more diverse and comprehensive experience. This can range from joint marketing campaigns to combined infrastructure projects that enhance accessibility and connectivity between different destinations.

By sharing knowledge and best practices, regions can learn from each other and implement policies and initiatives that prioritize environmental conservation, community engagement, and cultural preservation. This can ensure that tourism growth is not at the expense of the local environment and communities but rather benefits them in a sustainable and responsible manner.

Regional cooperation fosters a sense of unity and solidarity among neighboring regions. By working together, they can promote a shared vision and identity that goes beyond national boundaries. This can help overcome any existing rivalries or conflicts and instead create an environment of collaboration and mutual support. In turn, this can contribute to long-term stability and peace in the region.

By working together, regions can ensure that the benefits of tourism are distributed equitably among all stakeholders including local communities, small businesses, and marginalized groups. Besides, regional cooperation can strengthen cross-border cooperation and facilitate travel facilitation. By harmonizing policies and procedures related to visas, border crossings, and transportation, regions can make it easier for tourists to travel seamlessly between different destinations.

When regions come together and present a unified front, they become more attractive to potential investors who see the potential for growth and profitability in the tourism sector. By pooling resources and developing a cohesive strategy, regions can attract larger-scale investments that can further enhance their tourism infrastructure and offerings.

Regional cooperation fosters cultural exchange and understanding among the people of the region. Through tourism, travelers have the opportunity to engage with locals, experience their traditions, and gain insights into their way of life. This promotes cross-cultural dialogue, appreciation, and mutual respect, contributing to the development of a shared regional identity and strengthening ties among communities.

By pooling resources, countries can reach a broader audience and maximize their impact in



international markets. Collaborative promotions can highlight the diversity and richness of the region's offerings attracting more visitors and generating greater awareness and interest in the destination.

By working together towards a common goal, countries can overcome historical barriers and build stronger relationships among themselves. The promotion of regional tourism fosters a sense of belonging and unity among the people breaking down stereotypes and promoting peace and harmony. Regional cooperation plays a vital role in the expansion of tourism and promoting unity among the people residing in a particular region.

By creating a unified and stable business environment, countries within the region can attract larger investments from both domestic and international investors. This leads to the development of new tourism infrastructure, expansion of accommodation options, and the creation of employment opportunities for the local population.

By working together countries can establish common standards and guidelines for environmental conservation, responsible tourism, and community engagement. Joint efforts can help protect natural and cultural heritage sites, promote eco-friendly practices, and ensure that local communities are actively involved and benefit from tourism activities.

When regions collaborate, they provide opportunities for visitors to experience different cultures, traditions, and ways of life. This can foster greater appreciation and respect among people from different backgrounds leading to improved intercultural dialogue and harmony. It can also spur innovation and creativity in the tourism industry. By coming together, regions can encourage the exchange of ideas and stimulate innovation in areas such as tourism technology, product development, and marketing strategies.

By creating a unified and stable business environment, countries within the region can attract larger investments from both domestic and international investors. This leads to the development of new tourism infrastructure, the expansion of accommodation options and the creation of employment opportunities for the local population.

Regional cooperation facilitates the sharing

of best practices and experiences in tourism development. Countries can learn from one another's successes and failures implementing effective strategies and avoiding common pitfalls.

One significant advantage of regional cooperation is the ability to leverage collective resources. Through collaboration countries can jointly invest in improving transportation systems, developing tourist infrastructure, and establishing better connectivity within the region. Such endeavors benefit tourists by facilitating easy exploration of multiple destinations while simultaneously enhancing the overall appeal and competitiveness of the region.

By combining resources, countries can reach a broader audience, maximize their impact in international markets, and create stronger awareness and interest in the region. Collaborative promotions effectively showcase the diversity and richness of the region's offerings, attracting more visitors and generating increased footfall for multiple destinations.

Different countries within a region often complement each other in terms of attractions and experiences. By packaging these offerings together, tourists can enjoy a more holistic and immersive experience encouraging them to spend more time exploring the region and benefiting multiple destinations.

By collaborating countries can establish common standards and guidelines for environmental conservation, responsible tourism, and community engagement. Together, they can protect natural and cultural heritage sites, promote eco-friendly practices and ensure that local communities actively participate in and benefit from tourism activities.

Regional cooperation cultivates a sense of regional pride, identity, and solidarity among the people of the region. By working together towards a common goal, countries can overcome historical barriers and build stronger relationships among themselves. The promotion of regional tourism fosters a sense of belonging and unity among the people breaking down stereotypes, and promoting peace and harmony within the region.

Ethiopia has to draw lessons from Kenya and Rwanda about utilizing tourism potentials through expanding infrastructures and promoting resources, so suggested tourism experts.

The three countries need to consolidate cooperation in order to harness the tourism industry, stated tourism experts from Kenya and Rwanda, while attending the 2023 Tourism Week in Ethiopia organized by Oromia State.

On the event, Kenya Program Lead –W/O, Tuqa Jirimo (PhD) said that Ethiopia has huge tourism potential which needs to be utilized to attain adequate benefit from the sector.

“This is my first time in Addis Ababa and I had never been encountered such a kind hospitality,” he said.

Apart from the numerous tourism resources and hospitable atmosphere, Ethiopia needs to exert extra efforts with regard to developing the tourism sector so as to increase tourist inflow.

Of course Kenya has better preservation in the tourism destination though still many challenges there, he mentioned.

He suggested that Ethiopia has to draw important lesson from Kenya in terms of developing the tourism destination, promotion, marketing, and the like. Ethiopia and Kenya need to work together to develop infrastructure and preserve tourism sites in adjacent areas.

He believed that Ethiopia is sitting on a gold mine given that it is not obtaining the needed benefit compared to its huge tourism potentials.

Ethiopia accommodates various natural and manmade tourism resources including rich culture, home to influential athletes, land of origins, geographical landscape and so on, he elaborated.

However, it requires infrastructural development to utilize these potentials and increase tourist inflow, he underscored.

Vice Chairperson of Rwanda Hospitality Association, Sarah Kirenga on her part said that the tourism week held in Ethiopia helps to improve the cooperation between her country and Ethiopia in developing the tourism industry.

She said Rwanda has overcome many problems in the tourism sector so that the industry is now reviving.

She further stated that Ethiopia and Rwanda have a shared future in coffee, handcraft, and tourist destinations through it needs collaboration to promote the sector and ensure adequate benefit from it.

Law & Politics

Fostering shared prosperity in IGAD region

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

The establishment of Cross-Border Development Facilitation Office reinforces IGAD's role as a regional platform for cooperation and integration. It also demonstrates the organization's commitment to implementing its objectives and mandates effectively. By providing a dedicated office for facilitating cross-border development, IGAD strengthens its capacity to address the unique challenges and opportunities presented by regional cooperation.

The office serves as a platform for seamless regional integration and acts as a catalyst for harmonizing policies, aligning regulations, and improving coordination among member states. This results in the creation of a unified regional market with consistent rules which facilitates the movement of goods, services, and people.

Besides, it serves as a platform for knowledge and information sharing among member countries and fosters dialogue, exchange of expertise, and best practices in various development fields such as infrastructure, agriculture, energy, and tourism. This sharing of knowledge and experiences can lead to innovative solutions, increased efficiency, and improved implementation of development projects, benefiting all member states.

Enhanced regional integration leads to increased economic interactions, cultural exchanges, and closer collaboration in various sectors further cementing the bonds between IGAD member states. The inauguration of the office sends a strong signal of unity and solidarity among IGAD member states.

The office becomes a symbol of collective action and regional integration demonstrating the determination of IGAD member countries to forge closer ties and deepen cooperation for the betterment of the entire region.

IGAD's commitment to working together for sustainable development in the Horn of Africa underscores the organization's dedication to fostering economic growth, social progress, and environmental sustainability. Through collaboration, engagement with stakeholders, youth empowerment, and regional integration, IGAD aims to create a prosperous, inclusive, and resilient region for the benefit of its people.

The inauguration of the office promotes economic integration, regional peace, and stability while also addressing common challenges and ensuring inclusivity in development efforts. It also strengthens IGAD's role as a regional platform for cooperation and enhances connectivity among member countries. Furthermore, the office reinforces the commitment of IGAD and its member states towards fostering stronger collaboration for the overall prosperity and well-being of the region.

Collaboration among member states and partner organizations is another vital element in IGAD's work towards sustainable development. The organization facilitates dialogue, knowledge sharing, and joint decision-making processes to address

common challenges and seize shared opportunities. By fostering a spirit of cooperation, IGAD aims to enhance regional stability, resilience, and collective growth.

Improved connectivity not only facilitates trade and commerce but also strengthens social and cultural ties, fosters knowledge sharing, and encourages collaboration in areas of common interest such as education, healthcare and research.

Through its facilitation of trade, investments, and services across borders, the office promotes inclusive economic growth that benefits all member states. By reducing barriers to cross-border business activities, the office encourages entrepreneurship, job creation, and the equitable distribution of wealth within the region. This in turn contributes to poverty reduction and improves the living standards of the people in IGAD member countries.

The establishment of the office reinforces IGAD's commitment to its member states and their populations. It signifies the organization's determination to work collaboratively, respond to the needs of the people, and actively engage in facilitating their socio-economic progress. By bringing IGAD closer to the people the office can strengthen the sense of ownership and participation among member states, fostering a stronger partnership for advancing the vision of sustainable peace, shared prosperity, and seamless regional integration.

By regularly assessing the impact and effectiveness of these projects, the office can ensure accountability and transparency in resource allocation and implementation. This enables better decision-making, informed policy adjustments, and continuous improvement leading to more successful and sustainable development outcomes.

By streamlining bureaucratic processes and creating a favorable business environment, the office boosts investor confidence, encourages innovation and stimulates economic growth. The increased inflow of investments into the region supports the development of infrastructure, technology transfer, and the creation of new industries thus driving long-term economic progress.

The office plays a great role in promoting and facilitating cross-border development initiatives among member countries within the IGAD region. Its establishment is a testament to the commitment of IGAD and its member states towards fostering stronger ties and collaboration in various sectors for the overall development and prosperity of the region.

By promoting economic cooperation and interdependence, it can help in reducing conflicts and tensions among neighboring countries. Increased trade and economic activities create mutual benefits and shared interests, which can contribute to the resolution of disputes and the prevention of conflicts.

The Cross-Border Development Facilitation Office being a central part of IGAD's flagship agenda to take the organization to the people holds significant importance in achieving the vision of fostering sustainable peace, shared



prosperity, and seamless regional integration. By establishing this office, IGAD aims to bring its development initiatives closer to the communities and individuals who will directly benefit from them ensuring that their needs and aspirations are effectively addressed.

The office enhances regional connectivity through the development of transport infrastructure and connectivity projects. Improved transportation links and easier movement of goods and people will stimulate intra-regional trade, enhance cultural exchanges, and foster a sense of unity and cooperation among member states.

To achieve sustainable development, IGAD focuses on promoting economic cooperation and integration among its member states. This involves harmonizing policies, removing trade barriers, and facilitating the movement of goods, services, and investments across borders. By doing so, IGAD aims to unlock the region's economic potential, create employment opportunities, and improve the living standards of its population.

IGAD places great emphasis on environmental sustainability in its pursuit of sustainable development. The organization acknowledges the environmental challenges faced by the region such as climate change, deforestation, and land degradation. Through its initiatives, IGAD promotes sustainable land and water management practices, supports renewable energy projects, and encourages conservation efforts. By protecting the natural resources of the Horn of Africa, IGAD aims to ensure their availability for future generations.

The Cross-Border Development Facilitation Office also creates a framework for sustained engagement and collaboration among member countries. It provides a platform for regular consultations, joint planning, and monitoring of cross-border development initiatives. This institutionalized mechanism ensures continuity in cooperation efforts and allows for long-term achievement of shared goals and objectives.

By prioritizing social inclusivity and equity, IGAD aims to foster a society where everyone has equal opportunities for growth and development. The organization recognizes the importance of investing in human capital, improving access to quality education, healthcare, and social services,

and empowering marginalized communities.

By facilitating cross-border development initiatives, the office creates opportunities for economic cooperation, dialogue, and mutual understanding among member states. Such interactions can contribute to the resolution of conflicts, promotion of reconciliation, and establishment of peaceful relations leading to lasting peace in the region.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has inaugurated a Moyale Cross-Border Development Facilitation Office, according to information obtained from Ethiopian News Agency.

IGAD Executive Secretary Workneh Gebeyehu and Marsabit County Governor Mohamud Ali inaugurated the office on Friday.

The office is expected to support communities on Moyale-Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia.

Speaking on the occasion, the executive secretary said that the facilitation office is a central part of a flagship agenda to take IGAD to the people.

This office shall serve as a catalyst for enhancing vision of IGAD in fostering sustainable peace, shared prosperity, and seamless regional integration, Workneh pointed out.

"It's (also) our commitment to fostering regional cross-border cooperation with the objective to propel mutual interests, including the promotion of trade and cultural ties," he added.

Marsabit County Governor Ali tweeted that the inaugurated IGAD's Cross-Border Development Facilitation Office in Moyale is a historic step toward regional peace and prosperity.

Let's work together for sustainable development in the Horn of Africa, the governor urged.

According to IGAD, the office in Moyale will be mandated to facilitate cross border cooperation actors, local government institutions and communities in their respective clusters to foster cooperation around a common programming agenda, especially delivering social services to host communities, refugees, and migrants.

The office was built with the cooperation of IGAD and German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development.

Society

Irreecha: Symbol of peace, unity

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Festivals are capable of building common ground and fostering unity among diverse people who come from different backgrounds.

Experts from social sciences say festivals are real platforms that could provide an opportunity for groups of people to come together and celebrate their shared heritages and values as well as promote mutual understanding among them.

Festivals offer a prospective platform for different ethnic groups to showcase their cultural practices, traditional attire, their unique traditional foods and beverages as well as music and dance. It is believed through these cultural exchanges people from different backgrounds could learn about the tradition of other ethnic group, appreciate the richness and diversity and look for an opportunity to garner economic benefits.

What is more, festivals promote understanding and strengthen the sense of a shared cultural identity.

On the coming Saturday and Sunday, Irreecha, the Thanksgiving festival of Oromo people which is the pride of Oromo people will be celebrated in Addis Ababa and Bishoftu and warmly and colorfully. According to a briefing by Oromia State Communication Bureau and Oromia State Culture and Tourism Bureau to media practitioners, preparation is underway to celebrate the Irreecha as per the values of festival and in a manner strengthening unity and fraternity among the people.

Oromia State Communication Head, Hailu Adugna said that the owners of all festivals, be it cultural or religious holidays, are the people. No one has the right to violate the rights of the people or underestimate the cultural and religious practices in any form. The government is in charge of safeguarding the rights of people to let citizens exercise the festivals peacefully; as well as free from any form of interference.

He pointed out that, this year the Irreecha festival will be celebrated under the motto "Irreecha is the Emblem of Unity and Fraternity" all over Oromia State and other parts of the nation.

The celebration has both religious and cultural importance in strengthening unity and reconciliation as well as a sense of a shared cultural identity among the various ethnic groups.

"Celebrating such traditional and religious festivals is part of the government's social and development plans to practice in all parts of Ethiopia."

The Bureau acknowledges that all of Ethiopia's festivals can bring people together and build unity and fraternity between and among Ethiopia's nations and nationalities.



Ethiopia is home to numerous ethnic groups, each with its unique cultural traditions, languages, and identities celebrating several festivals as per the values and norms of the culture.

The celebrations of festivals and religious days are a testimony to the unity and togetherness of the people of Ethiopia because everyone is welcomed regardless of any background- gender, religion or ethnic background.

He also called on pertinent stakeholders to preserve this colorful heritage as well as pass it to the next generation with the mindset to benefit the coming generation as it is pivotal in reinforcing the unity and solidarity of the people because as the saying goes united we stand divided we fall.

People who may come from other parts of Ethiopia and individuals should demonstrate the value of unity and fraternity in the Irreecha celebrations.

All actions have the potential to inspire others to follow suit. In turn, it also creates a ripple effect, leading to a more cohesive and inclusive society for the benefit of all.

That is why the Bureau is keen on advocating unity and fraternity and sets

a positive example for future generations through the festivals.

Irreecha is fit to build fraternity and unity among the peoples of Ethiopia because all celebration goers have the right to come together regardless of political, gender and ethnic identity.

Simply Irreecha festival celebration is the day of the Oromo people Thanksgiving Day for the almighty held in Addis Ababa and Bishoftu town in colorful fashion. This annual celebration attracts from six to seven million people from all parts of the nation and neighboring countries like Kenya.

"We are working to boost the Irreecha celebration to generate substantial economic benefits and help to conserve the cultural assets and traditions. In my view, residents in respective areas from higher standard hotels to shoe shiner should benefit."

Oromia State Culture and Tourism Bureau Deputy Head Birhanu Butte for his part said that preparations are underway along with pertinent stakeholders in Addis Ababa and Bishoftu town as well as public and private institutions in Sheger sub-cities to make the celebration peaceful and free from any kind of political and other interests.

Irreecha is a pure Oromo people's culture that brings millions of people from all parts of Ethiopia and beyond together. The Bureau is working to build a common ground, the spirit of unity and fraternity among the people of Ethiopia and boost tourism.

As Irreecha lets people come together it creates connection and when people feel connected to others it positively impacts their overall well-being.

The Bureau holds that Irreecha could create an environment where individuals can thrive, and express themselves as per their identity, in a peaceful fashion.

Festivals can be powerful tools for nation-building, economic growth, and boosting tourism. When organized effectively, festivals can showcase a nation's cultural heritages, attract visitors from both domestic and international markets, and stimulate economic activities.

Incognizant of the benefits of the Irreecha celebration, it will be celebrated in areas apart from in Addis Ababa Administration and Oromia State such as in Gambella and Benishangul-Gumuz colorfully.

"We urge respective states to join the Irreecha celebration willingly. The celebrations of Irreecha in these two states signify that Irreecha can promote unity and fraternity.

Irreecha has the potential to be registered by UNESCO and efforts are underway to impart and document the value of the festival in a more organized fashion in a bid to open the door for the UNESCO heritage registration process.

The Bureau holds the great role that the media has in communicating the general public to practice the festival as per the values. This helps celebrate it in a productive fashion, boost tourism and create jobs.

Planet Earth

Ethiopia should...

are wasted every year since it is utilized as firewood and fuel consumption. crop residues are also the other potential resources for natural fertilizer preparations. Nonetheless, the country hasn't utilized them properly.

Cities especially Addis Ababa have also significant potential for natural fertilizer preparation. There are many organic resources available in cities that might be used to create natural fertilizer. Materials that could be used as natural fertilizers in the city are wasted, including onion, vegetable, and fruit peels, food, and other leftovers.

Considering both the drawbacks and the advantages, HU has been preparing natural fertilizer first in its own compound before spreading it to other locations. In light of this, HU promotes the creation awareness, and application of natural fertilizers by providing various forms of training, hands-on demonstrations, field trips, and other activities in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture and other partners. This is done in recognition of the importance of natural or organic fertilizers for the ecosystem.

As stated by Teferi, any plant, when it grows, takes various nutrients from the earth. As the plant ages and collapses to the ground, it returns the nutrients to the soil. On the other hand, cattle eat plants and

produce dung or manure, which is important for restoring the fertility of the land.

Nevertheless, food leftovers, fruit and vegetable peels, and other waste have been properly returned to the land. Cattle manure is frequently burned for fuel, and the land now does not receive the nutrients it needs. In addition, no trash, and dung gained from living organisms are used in the community to create natural fertilizers. As a result, the land is being depleted, and its fertility and productivity are drastically decreased.

To boost the soil's fertility, the government has been importing chemicals and soil fertilizers at high cost and distributing them to the farmers. These chemical fertilizers, however, provide a temporary solution for soil fertility. Therefore, the country should pay due attention to natural fertilizer preparation since it provides a permanent solution for soil fertility. Additionally, utilizing natural fertilizers helps to solve environmental issues sustainably while saving foreign currency, he elaborated.

Particularly the Ministry of Agriculture should encourage farmers to adopt biogas as a fuel choice because the sludge can be used for natural composting and to maintain soil fertility. To use the residues for the creation of natural fertilizer, appropriate waste management practices should be used.

Cities especially Addis Ababa have also significant potential for natural fertilizer preparation. There are many organic resources available in cities that might be used to create natural fertilizer. Materials that could be used as natural fertilizers in the city are wasted, including onion, vegetable, and fruit peels, food, and other leftovers.

HU also provides various training on the utilization of chemical fertilizers in combination with natural fertilizers since combining the two fertilizers provides appropriate nutrients to the soil, prevents the side effects caused by chemical fertilizers, and improves the quality and safety of the soil. Moreover, natural fertilizer is imperative for all types of soils since it increases the water-retaining capacity of sandy soil and allows water to run freely, he indicated.

Unlike chemical fertilizers, applying natural fertilizers helps plant growth, soil health, disease prevention, and pest control. Because they contain 16 nutrients a plant needs for growth. Therefore, the country has huge potential for natural fertilizer preparation. Even if the country uses its potential properly, it will be possible to avoid importing fertilizers in 2 to 3 years.

Apart from chemical fertilizers, the farmers have been using natural fertilizers with multiple benefits to improve soil fertility by adding organic matter, which enhances soil structure and water retention capacity. This is particularly important in areas with low soil fertility and limited access to water resources.

In brief, Ethiopia has plenty of resources for creating natural fertilizer. Therefore, the country should take advantage of this opportunity to avoid or minimize imported fertilizers since natural fertilizer is essential for sustainable agriculture as it improves soil health, protects the environment, and encourages the production of healthier foods. Natural fertilizers are also a cost-effective, green way to increase soil fertility while preserving foreign exchange.

Planet Earth

Ethiopia should invest more on natural fertilizer to replace import

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Natural fertilizers are organic products made of a variety of organic components, including compost, plant waste, and animal manure. A nutrient-rich mixture made from these components is combined to increase the soil's fertility and encourage plant development.

Most people use compost, a type of natural compost fertilizer created by the decomposition of organic materials like food scraps, yard trash, leaves, and so forth. The growth of plants depends on important minerals like nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, which are abundant in compost. Additionally, it enhances microbial activity, water retention, and soil structure.

In contrast to chemical fertilizers, natural fertilizers, sometimes referred to as organic fertilizers, are made from natural sources and release nutrients gradually, giving plants a more balanced and long-lasting nutrition supply. They frequently have high levels of organic matter, which enhances microbial activity, water retention, and soil structure. Natural fertilizers have negligible adverse effects on the environment and are

renewable resources.

Chemical fertilizers are synthetic goods made from non-renewable resources like fossil fuels. These fertilizers are designed to deliver particular nutrients in concentrated quantities, enabling quick nutrient uptake by plants. They can, however, leak into bodies of water or runoff from farms, causing water pollution and ecosystem imbalances. Additionally, using chemical fertilizers too frequently can cause soil degradation and nutrient imbalances.

Therefore, it is essential to use natural fertilizers made from animal dung. This is a typical organic composite fertilizer that is used in farming all over the world. To provide nutrients to the soil, manure from animals like cows, horses, or chickens is collected and spread over fields or gardens. High concentrations of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium are found in manure, along with other micronutrients that are good for plant growth.

Additionally, there are numerous advantages of natural composite fertilizers over chemical fertilizers. They offer a gradual release of nutrients, lowering the possibility of nutrient runoff and leaching and reducing



Lecture and Researcher Teferi Tadesse

environmental pollution. By boosting microbial activity and adding more organic matter to the soil, they help increase its health. They also assist in lessening reliance on chemical fertilizers because they are sustainable and renewable resources.

In Ethiopia, natural composite fertilizers are utilized in agriculture. Compost, crop

waste, animal dung, and other organic wastes were combined by farmers and professionals to create fertilizers. However, the nation imports fertilizers because this is insufficient. The nation spends a lot of money each year importing fertilizers and distributing them to the farmers.

Why isn't Ethiopia utilizing natural fertilizer more frequently if it has all these advantages? Does the nation possess the necessary resources to produce organic fertilizers? The most crucial questions that should be addressed.

Haramaya University (HU) College of Agriculture and Environment, School of Natural Resource and Environmental Science Lecture and Researcher Teferi Tadesse said that Ethiopia has a lot of potential for producing organic fertilizer. However, the nation hasn't made use of this opportunity to save the environment and replace imported fertilizers.

Ethiopia has one of the largest livestock populations in Africa, and their dung and manure are a significant resource for making natural fertilizers. Nevertheless, over 22 million tons of dung and manure

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