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Ethiopia, Venezuela to deepen ties

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia and Venezuela have agreed to improve their diplomatic relations in various areas of common interest.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) discussed yesterday with Yvan Gil Pinto, the Foreign Minister of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, he Office of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia said.

Accordingly, the two countries reached common understanding to improve and diversify the diplomatic cooperation in

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State projects coffee exports to hit over 33, 000 tons

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA- Sidama State has been working to export over 33, 000 tons of coffee during this Ethiopian fiscal year (FY).

Sidama State Agriculture Bureau Head Memiru Moke told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the state has been working to cover

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Photo: Berihun Tadele

Metropolis integrates tourism with green legacy: Deputy Mayor

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA– In a bid to realize eco-friendly tourism, the Addis Ababa City Administration is working to integrate tourism development efforts with the national green legacy program, Deputy Mayor Jantirar Abay said.

The Deputy Mayor has opened the 44th World Tourism Day in which Ethiopia celebrated on Tuesday for 36th time under the theme: “Tourism for Green Development - Green Development for Tourism.”

Jantirar stated that the development basis of tourism attraction is to protect nature,

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Addis photo exhibition expects to attract crowd

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – Having attended a photo exhibition that was staged in connection with the metropolis’s commemoration of World Tourism Day at Meskel Square, foreigners said the exhibition is highly expected to attract crowd.

Moreover, they said that such event would be a platform to document historic events and explore destinations.

One of the visitors from Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency in Addis Ababa, Cengiz Polat said that exhibitions are a kind of documentary showing the historical transformation that entails the past, the future and helps point out the direction.

The visitor further remarked that these kinds of activities would be of paramount importance in promoting various tourist destinations and parks found in the capital and across the country.

As to him, other promotional activities including this one should be strengthened to encourage other tourist center of attraction destinations which are not yet witnessed by foreign tourists in the capital and across the nation.

He said: “This kind of photo exhibition needs to be fortified to create more opportunities towards exchanging cultural assets, experiences and others to promote the country’s untapped tourism potentials.”



Photo: Berihun Tadele

Moreover, it is an opportunity for visitors to help promote the hotel industry and hospitality. Also, he recommended that the country would reap fruits from the industry more if international tourist actors and companies are involved in droves.

As Ethiopia is a gifted country with a great potential, he emphasized that it is ideal to build standard hotels, lodges and other packages to enhance the tourist influx and

develop the tourism industry that has great contribution to its economy.

Addis Ababa Culture, Arts and Tourism Bureau Deputy Head Haftay Geberegzabher on his part said that the bureau has been staging various activities from lower to higher levels that help execute the green transition investment.

The exhibition embraced various photos

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News



Tourism promotion technologies growing in Addis: Bureau

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- The number of digital platforms that promote tourism destinations in the capital have seen significant growth as the government supports digitalization of services, said Addis Ababa Culture, Arts and Tourism Bureau.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, Bureau Communication Director Siratu Meja said that several software developers have launched apps and websites designed to make tourism destinations easily findable.

The bureau has supported application and website developers, he said, adding that mobile application called Discover Addis, for instance, has been developed in support of the bureau.

There is technical committee assessing the information of developed apps and websites while rewards and supports are also being issued to this end, the Director noted.

Digital advertisements and promotions are available on social Media enabling

tourists easily access their choice digitally. Furthermore, exhibitions displaying major destinations will be organized, he disclosed.

General Manager of Wos International Business Group PLC, Debebe Fekadu for his part said that his company has developed a mobile application named "Visit Addis Ababa".

He believed that the tourism sector requires more technological developments.

Debebe expressed that Visit Addis Ababa mobile app provides tourists and resident diplomats with up-to-date and comprehensive information about the capital city.

He also stated that the project has a potential of creating 200-500 jobs. However, he said, currently the project has 24 full-time and 33 temporarily employed staffs.

"We will start collecting 500,000 data from all over the city at the end of this month and we will start to employ more staffs. This is a pilot project, we have a plan to develop similar mobile apps in collaboration with other regions' municipalities," he expressed.

Dashen Bank grosses 18 bln Birr last FY

• *Actively discharges Corporate Social Responsibility*

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA- Dashen Bank, one of the pioneering private Banks in Ethiopia stated that it has amassed a total income of 18 billion Birr in the last fiscal year of which the five billion Birr is a profit before tax.

Bank's Shareholders met at Sky Light Hotel for the 30th ordinary annual session that discussed the Bank's last fiscal year performance, achievements, and issues of focus during this fiscal year.

Addressing the gathering, Board Chairman of the Bank, Dula Mekonnen indicated that this year's profit before tax surpassed that of last year's same period by 31.9 percent. Last fiscal year was marked with multifaceted global and domestic occurrences that gave rise to both challenges and opportunities to the bank industry.

Dula said, amid the challenging environment, Dashen Bank has achieved a commendable performance during the 2022/23 fiscal year. During the last fiscal year, the bank has managed to mobilize incremental deposits of Birr 23.6 billion and increased the aggregate positional balance to Birr 114.8 billion, which is a 25.9 percent growth compared to last year's same period.

The Board Chairman also added that total assets of the Bank has surged to 144.6 billion Birr, registering a 24.7 percent growth. Owners' equity also went up to 19.3 billion Birr attaining 34.3 percent growth relative to last year. Half of the growth came from paid-up capital, which increased by 2.5 Billion Birr or 36.2 percent compared to last year.

CEO of the Bank, Asfaw Alemu, on his part said that in terms of operational performance,

the bank's channels expansion, customer attraction, resource mobilization and deployment have recorded positive growth over last year during the same period. During the concluded fiscal year, the Bank had opened 253 additional branches at various locations bringing itself one-step closer to its customers.

The much-anticipated opening up of the Ethiopian banking sector and establishment of the Capital Market in the near future are expected to be a new frontier to deal with timely and smartly, Asfaw emphasized.

With a customer base of 5.2 plus million, Dashen shall continue to place utmost importance on understanding and addressing the evolving needs of its customers. Through 835 branch networks, 388 ATMs and other digital platforms, the Bank shall strive to deliver best-in-class banking services tailored to its customers' needs, Asfaw added.

After successfully undergoing a detailed due diligence process, Dashen Bank has secured a foreign loan to the tune of USD 40 million on a joint commitment from UK's British International Investment (BII) and Dutch FMO. The situation made the Bank the first financial institution in Ethiopia to obtain long-term funding from DFIs' under the Foreign Currency Intermediation Directive for Banks. The funding will be instrumental to boost the Country's agricultural export.

The CEO further noted that, as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, the Bank in partnership with MIDROC Ethiopia, has established feeding centres in Lideta and Lemi Kura Sub cities and provided financial support to various noble causes. In 2023, Dashen Bank has invested close to Birr 285 million in various social initiatives.

Ministry eyes on implementing leather strategy for better yield

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA—Ministry of Industry (MoI) stated that a leather development Strategy document is highly required to make "Let Ethiopia Produce" initiative effective.

Speaking at the workshop organized yesterday in order to discuss the implementation of leather development strategy document with government officials, stakeholders, and owners of manufacturers aiming at addressing the leather sector challenges, Industry Minister, Melaku Alebel said that communication gap is a serious factor that has hindered the effective realization of 'let Ethiopia produce' motive. Therefore, all hierarchical leaders ranging from local chiefs to the Federal senior officials should examine the initiative to help the nation get what it deserves out of the leather sector.

Presenting a discussion paper, Leather and Leather Products Industry Research and



Photo: Gebabo Gebrie

Development Center Manager Mohammed Hussein said that the leather industry has been facing various challenges like shortage of chemicals, COVID-19 pandemic, quality reduction, foreign currency crunch, reduction of international price, capacity

limitation, and the stagnant of some fabrics.

"Though the country is capable of producing 41 million leather and pickle produces, it produces only 22 million ones at present," he underlined.

As to Mohammed, the leather development

strategy document will play a significant role in reducing the challenge via encouraging import substitution following research based undertakings and giving equal chance among stakeholders.

He added that utilizing the potential of the leather industry hand-in-hand with wise use of resource helps bring meaningful outcome from the sector. Besides, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Industry, leather providers or exporters, Ministry of Trade, and various states bureaus should jointly work to eliminate leather constraints. Ethiopia is exporting leather to China, India, Europe, and leather products and shoes to the U.S., Mohammed noted.

Furthermore, participants who came from various states, manufacturing industry, leather exporters, government heads and others raised their question and suggestion in a manner towards addressing the leather industry constraints and bringing significant impact in that regard.

News

Ministry identifies major areas to boost horticulture's export performance

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- Enhancing productivity and ensuring quality would boost the export performance of the horticulture sector thereby improving nation's foreign currency earnings, so stressed Ministry of Agriculture (MoA).

Speaking with local media, Agriculture Minister, Girma Amente (PhD), stated that the horticulture sector has allowed in creating employment opportunities with limited space, generating foreign currency, as well as knowledge and technology transfer, among others.

In the past, the sector has been operated by foreigners. However, through knowledge and technology transfer, almost 90% of the sector is now led by Ethiopians, he said.

Under the green legacy initiative, the nation had started exporting Avocado, Banana and other fruits to the world market. By expanding the productivity and ensuring quality, the nation could increase its contribution in the nation, he underlined.

"The land, weather, and surface and underground water of the country are favorable for the horticulture sector. Thus, mapping the areas that are more conducive is essential."

To this end, the Ministry has mapped the surroundings of Bahir Dar, Jimma, and



Arbaminches the major areas that are suitable for the production.

Executive Director of the Ethiopian Horticulture Producer Exporters Association (EHPEA) on his part noted that much effort should be exerted in ensuring quality and improving skill and technology transfer.

"The more the investment enhances in the horticulture sector, the better the outcomes contribute to the development of the nation widely."

The director further highlighted sector's paramount of significance in supplying agro-processing factories besides creating

ample jobs and attract more earnings.

Nonetheless, provision and expansion of land and basic infrastructure, cold chain logistics as well as taxation system remained challenge in the sector. Thus, priority must be given in addressing the challenges to reap the right amount of benefit from the sector, as to him.

The nation has set a plan to generate some 741.8million USD from the horticulture sector. Apart from addressing the aforesaid bottlenecks, the Minister underlined that an action plan would be prepared where the performance of the sector would be evaluated quarterly.

Addis photo exhibition...

showcasing the city's past and present scenarios, monuments, tourist destination sites is believed to boost city tourism and would be a historic document for the next generations, he said adding that this trend should be further augmented.

"This would serve as a bridge that links the past, present and the future and helps the tourists visit these places on the spot as well," he added.

It was learnt that ambassadors and representatives drawn from 80 countries visited the photo exhibition opened yesterday and would last for 3 consecutive days for the public.

During the opening ceremony of the exhibition, City's Deputy Mayor Jantir Abay, Speaker of Addis Ababa City Council Buzena Alkedir, Addis Ababa Tourism and Culture Bureau Head, Hirut Kassaw (PhD) were in attendance.

Ethiopia, Venezuela...

many areas.

On Monday, Foreign Minister Pinto also discussed with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen. Both exchanged views on bilateral and multilateral issues of common interest.

During the discussion, Demeke said that it is high time to deepen the historic traditional relations with Venezuela.

He also commended Venezuela for its principled, consistent support to Ethiopia in various multilateral forums, the information obtained from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) indicated.

The Venezuelan, Foreign Minister Yvan Gil Pinto on his part said that his country is keen to work closely with Ethiopia in agriculture, tourism, energy and health.

The Foreign Minister has also invited Ethiopian Airlines to start flying to Venezuela while expressing his government's desire to offer scholarship opportunities to Ethiopian students.

The two ministers also agreed to commence the Joint Ministerial Commission between the two countries.

Briefing journalists on the event, Ambassador Meles Alem, Spokesperson of MoFA, stated that the two FMs have made a successful discussion which is exemplary to Ethiopia's efforts to bolster ties with Latin American countries.

Since September 2023, Ethiopia is striving to improve and reach its diplomatic relations to a new height with neighboring and other African, Asian, European and American countries, he elaborated.

State projects...

some 10, 000 hectares of land with coffee seedlings, and has been working to supply over 33, 000 tons of coffee product to central market during the reported period.

The state managed to export 31, 000 tons of coffee to foreign market during the last fiscal year. This year, it has planned to reach its export to over 33, 000 tons, he indicated.

There are some 388 coffee trading centers in which coffee producing is exercised forming many association and at individual level. Among these places, some 74 have gone operational. Some 142 have also finalized preparations to commence trading activity, he added.

Delay of loan has been a serious challenge for them not to operate at full capacity. Hence, efforts are being exerted to make operators fully operational via establishing a taskforce.

According to Memiru, the state has enabled to gain over 10 quintals of coffee product per hectare and it has been also tirelessly working on improving its productivity.

Furthermore, it has already prepared 3.5 million tons of compost to increase and improve productivity.

Currently, the state covers some 164 hectares of land, and it has planned to increase the yield to 174 hectares of land this fiscal year, he noted.

So far, the state has been working to cover 10 hectares of land with coffee seedlings or trees preparing over 30 million coffee seedlings, and would start planting the saplings in May 2024.

Hence, some 134, 000 coffee trees have started yielding coffee covering 164 hectares of land, he further elaborated.

Metropolis...

develop it and make it suitable for mankind.

Accordingly, Ethiopia is working on the development of green legacy in addition to developing man-made, natural and historical tourist attractions, he stated.

In this regard, the city administration has increased the forest coverage of the capital from 2.8% to 15% while efforts are still underway to develop various destinations and parks, he noted.

According to the Deputy Mayor, striving

for green legacy enables the world to overcome air pollution that's why the World Tourism Organization is celebrating the Day with a slogan "Tourism for Green Development - Green Development for Tourism."

"Therefore, we can understand it in depth and give a practical response," he said.

According to Jantir, Addis Ababa is the hub of many tourist attractions, though it requires the cooperation of all stakeholders to make the capital a preferred tourism

destination globally.

Addis Ababa City Administration Spokesperson Buzena Alqadir on her part said that stakeholders ought to play due role in a bid to elongate number of days visitors stay in the country.

This could be achieved through increasing tourism investment in developing attractions in a way that improve tourism income and the livelihood of residents.

Addis Ababa Culture, Arts and Tourism

Bureau Head Hirut Kassaw (PhD) said that the city is working with great attention in the field of green development.

"In addition to the previous tourism activities, we will focus on tourism conference and health tourism," she noted.

In addition, all the residents of the city should be well aware of tourism resources in the city and the Bureau will work hard to make Addis Ababa a clean, beautiful and convenient city for visitors, Hirut underlined.

Opinion

The irreplaceable role of media for the ND's success

BY BACHA ZEWDIE

When talking about dialogue, we are referring that people come together and discuss issues by controlling their emotion; listening to each other politely and honorably aiming to come to consensus. National Dialogue (ND) is a platform where all concerned bodies are participated either directly or indirectly through representatives.

Dialogue by nature does not go along with rigidity or sticking on one idea; rather it is a matter of understanding the others' idea flexibly; it is not debate, rather it is a matter of sharing ideas; it is not convincing or defeating the other group; rather it is a means of finding common solution. It can be held among small groups of people, communities, and political groups or between the entire public at the national level.

Based on the mechanisms utilized and the way it is handled, a dialogue can be effective or not. National dialogue can work if it includes key political actors, armed groups and civil society groups.

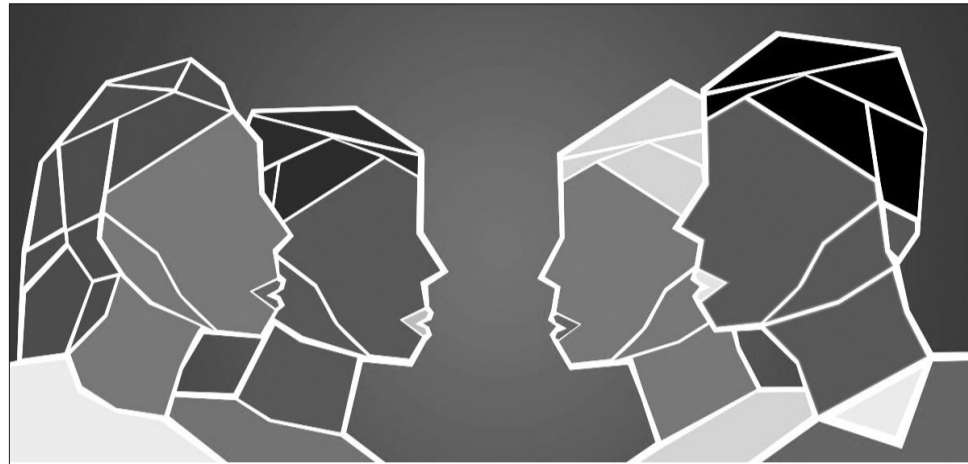
Depending on the political context, government, opposition groups or civil society organizations may initiate a national dialogue process. In Sudan and South Sudan, the talks were started by the incumbent presidents, without much participation by some major opposition and armed groups. This proved to be a weakness, undermining the dialogues' credibility in the preparation phase, and later hampering the implementation of recommendations.

Wide consultations are essential for defining achievable goals. Failing to do so, results in unrealistic dialogue agenda and proposals that are hard to implement as the Sudan national dialogue showed. In contrast, the aims of the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation (KNDR) were specific and limited, so the outcomes were manageable.

Inclusivity and the participation of a wide range of stakeholders during negotiations are crucial to accommodating divergent interests and needs. Despite including many participants, Sudan and South Sudan's dialogues didn't adequately involve key opposition political parties and armed groups. The groups were either excluded from the talks intentionally, or boycotted the processes due to dissatisfaction regarding government's role.

National dialogue is an increasingly popular tool for conflict resolution and political transformation. It can broaden debate regarding a country's trajectory beyond the usual elite decision makers; however, it can also be misused and manipulated by leaders to consolidate their power.

In this sense, is national dialogue necessary and workable to Ethiopia? Certainly, it can be both. The country is a home of diversified societies, interests, political outlooks, and ideological viewpoints among elites. Plus, there is a big misunderstanding among these



sections on basic national issues including history of the nation. Thus, in order to create national consensus by resolving the differences and misunderstanding, conducting extended, participatory and inclusive national dialogues are essential.

Taking in to account the urgency of the issue, the Ethiopian government established a National Dialogue Commission (NDC) by proclamation No. 1265/2021 with the mandate of coordinating and leading the dialogue efficiently and impartially that deserve acceptance by the entire public.

Accordingly, the commission was formed and engaged into the activity for more than eighteen months with the mission to see national consensus reached on basic issues by 2024. The commission has also its own mission and values. The values are inclusiveness, transparency and participatory and conducting reliable dialogue.

All these efforts are extremely essential but only fruitful if the whole public of the country could access the information and reach on informed common understanding. To this end, media has an irreplaceable role.

Media is like a sword with double edges. It can serve in two different extremes. It can either serve for the sustainability of peace and stability or a blood shade war among peoples even in one country. Wise usage of media, thus, will enable the commission achieve the intended success.

According to Yohannes Shiferaw (PhD), Lecturer at Addis Ababa University School of Journalism and Communication, the media has an important role to play in facilitating communication for the success of the upcoming national dialogue in Ethiopia.

As to Yohannes, evidence suggests that many countries around the world have used national dialogue as a solution to their internal political challenges. For example, Rwanda, South Africa, and Kenya, had been able to create a peaceful community with relatively strong economies by successfully conducting national dialogue.

By the same token, Ethiopia also established National Dialogue Commission with a view to bring a lasting peace vital to the prosperity of the country. The constructive engagement of the media is crucial for the successful conduct of this national dialogue.

Similarly, Samson Mekonnen (PhD), Assistant Professor of Communication Science School of Journalism and Communication at Addis Ababa University, in his article titled: "Role of Media in Making or Breaking the Ethiopian National Dialogue" stated that Ethiopia's national dialogue is an opportunity to forge a new route toward peace, political tolerance, national unity, political and economic equality, and a shared destiny by expanding the debate about the country's future beyond the traditional elite decision-makers. In general, the success of National Dialogues is dependent on widespread public support, availing information to the public, and importantly, media participation.

Highlighting the media role, Samson noted in his article that media, arguably, plays a critical role in creating a well-informed public that gives credence to the process and outcome of National Dialogues. Two very different instances, Poland and Iraq highlight this critical point. While the media and public consultation activities in Poland (1990) significantly aided the overall dialogue process and contributed to a diversification of the political landscape and, eventually, a shift in power relations.

In contrast, such critical roles were largely absent in Iraq (2004), limiting substantial input from opposition groups and civil society. Yemen (2013) demonstrates the immense difficulties of reaching ordinary citizens. Though Yemen had a well-developed media strategy and a designated body, the National Dialogue failed to catch the interest of the wider public. Thus, media, if properly utilized, can create public awareness and support for National Dialogue in all its phases.

In this sense, the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission has gone long distance in communicating the public through media but it was commented that it has not been at the level it had to be since the issue is a very critical that needs continuous update. In order to resolve conflicts erupt here and there that become cause for loss of lives and property destruction, conducting national dialogue sooner than later is a matter of existence to Ethiopia as nation, some elites suggest.

Ethiopians have tried various ways, more of involved in conflicts to solve their national problems but coming to consensus has remained reaching for the stars. It is proved

that conflict cannot bring solution for any differences except aggravating the matter. The only option to be exploited is dialogue.

Dialogue can achieve many goals like creating trust between the people and the government; enforcing democratic system; nurturing civilized and transformed society; bringing to end of conflicts and misunderstandings among others such as strengthening brotherhood among the entire public.

To this end, communicating the public is a basic process which can be achievable only through media so that the commission has to consolidate its relationship with the all forms of media.

As it was commented on the forum held in Adama last weekend with the media institutions, the commission needs more effort in working with the media. It could be learned from the presentations that the commission has gone long distance in reaching different regions and communities on awareness creation and selection of participants but could not communicate the entire public with its outcomes and this created misperception among the people that the commission became non functional and even dissolved.

Taking into account all the blur, the commission has shown commitment to work with the media closely. For the practicality of the commitment, a media forum that includes seven officials of media houses was formed at the closing session of the Adama discussion forum. Members of the media forum accepted the responsibility with good will and a servant mentality for the fruitfulness of the goals of the NDC.

Ethiopia, a country endowed with multitudes of resources both natural and manmade and the bulk of working force, deserves such commitment and should not suffer from poverty while standing on wealth. The major obstacle, not to develop its resources and get rid of poverty and to be food self sufficient, is the misunderstanding among the peoples that resulted in conflicts.

On top of keeping the country under the siege of poverty, the conflicts have destroyed its image in front of the international community. The national dialogue, thus, should play its decisive role of creating lasting peace and stability through inclusive and participatory dialogue.

The country ought to stand with honor and pride in front of the international community and should be considered as a peaceful state preferred to be visited by tourists. To this end, Ethiopians should work their homework of making it peaceful and stabilized that fits its reputation that has existed for centuries.

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

Editorial

Interweaving tourism and green dev't!

The World Tourism Week 2023 is being celebrated in Addis Ababa at Meskel Square under the theme "Tourism for Green Development - Green Development for Tourism."

The celebration that continues for three consecutive days will entertain a diverse range of activities; including, photo exhibition, street festivals, business and job opportunity creation fair, 'Miss Tourism Addis Ababa 2023/24 Competition', blood donation, recognition and award ceremony, among others.

The celebration of tourism week, according to the Addis Ababa Administration Culture, Arts and Tourism Bureau, has tremendous benefits. By showcasing and promoting the untapped cultural heritages and natural treasures of the capital, the event not only stimulates the tourism sector, but also strengthens the economy and enhances the city's reputation as a preferred tourism destination at regional and international level.

The Ethiopian government, considering the ample potentials that the tourism industry holds to expand economic opportunities for local communities particularly for the young people and women through creating jobs, has been exerting determined efforts to develop and expand the nation's tourism sites, ensure quality tourism services, and benefit local people.

The initiatives such as the 'Dine for Sheger,' 'Dine for Nation,' and 'Dine for Generation' projects demonstrate the government's commitment to driving the tourism sector's growth through investing in the green economy.

The renovations of parks such as Unity Park, Entoto Park, and Friendship Park and the Meskel Square, along with the newly constructed library and museum- The Abrehot Library and the Science Museum - and the construction of various youth centers are also the remarkable achievements that highlight government's dedication and efforts to providing top-notch facilities and attractions for visitors.

These days, the newly inaugurated tourism spots, apart from spicing up the natural beauty of the Addis Ababa city and lifting up the image of Ethiopia, are bearing fruits. They are attracting hundreds of thousands of local and international visitors and yielding a significant amount of income.

Certainly, the contribution of the tourism industry in accelerating economic growth through unlocking numerous benefits such as job creation, reducing poverty and increasing foreign currency earning cannot be overstated.

And, Addis Ababa, with its untapped potential, has the opportunity to position itself as a thriving tourism hub. By capitalizing on the power of tourism, the city aims to unlock economic opportunities, attract a larger number of visitors, and uplift local communities through job creation and socioeconomic empowerment.

In fact, the World Tourism Week celebration in Addis Ababa is not just a fleeting event but a testament to Ethiopia's broader vision for sustainable development. By showcasing the country's rich cultural heritages and breathtaking natural wonders, the celebration serves as a platform for fostering economic growth and creating a brighter future for its people.

In essence, the World Tourism Week celebration in Addis Ababa indicates Ethiopia's commitment to harnessing the potential of tourism as a catalyst for economic growth and sustainable development. It is a testament to the country's vision, ambition, and determination to leverage its cultural and natural treasures to create a prosperous and vibrant future for all.

In short, Ethiopia has been investing in the green economy incorporating the Green Resilient Economy in its national development. This green investment has inseparably interwoven with the tourism sector. Hence, the theme, "Tourism for Green Development and Green Development for Tourism" is a generalization of government's commitment.



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Office of the CEO

Tel. 011-126-42-22

Fax. 251-011-156-98-62

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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

Opinion

Ethiopia accessing to the port by respecting neighbor countries sovereignty

BY SOLOMON GIRMAY

The use of ports in Ethiopia plays a significant role in facilitating international trade and promoting economic development. It also enables Ethiopia to connect with global markets, attract foreign investment, and promote economic growth and development. Despite being a landlocked country, Ethiopia relies on several ports in neighboring countries to facilitate the trading of goods and commodities.

Ethiopia heavily depends on the ports of Djibouti due to its proximity and good diplomatic relationship. The Port of Djibouti, along with other facilities such as Doraleh Multipurpose Port and Doraleh Container Terminal, serve as major gateways for Ethiopian imports and exports. These ports handle a significant portion of Ethiopia's international trade, particularly with countries in the Middle East, Asia, and Europe. They offer various services including container handling, bulk cargo handling, and transshipment facilities. But as Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said "A population of 150 million can't live in a geographic prison" With Ethiopia's population projected to be 150 million by 2030.

It's hard to exaggerate the extent of Djibouti's economic reliance on its considerably larger neighboring countries mainly Ethiopia. Djibouti faces an acute scarcity of fresh water, necessitating the importation of water from Ethiopia. Likewise, a significant portion of Djibouti's electricity is sourced from Ethiopia. Given the arid desert terrain in Djibouti, agricultural production is limited, leading to a daily influx of fresh fruits, vegetables, and grains transported across the Ethiopian border. As the world community built on give and take philosophy, Ethiopia must have an option to access port. "Declaring 'I will take yours, but I won't give you mine' is not appropriate. Ethiopia, indeed, has every right to pursue access to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean," Abiy asserted.

Abiy said that The Red Sea and the Nile are intimately linked to Ethiopia, serving as the pillars that could either propel the country's progress or lead to its demise. "When we had access to the Red Sea, we were one of the great powers," the prime minister remarked, emphasizing that "gaining access to the sea should not come at the cost of bloodshed and conflict." In return, Abiy expressed his country's interest in offering shares from the Great Renaissance Dam, Ethiopian Airlines, and Ethio-telecom. He stated, "When we propose sharing the benefits of the Renaissance Dam, it's not merely an idea, we have calculated it. It yields substantial returns," he said.

Although the GERD is nearing completion,



When we propose sharing the benefits of the Renaissance Dam, it's not merely an idea, we have calculated it. It yields substantial returns,



it took Ethiopia more than 10 years to complete it. As Prime Minister Abiy said, if Ethiopia uses port charges for GERD, it will be able to build it every three years. At present, if Ethiopia gives 30% of the GERD Share and gets a sea gate, it can get 100% of the lost 30% of the GERD in three years. This will be the key to Ethiopia's economy and the return of its power that left in history.

"We must address this today to prevent future generations from resorting to conflict. This can be achieved through discussions on investment options, shares, and leases. However, dismissing it entirely as a topic of conversation is a mistake," he emphasized.

"We're not insisting on Massawa or Assab specifically. What we seek is an accessible gateway. However it may materialize—be it through purchase, leasing, or any mutual arrangement—that's our objective," the prime minister stated.

In the process of getting port, Ethiopia would not chase its interest through war or any conflict as Abiy said "there are fears that Ethiopia may carry out an invasion after our recent strong demand for access to the sea, I want to assure that Ethiopia will not pursue its interests through war. We are committed to mutual interest through dialogue and negotiation," Abiy added.

"If we plan to live together in peace, we have to find a way to mutually share from each other in a balanced manner, Ethiopia has never been defeated and will not be defeated in the future," and he insisted that "the Ethiopian army does not aim to attack and invade others, but to defend the country. Ethiopia has never invaded any country and will not do so in the future," he added.

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

Business & Economy

Supporting livestock sector to enhance its economic value

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Studies indicate that Ethiopia has the largest cattle population in Africa. Cattle breeding is practiced since the ancient time both in the low and high land parts of the country. But the sector is still very traditional and its contribution to the Agricultural Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is less than the expected.

Among the many factors which hamper the sector's growth are shortage of forage, water and veterinary service. The location of the places where the livestock are available is far from the formal market, and their type of species which provides less milk and meat products also contribute to its substandard growth.

12% of the population in Ethiopia is living in the low land parts mostly in arid areas and engaged in pastoral life. The area is characterized by shortage of rain and in time of drought, the availability of water and forage will be dwindled and when it becomes severe, catastrophic consequence will occur. In addition to these, the absence of veterinary services critically affects the sector.

The pastoral community has rarely developed the culture of consuming meat even in time of adversity. They mostly consume milk. As they live far away from the central market place, they don't take to market for selling their animals in time of drought with the aim to converting the live animals in to cash. Therefore, the economic value of the animals is remained insignificant.

It is remembered that two years ago, only in the south eastern Ethiopia, in Somali and Oromia regions, millions of cattle lost their life due to drought and this clearly indicates that how the sector is not climate resilient.

The death of the cattle critically affected the livelihood of the pastoral community and rehabilitating them to restart new life is very challenging which needs billions of Birr.

The number of cattle population in the high land parts of the country is exceeding that of the low land parts. People engaged in sedentary farming in the high land parts of the country also rear cattle. But mostly they use it as the means of energy for farming and transportation purpose. Behind the growth of crop yield, there is labor of the cattle. Similar to the low land parts, there is shortage of both forage and water. Currently, due to shortage of farm land posed by population pressure, some grazing and wet lands are invaded by people who suffer from lack of land and cultivate their crops.

Ethiopia's meat and milk per capita consumption is very low when compared to the Sub Saharan African countries. In fact, currently, Ethiopia exports live animals to the Middle East market but the volume of hard currency it contributes to the Gross National Product is very small.

The government pursues the policy of expanding the manufacturing sector to



Ethiopia is endowed with large number of cattle – photo Google

create link with the agriculture, create job opportunity and boost export. However, the supply of livestock products to the agro industries is not developed as it is expected. Some of the flourishing abattoirs are not producing by their full capacity due to shortage of industrial inputs imported by the hardly gained foreign currency and shortage of cattle supply because of deteriorating security issues in some parts of the country.

Ethiopia aspired to earn billions of Dollars from export of leather and leather products but due to shortage of supply of inputs it was unable to meet the plan.

Since Long ago, the successive governments of Ethiopia strived to modernize the sector and took various measures. Among others, starting from the 1950s, agricultural colleges and research institutions which centered the livestock development were established in different parts of the country such as Haromaya, Jimma, Holeta and Amibara agricultural research institutions to mention but few. Many professionals have been graduated from these agricultural institutions.

Some of the graduates from these Colleges have become the celebrated scientists working in the USA and Europe and others are serving their country.

To strengthen the ongoing research and study on the livestock, the government established Ethiopian Agricultural Research Institute and the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency. In addition to providing extension service to the sector, the two institutions provided hybrid species of animals to farmers.

According to the recent FAO report, Ethiopia's agriculture sector accounts for 40% of the country's GDP and employs 75% of the country's workforce. Livestock is a key component in this sector—in fact Ethiopia has the largest livestock population in Africa, with 70 million cattle, 42 million sheep, 52 million goats, 8 million camels, and 56 million chickens.

Therefore, Ethiopia's livestock is vital to the country's economic well-being and is a key component in the government's aim to ensure food security and decrease reliance on agricultural imports, as outlined in Ethiopia's Ten-Year Strategic Development Plan of the Ministry of Agriculture. To meet these goals, Ethiopia needs a more robust tool for managing livestock data, known as a Livestock Information System (LIS).

A project aimed at establishing commercially viable and sustainable forage markets for dairy producers in Ethiopia is recently launched.

Speaking on the launching ceremony, Livestock Development Institute Director-General, Asrat Tera said the project focuses on increasing the demand for climate-smart forage among small-scale producers in dairy villages; increasing the supply of nutrient-dense climate-smart forage grown locally and strengthening the enabling environment for forage market development.

The project will be implemented in six regions of Ethiopia—Oromia, Amhara, and Sidama, as well as the Central, Southern, and South West Ethiopia—and brings best practices to the other regions, he added.

The Nourishing Prosperity Alliance Forage project in Ethiopia will be implemented in collaboration with various pertinent bodies, including Corteva Agriscience, Forage Genetics International (FGI), the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), and local partners of the Nourishing Prosperity Alliance (NPA), with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Land O'Lakes Venture 37.

According to Asrat, the project directly aligns with the millstone of Yelemat Tirufat, and hence, the Ministry of Agriculture renders whatever support is needed to achieve the milestones of the project through its local partner institutions.

Land O'Lakes Venture 37 Group Director, Dai Harvey, said the project will be implemented in the next five years. The

Nourishing Prosperity Alliance Forage project is looking at the commercialization of forage in Ethiopia and also in Kenya to improve animal nutrition so as to improve the productivity of animals across East Africa.

The group director pointed out that in Ethiopia's context, the project will significantly contribute to improving the productivity of the dairy animals with the view to enhancing the amount of milk being produced from existing dairy animals across Ethiopia, starting in high-dairy potential regions of the country.

The current Ethiopia's livestock information is impacted by input data of varied quality and a limited capacity for data analysis, including comparison which slows down the flow of information to stakeholders and limits their ability to use data to shape production decisions.

With all these limitations combined, stakeholders have access to only segments of Ethiopia's livestock sector and therefore, are limited in data driven decision making.

Ethiopia's MoA recognized the challenges facing the agriculture sector and, in 2017, partnered with stakeholders to transform the country's livestock data ecosystem. This was the first phase of live program. During this phase, the MoA worked closely with the Livestock Investment Corporation (LIC) and International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) to conduct a landscape analysis of the livestock data ecosystem which outlined stakeholder needs and the state of the livestock data ecosystem.

From this landscape analysis, the partners developed the Livestock Information System (LIS) Roadmap, which provides an overarching vision for the development of comprehensive LIS which includes discrete steps on how to achieve this vision. For the second phase of the LIS program, the Director General will take the lead on the technology implementation stage.

Art & Culture

A sojourn in a wonderland-Chebera Churchura Park, Halala Keela

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Unrestricted light poured into the bedroom through the window via the white blind. Its fingers caressed me to awaken me. I took a shower to be in full gear for the next trip. The cold water washed away my tiredness. Fortifying myself with the Hotel's breakfast, I hurried to the car that was lining up to head to Chebera Churchura Park, which is entailed in the country's project chart.

After a short tour, when we reached a place, where all the cars were told to stop at one flank.

We alighted from the car. Members of the Konta Cultural Group welcomed us staging a wonderful melody assisted by traditional wind instruments. Following the music, presenting different cultural performances about ten dancers dressed in the traditional clothes of the nation were able to capture the attention of all of us. We understood that such music show is meant for special guests.

The zonal officials led us to a shady spot on the right to take a rest. We accepted the invitation and took a rest. "Honorable guests, welcome to this ever green land! We are glad that you have come," said the Konta Zone administrator. Not only that, he soon started enumerating the natural gifts the zone is blessed with. With word pictures he also painted about the Koisha project which is being carried out by the initiative of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. When park sees the day's light, he made us conjure up in mind the hidden wonderful natural beauty that will be unveiled in the place.

Indeed, it was true. This tourist destination will undoubtedly generate income, also much-needed hard currency, when, via advertisement, it sells itself to both local and foreign tourists. The zone administrator did not want to talk much; instead, he let us witness the awe-inspiring beauty of the zone. As soon as he finished speaking, the zone manager invited us to see the agricultural products in the zone. Honey, Yogurt, cheese, banana, pineapple, papaya, mangoes, and oranges are among the agricultural products of the zone. The hosts offered to us everything that grew in the green land.

After a short rest, we left the main gravel road to embark on the Chebera Churchura Park. Through video clips of various folk songs I had a prior knowledge of the potential tourist attractions in this park. I visited the park in person and feasted my eyes on this paradise found under Ethiopian sky. The park was made to enjoy protection in 2004/2005 by the request and participation of Konta and Dauro ethnic groups. So it is safe to claim it is free from any form of threat.

The park is said to be a suitable and harmonious conservation area for biodiversity and wild animals. In Konta, and Dawro people are known for their forests upkeep traditions. A person is obliged to plant three saplings before cutting down a tree. It covers an area of 1190 square meters; it is located at an altitude that ranges from 700 to 2800 meters above sea level. The park is unique in its bounty of natural resources. It is also home

Chebera Churchura Park has various water basins of rivers; it seems to have allowed large numbers of wild animals to roam freely as the park abounds in streams and lakes

to the African elephant, whose number is on decline around the world. It is also home to other rare and stunning flora and fauna.

Chebera Churchura Park has various water basins of rivers; it seems to have allowed large numbers of wild animals to roam freely as the park abounds in streams and lakes. During our morning visit; we saw the tourism infrastructural facilities that has been built and is being built for visitors who want to pay homage to this wonderful place. The choice of location and the diversity of the designs to be carried out were/are amazing and convenient to show the potential natural resources. It is a right spot to take time to relax.

A paved road that allows you to see around the park; bridges; tourist accommodation areas; cafes; restaurants have already been built in designated areas. Some are in the pipeline. When these infrastructures see the light of day, they can help prolong the stay of tourists that came for a sojourn as well as create employment opportunities for the residents.

Three rivers snake through the park, making the place evergreen year after year. The Shiva and Dono lakes are also the assets of the park which foreground its majestic beauty. In one of these lakes; there is a fish called "Gara Chebera" that is not found anywhere else in the world. This park has 37 medium and large mammals; it contains 237 species of birds. Five of the mentioned bird species are endemic.

African elephant, hippopotamus, boar, deer, monkey, lion tiger wild cat and what have you are available. In order to see the wildlife, one needs to patiently wait till they emerge out for water and food. In addition, traveling without making noise helps to see the wild animals. Chebera Churchura Park is vast, so it is mandatory to use a vehicle to explore every corner of it.

We headed to the nature reserve in the park and with the help of the scouts saw a red hippo. We then took a break for lunch at a restaurant in the park. The owner of the restaurant goes by the name Fibela. She is French by birth and married to Ethiopian. Ten years ago, she came to the park. The Joe-dropping destination is one of the things that attracted her to dwell for good in Ethiopia. Febila is currently sharing her experiences to countless investors. Some of the investors are following her footsteps and engaged in tourism facility developments that will add jewels to the crown of the Park.

After lunch, when the sun took refuge behind the mountains, the scouts in the park invited us to rove circling the park so as to see the elephants. From a distance, amidst many buffaloes we saw a huge elephant. "The others are found deep in the dense forest," said one of the scouts. Some of us used binocular, half of us stood on top of a vehicle, the rest of us stood on hilly areas. We managed to observe many elephants roaming around. A drone was sent to the central park to find out as to where the elephants might be hiding. The drone returned apologetic of its botched attempt. We searched all possible spots where elephants could be found in abundance. The scouts remarked; if you wait with a baited breath you will see what you waited for. Not long we saw a number of elephants walking along the river bank. As we waited patiently, our wishes were fulfilled, and we experienced an inner joy at what we saw.

Following the completion of the field visit to Chebera Churchura Park, we took a commemorative photo with Konta leaders. Then after we went to our accommodation at Koisha Power Plant and stayed there. The next morning, we were told that our Konta Zone tour was over and we packed our bags and headed out to the coaster cars.

Thanks to the Koisha Power Project workers, the broken leaf spring was repaired and readied for action. We were told that our destination was Dawro Zone and we headed there.

We reached the city of Dawro Zone at two o'clock. The city dotted with some skyscrapers was lively. We were told to check into one of the hotels where we dined. As per our schedule, we headed to the Ethnographic Museum in the city. In the museum; the culture and history of the Dawro people are found well recorded. In the Museum, assortment of valuables and utensils such as motely traditional clothes made in different designs, musical instruments and artifacts were in display. When we left the museum, the members of the ethnic group gracefully attired in different costumes of the ethnic group engrossed us for a few minutes with charming and typical songs and dances.

It was 6:00 in the morning and we visited a coal mine near the city. Six of the eight investors licensed in the zone had already started work.

Although there were 41 developers who had applied for permission, some have been banned in order to parry damage on the local ecology. We were told that the investment door is still open for those who want to responsibly engage in other fields.

After completing our stay in Dawro Zone, we began hitting the road to Halala Kela and surged forward. The road leading to the Halala checkpoint is nothing less than the asphalts of Addis Ababa city. We arrived at the gate that signaled our arrival at our destination, the Halala Resort. Amazing designs and architecture wonders on display greeted our eyes at the resort. The reception, the auditorium that can accommodate about 200 people at a time, the sprawling dining hall (which can put up 100 people at a time), the swimming pool, and the junior to deluxe or VIP bedrooms are built on high ground to let in fresh air.

The elegantly styled guest rooms look like a cluster of cottages on the mountain. The reason why the resort was chosen to be built on the site is not only for the presence of the historical heritage of Halala Keela but also for an artificial lake created at the foot of the mountain, following the birth of Gibe III dam.

Halala is the name of the King of Dawro. The king had built a fence of long stone walls that extend large distance to protect the people from the sudden attack of enemies. The entire construction took more than 200 years and was completed by three generations of people.

The work was started in the 16th century during the reign of Kati(King) Halala. The place is known by the Dauros as Kathi Halala Keela which means King Halala's forts. The king is said to have devoted most of his reign, 25 years, to the wall-building task. The park's name is associated with King Halala. The construction was completed within his life span.

Halala Keela is 1225 km long and has seven gates. After visiting this wonderful touristic gem, we headed with the voluntary service of the resort cars to the man-made lake called Gilgel Gibe dam. The lake has proved a suitable spot for fish production. The quality of the meat is not like the ones we find in every market. Because of their plumpness, the fishes fill both the net and eyes. If one crosses this lake by boat as a shortcut, one will cut 50 km off one's road as a straight line is the shortest path. The cars should take the normal route—the circumference.

We took the advice and crossed the lake by a motor boat. The coasters didn't come at the expected time due to an unknown reason. The sun sank. We approached a nearby residence where inhabitants were eagerly awaiting the arrival of our cars. After a long waiting, they came. Talking about the beautify scenery of Chebera Churchura, Halala keela, we reached Wolayta Sodo town. We explored southwestern Ethiopia's vast resources that lure tourists and investor among others. Before we feast our eyes to our fill of experiencing the fertile land, our journey came to its closing part. Seeing is believing. See this wonderland for yourselves. I envy you for what awaits you. Stay blessed!

Global Affairs



Carbon credits in Africa can be generated by projects that curb emissions with a major focus on switching to renewable sources such as solar energy

Innovative business models, critical for African governments to unlock carbon markets

BY AIMABLE TWAHIRWA

With current efforts to boost Africa's carbon credit production by 2030, experts believe the commitments will require Governments to switch from a voluntary to a compliance market by generating renewable energy for a portion of national and regional electricity supplies.

The compliance market in Africa, according to experts, is critical for countries to establish a carbon price through regulations to control the supply of allowances that are then distributed by national and regional regimes.

"It is all about getting the business model right (...) the capability of African Governments is there very central to having the right kind of information and investing in local business models," Mahua Acharya, the Chief of Staff of C-Quest Capital (CQC), one of the world-leading carbon finance company told IPS.

Currently, African leaders are pushing market-based financing instruments, such as carbon credits which can be generated by projects that curb emissions with a major focus on switching to renewable energy sources.

Carbon market initiative allows polluters to offset their greenhouse gas emissions by investing in development or initiatives such as tree-planting or renewable energies. Nevertheless, experts point out that they are still cheaper to purchase in Africa due to poor regulations and weak policies.

Renewable energy was at the heart of discussions at the 2023 Africa Climate Summit (ACS) in Nairobi, Kenya, and shifting away from centralized fossil fuel energy towards people-centred green energy sources is now seen as the single most effective way to expand the

continent's participation in voluntary carbon markets.

The African initiative's goal is to produce 300 million new carbon credits annually by 2030, comparable to the number of credits issued globally in voluntary carbon offset markets in 2021.

Mahua Acharya, the Chief of Staff of C-Quest Capital, recommends Innovative business models for African Governments to unlock carbon markets.

"This is a very ambitious target and a fantastic opportunity for Africa to set the course," Mahua said in an exclusive interview.

Article 6 of the Paris Agreement's rulebook governing carbon markets gives countries a right to emit carbon dioxide at an agreed price per tonne, but one of the major challenges facing most African countries is the lack of appropriate strategies to earn money on these carbon markets.

The latest report on carbon markets and climate finance by the Eastern Africa Alliance shows that Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda are currently scaling up carbon credit production via voluntary carbon market activation plans.

Under the new move, internationally traded credits between governments and private sector players are acceptable under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

For example, Rwanda, as one of the few countries that expressed willingness to begin trading in voluntary carbon markets, is currently exploring key strategic sectors in which projects that reduce carbon emissions can be designed to sell credits on the carbon market. Officials emphasize that the major focus will be on renewable energy, the country leveraging on the carbon market as the source of climate finance.

However, some experts point out that

such projects and programs need to be "authorized" to avoid the same carbon credit being sold twice.

"Voluntary approach is vulnerable to the decisions of corporate entities to meet their net zero goals – which is fine, but shaky if you think that countries should be basing economic planning decisions around this," Acharya said.

Carbon finance – the revenue from the sale of carbon emission reduction linked with mitigation activities – is a green growth opportunity for many developing and emerging economy countries.

On the sidelines of the Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi earlier this month, some activists rejected carbon markets, describing them as "false solutions and narratives that undermine African communities' rights, interests and sovereignty."

The Executive Director of the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA), Mithika Mwenda, told IPS that he was disappointed that the principle of shared responsibility was a missing point.

"The initiative [of carbon market] seems to be promoted by powerful interests who benefit from maintaining the status quo of fossil fuel dependence," he said.

While Mithika is convinced that, in most cases, these carbon market investments do not serve the climate justice imperatives for Africa, Acharya points out that different African countries are at different stages of preparedness and clarity towards putting carbon markets to work.

"These carbon finance transactions are very precious to many African countries because they are forex-based and provide a good degree of risk mitigation," Acharya said.

The latest Africa Environment Outlook for Business by the United Nations

Environment Programme (UNEP) shows that Africa could become a trailblazer in renewable energy solutions, with abundant solar, wind, hydro, biomass, and geothermal resources that may contribute to a 6.4 per cent increase in GDP from 2021 to 2050.

Businesses in the energy efficiency sector can provide products and services, such as lighting systems, smart buildings, and efficient industrial processes on the continent, it said.

While Carbon markets are seen as an incredible opportunity to unlock billions for the climate finance needs of African economies while expanding energy access, some carbon credit experts stress the need for the African Union (AU) as a continental body to position itself economically on equal footings with other major economic blocks.

"There are thousands of billions of dollars are being allocated as loans on high-interest terms to poor countries seeking help to cope with climate change impacts," said Adhel Kaboub, Associate Professor of economics at Denison University in Ohio, USA, and the president of the Global Institute for Sustainable Prosperity.

"Through these schemes, Africa cannot continue to play the role of source of cheap raw materials while serving as a large consumer market for the Global North," he said.

Rwanda is among the countries planning to use carbon markets to meet their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCS) to the Paris Agreement.

Currently, the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and Voluntary Carbon Market (VCM) are the two operational mechanisms allowing the country to earn carbon credit units by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Law & Politics

Ethiopian Army: From ancient warriors to modern defenders

BY SOLOMON WASSIHUN

The secret of Ethiopia's uninterrupted existence and sovereignty over several millennia is neither accident nor magic, nor the protection or benevolence of the superpowers, nor the impeccable justice of the UN and its inviolable charter. It is the bravery, wholehearted sacrifice and perseverance of Ethiopian patriots who defend the country's sovereignty and freedom to this day. Last week, Ethiopia observed Army Day and commemorated its sons and daughters who gave their lives and received injuries while defending their country from aggressors.

The history of the Ethiopian army is a magnificent tapestry woven with tales of gallantry, resilience, and strategic prowess. From ancient times to the present day, the Ethiopian military has played a significant role in shaping the nation's destiny and defending its sovereignty. The Ethiopian National Defense Forces, one of the foremost formidable armies in Africa, has a rich and fascinating history that dates back to ancient Ethiopian warriors who laid the foundation for its military might of the present time.

Throughout centuries, Ethiopia has faced numerous challenges and conflicts that have tested its military strength, and survival as a nation-state. From fending off foreign invasions to internal struggles for power, each chapter in Ethiopian military history reveals remarkable stories of courage and determination. Some historians say that Ethiopia's history is mainly a story of war. In a way, it is the story of the struggle of the Ethiopian gallant patriotic forces for peace, liberty and freedom against aggressors, oppressors and traitors.

Ancient Ethiopian warriors were renowned for their scary daredevil acts and unmatched skill in battle. Armed with spears, shields and an unwavering spirit, they defended their land against all odds. Their tactical brilliance, resilience, bravery unyielding loyalty to their homeland, and unwavering dedication to protecting Ethiopia's sovereignty earned them a place in history as formidable defenders.

From the mighty Axumite army to the valiant soldiers of the Zagwe dynasty and the formidable warriors of the Solomonic dynasty, these legendary armies left an indelible mark on Ethiopian history. If we delve into the history of these ancient armies, we uncover tales of epic battles, heroic leaders, and a rich cultural heritage that has shaped Ethiopia's identity. Those legendary warriors have left an enduring impact on Ethiopia's past—a legacy that still resonates today.

The Axumite army, known for its strategic prowess and military might with war elephants on the land and advanced naval power on the sea, has enabled the Axumite kingdom to be the undisputed trading and

The Ethiopian army needs to carry on building the legacy of the past generation and keep pace with the latest military technologies to ensure that Ethiopia is always safe from the attacks by adversaries both from within and outside

military power on the Red Sea, and thus played a crucial role in shaping Ethiopia's ancient civilization. With their advanced weaponry and disciplined tactics, they secured peace for several centuries throughout the vast territories of the kingdom that stretched in all directions including the Red Sea coast where the port city of Adulis was situated as well as the southern Arabia.

During the reign of the Zagwe dynasty, Ethiopian military strength reached new heights. The Zagwes made significant contributions and hold a significant place in Ethiopian army history, particularly when it comes to warfare and military tactics. The Zagwe military chiefs emphasized defensive strategies, discipline, and rigorous drills, and are known for their exceptional ability to fortify strategic locations, such as mountainous regions, which provided them with a natural advantage against invading forces.

Additionally, they also implemented innovative strategies that utilized guerrilla warfare techniques. They understood the importance of mobility and surprise in battle, often employing hit-and-run tactics to weaken larger enemy forces. By utilizing their knowledge of local terrains and

employing unconventional methods, they were able to outmaneuver their opponents and secure victories.

Through the later centuries after the fall of the Zagwe in the late 13th century, the Ethiopian army continued to make organizational and technical advances, in an attempt to maintain its deterrent power against internal anarchists, regional rivals, and foreign colonial power. Ethiopian leaders of that time tried to acquire the best weapons available from the Europeans. Even leaders like Tewodros II commissioned the local manufacture of heavy artillery mortar capable of firing off half-ton artillery rounds.

It was near the end of the 19th century that the traditional Ethiopian army achieved its golden age when it decisively defeated the highly advanced European army at the Battle of Adwa. This battle marked a historic victory for Ethiopia against Italian colonial forces and has since been recognized as a pivotal moment in African history.

The Battle of Adwa not only showcased the strength, resilience, and invincibility of the Ethiopian army but also shattered European notions of African inferiority. It served as an inspiration for other African nations in their fight against colonialism and became a symbol of Pan-African unity.

Under Emperor Menelik II's leadership, Ethiopia's military capabilities were further strengthened through modernization efforts and strategic alliances. The building of the modern Ethiopian defense force began taking roots and structure during this period, with the establishment of the Ministry of War in the imperial regime, headed by the acclaimed war hero and strategist in the major battles like Adwa and Segele [the two bloodiest single-day battles in the Ethiopian war history], Habte Giyorgis Dinagde.

In the 20th century, the Ethiopian army kept up its patriotic duty of protecting the nation against external aggressors. During the second Italian invasion, members of the Ethiopian army fought tooth and nail for five years to foil the fascist aggression and defend Ethiopia's sovereignty. Many of the soldiers became martyrs. The contribution of a fascist resistance group, The Black Lions, which was mainly comprised of young military cadets and officers, is worth remembering here. Even though they were not successful militarily, the Black Lions set a solid political and moral guidance for the continuation of the resistance struggle until victory was achieved.

In the recent period, the Ethiopian army registered spectacular historical victories on the continued struggle for Ethiopia's sovereignty in the conflicts occurred mainly in eastern and northern Ethiopia, the part of the country closest to the Red Sea. The eye of the storm of the political and military rivalry of world powers.

The magnificent history of the Ethiopian Army is adorned by the extraordinary battlefield heroic deeds of its members, most of whom did not survive their dangerous

missions to tell their incredible patriotic service. However, there are a few who stayed around long enough to recount their stories in books and the media, and also to receive honor and formal recognition from the government.

Failing to mention some of these incredible heroes would be doing a huge disservice to all they sacrificed for Ethiopia and also for the honor, freedom, and pride we enjoy as Ethiopians. First, we remember Emperor Yohannes IV, a great military leader, who had little time to enjoy the luxury of palace life, as he was busy defending Ethiopia's borders against the infiltration of Egyptians, Italians, and the Methodists. Theodoros II could have saved his life and his family by surrendering to the British. But he preferred an honorable death over living a life of shame and setting a bad precedence for future Ethiopian leaders and being disgrace to his people.

Colonel Abdissa Aga, the incredible larger-than-life hero of the second Italian-Ethiopian war fought with the Italian fascists and German Nazis on their land, and triumphantly drove into the cities of Rome and Berlin, waving first the Ethiopian flag. We also remember Brigadier General Legese Tefera, the fighter pilot in the 70s and the Ethio-Somali War hero, who destroyed five Somali MiGs in an air-to-air combat. Along with Gen. Legese, two other Ethiopian heroes, namely Brigadier General Tesfaye Habtemariam and Sergeant Major Ali Berki were decorated with the highest military honor of the time.

Similarly, so many war heroes have emerged in the battles fields held in recent times and got the appropriate recognition and Medal of Honor by the encumbant government. Because of such selfless courageous and patriotic heroes who go beyond the call of duty to provide unreserved service to their nation, Ethiopia will surely continue to be a free, peaceful, and sovereign state.

It is a commendable effort to dedicate a day to commemorate the Ethiopian army. Even the long and vast history of the Ethiopian army calls for the establishment of an Ethiopian National Army Museum, where the present and the future generation of Ethiopians will get inspiration for patriotism, the honor of being a soldier and sacrificing oneself for the good of Ethiopia.

The struggle to defend Ethiopia's freedom and sovereignty is a continuous process. Ethiopians' fight to defend their motherland has cascaded through the generations and continues to this day. This is so because Ethiopia's enemies have never ceased to pursue their ambition of dismantling Ethiopia, and erasing the Ethiopian identity in one way or another. That is why the Ethiopian army need to carry on building the legacy of the past generation, and keep pace with the latest military technologies to ensure that Ethiopia is always safe from the attacks by adversaries both from within and outside.

Planet Earth

Ethiopia harnessing rice productivity potential to boost food security

BY FIKADU BELAY

Ethiopia's Highlands are entertaining an amazing level of agricultural revolution. The country that was once known for its coffee beans is now drawing interest from around the world for its rapidly growing rice production sector. Ethiopia has achieved amazing results from its dedication to diversifying its agricultural sector and maximizing the potential of rice agriculture. In addition to reforming the agricultural sector, the nation's strategic focus on this vital crop is opening the door for improved food security, rural development, and economic expansion.

A crucial approach to guaranteeing food security and bolstering the country's economy has emerged against the backdrop of a changing environment and a growing, deeply rooted population. Ethiopia has enormous potential for rice production due to its ideal agro-ecological conditions, and its government-backed innovations have seized this opportunity to transform their communities and raise their livelihoods.

The productivity of rice cultivation has increased significantly across the nation in recent years. The need to attain food security is one of the factors pushing Ethiopia's rice production flow. Ethiopia hopes to reduce its need for imports and guarantee a constant supply of affordable, quality food for its people by increasing its rice production.

With smallholder farmers making up the majority of the agricultural labor, the rice industry's expansion presents enormous potential for rural development. Smallholder farmers are turning to rice production as a way to enhance their standard of living.

The increase in rice output has a positive effect on rural development and food security, in addition to directly boosting Ethiopia's economy. Such as providing more wages, more work opportunities, and improved resistance against climate variability.

The growth of rice cultivation in Ethiopia, after three years, is estimated to be able to assist the economy by removing the foreign currency spent on rice trading, in addition to safeguarding the food security of the nation. Purchasing rice with foreign currency has various negative economic effects. Its potential to generate foreign currency is also taken in to consideration.

The demand for rice has increased as a result of changes in cuisine and urbanization, according to Taye Tadese (PhD), Director of Crop Research at the Ethiopian Agricultural Research Institute, who spoke with the Ethiopian Press Agency.

He also stated that about 70–80% of the rice he consumes is imported; a significant



amount of foreign exchange is required.

On his part, Alayu Yalew (Ass.Pro), lecturer and director of the Blue Economy Center of Excellence at Bahardar University's College of Agriculture, stated that Ethiopia should focus on increasing rice output in order to achieve food self-sufficiency currently.

He said that rice can be grown in a short area, making it a more favorable crop than other crops, and that the majority of Ethiopia's climate and soil types are favorable for rice production. And he also indicates that it is appropriate to understand the soil resources and select a seed that is suitable for the environment in order to succeed in the field.

According to national rice research and development strategy of Ethiopia (NRRDSE), rain-fed rice cultivation potential is more than 30 million hectares. Among these, 5 million hectares are highly suitable, and 25 million hectares of land are suitable. Moreover, 3.9 hectares of Ethiopian land are suitable for irrigated rice production.

Taye mentioned that the study area has a potential to yield 60 to 70 quintals of rice per hectare; if the sector's potential is realized, it may be able to quickly replace imported goods and export them.

Despite the fact that rice requires a lot of water to grow, effective water management is essential to its successful production. Ethiopia faces difficulties in developing its irrigation infrastructure, obtaining water, and making the most use of its water resources. Inadequate irrigation

infrastructure and fluctuating water supplies can also restrict the growth and output of rice farms.

To achieve the best yields, it is also essential to have access to high-quality seeds, fertilizers, insecticides, and other agricultural inputs. Due to their limited availability, high cost, and poor distribution networks, many Ethiopian smallholder farmers have difficulty getting these inputs.

Furthermore, the sector remains to have relatively low levels of market access, inadequate market information, poor land preparation, planting, and harvesting, restricted access to suitable machinery, high expenses, and inadequate technical infrastructure and milling and drying technologies.

Ethiopia is also vulnerable to the effects of climate change, which include unpredictable rainfall patterns, rising temperatures, and an increase in pests and illnesses. These elements can worsen soil erosion and water scarcity, lower yields, and raise production risks, all of which can have a negative impact on rice production.

With Ethiopia's rice production revolution; it becomes evident that this strategic focus on rice is not merely an agricultural endeavor but a pathway to prosperity for the nation. The government's commitment, coupled with the resilience and determination of farmers, is driving this transformation, offering a promising future where Ethiopia becomes self-sufficient in rice production, ensures food security for its people, and strengthens its position as a regional

agricultural powerhouse.

The government has been actively encouraging the development of rice for domestic as well as international markets due to realizes crop's export potential. Ethiopia is establishing itself as a major player in the global rice trade by using its advantages in terms of price, quantity, and quality. This will open doors to higher foreign exchange revenues and improved economic stability.

The scholars noted that, generally speaking, the most effective way to raise Ethiopia's economic output is to boost rice production and efficiency. They state that in order to maximize the food's numerous benefits, attention should be given to how widely it is used.

Enhancing farmers' and extension services' knowledge and skills is essential for the adoption of better farming approaches, such as effective water management, disease and pest control, and post-harvest handling. For the rice industry to grow sustainably and to close knowledge gaps, it is crucial to enhance agricultural extension services and encourage knowledge sharing.

Despite the fact that these issues could stand in the way of Ethiopia's revolution in rice production, they also create chances for focused investments, governmental support, and interventions. Ethiopia can realize the full potential of its rice industry, increase production, improve livelihoods, and support the country's objectives for economic development and food security by tackling these issues.