



# The Ethiopian Herald

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## Ethiopia's quest for sea access public agenda: Historian

BY STAFF REPORTER

**ADDIS ABABA** – Ethiopia's aspiration to sea access should not be regarded as a mere agenda of the government or the ruling party and it has an overwhelming support from public at grassroots level, a historian pleaded.

History Assistant Professor at Wachemo University Asrat Ermolo (PhD) heightened the public's active involvement and support for the government's efforts to ensure a direct access to the sea. "The people ought to address internal disagreements through discussions and back the government to realize the nation's aspiration to sea ports."

Withstanding some groups' attempt to tackle Ethiopia's aspiration for mutual growth, the government should persist in its stance and focus on the solidness and appropriateness of the quest that also considers the interests of coastal neighbors.

According to him, Ethiopia lost its sea outlets due to political conspiracy and lack of interest from the previous government.

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## Nordic Black Theater troupe aims to successful mission

### • Set to visit tourist attraction sites

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

**ADDIS ABABA** – The Nordic Black Theater Group arrived here yesterday to stage various performances in different areas that are believed to consolidate the people-to-people relationship of Ethiopia and Norway.

Upon arrival at Bole International Airport, the 30 member Nordic Black Theater Group was welcomed by Tourism Minister NasiseChali and other high-level officials.

Briefing the media, Tourism State Minister Lensa Mekonnen said the group's choice of Addis Ababa as the first venue to its performance reaffirms that Ethiopia is still the epicenter of Pan-Africanism arts, culture and others. The event is crucial to

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Engineer Yonas Ayalew

## ECWC striving to expand services in Africa

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

**ADDIS ABABA** - Ethiopian Construction Works Corporation (ECWC) announced that it is putting much effort into providing advanced services in Ethiopia and

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## Ministry spotlights women's inclusion to deter climate crisis

- UAE plays active role in climate diplomacy

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

**ADDIS ABABA** – Strengthening the role of women in climate policies formulation and bringing sustainable solutions is critical to create a more sustainable, equitable

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# News



Solomon Soka

## INSA works to ensure digital sovereignty through national capacity

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** –The Information Network Security Administration (INSA) revealed that it is being done to realize digital Sovereignty by combining the national capacity.

Briefing Journalists yesterday on the finalization of the 4th National Cyber Security Month under the theme “Resilient Cyber Capability for National Sovereignty”, Administration Director General, Solomon Soka said that the administration is working various activities to fight against cyber-attack and safeguard citizens.

As to him, the 4th national cyber security is unique due to its focus on creating awareness among the people and institutions to combat cyber-attack and ensure national interest. Improving the cyber security capability of institutions, motivating various parties who engage in fighting cyber-attacks, establishing a system for the next generation on cyber security are also parts of the administration tasks in the campaign.

In this regard, the administration reached some 60 million people in various mediums such as SMS messages in the 4th national cyber campaign. The administration also launched startup development software to the people in order to widen the understanding about cyber-attack among the society.

He praised the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and ethio-telecom due to active participation in battling cyber-attack. However, fighting cyber-attacks required concerted effort due to its complexity nature and targeting financial, security, and related sectors at large. Therefore, all concerned bodies should be playing their part to defend cyber-attack and protect national resources.

He further stated that conducting research on the exposing of institutions to cyber-attack was presented in the 4th national cyber campaign. In this regard, the research showcased that 60 % up to 85 % of institutions were exposed to cyber-attack in Ethiopia. Similarly, merely 35 % of the people have adequate information about cyber-attack.

“The administration discussed Cyber Policy Law and Standard with various states’ leaders through virtual methods to combat cyber-attack at national level. Some 38 research papers were presented in the 4th national cyber security campaign. Out of the conducted research, 21 of them passed the criteria while 10 were selected for recognition and awards. However, some eight pieces of research were mainly provided to the people.

Furthermore, the administration is attempting to fight against cyber-attack in collaboration with various institutions.

## African Medicine Agency crucial to ensure access to quality medicines: LiaTadesse

**ADDIS ABABA**- The establishment of the African Medicine Agency (AMA) is crucial to ensure access to quality medicines in a sustainable manner in the continent, according to Ministry of Health.

Health, Social, Development, Cultural and Sport Affairs Standing Committee of the House of Peoples’ Representatives held a discussion today with stakeholders on the draft proclamation of Treaty for the establishment of the African Medicines Agency.

The African countries adopted the treaty to establishing the Agency in 2019, which came into force in 2021.

The treaty under the leadership of African Medicines Agency will allow African Union member states to provide for efficient and effective protection of public health against risks associated with the use of substandard and falsified medical products.

Weak regulatory systems have resulted in the circulation of substandard and falsified medical products, and health technologies in many of the African Union member states, it was indicated.

Health, Social, Development, Culture and Sport Affairs Standing Committee of the House of Peoples’ Representatives held a discussion with stakeholders on the draft proclamation of Treaty for the establishment of the African Medicines Agency.

The objective of the discussion is to exchange views on the importance of the establishment of agency to help strengthen national capacity in the sector.

Speaking at the occasion, Health Minister



LiaTadesse(MD) said that the establishment of the Agency will help Africans to have access to quality and proven medicines in a sustainable manner.

The existence of substandard and falsified products poses a risk to public health, harm patients and undermine confidence in healthcare delivery systems, she stated.

In this regard, the minister said the establishment of the continental agency will enable the sustainable supply of quality medicines in an efficient manner.

The agency will also play an important role in strengthening national drug control institutions and increasing their capacity in Ethiopia.

Director General of Ethiopian Food and Drug Authority, HeranGerba on her part said Ethiopia is working in cooperation with African countries

to strengthen the quality and control of drugs, medical equipment and other health resources in the continent.

In this regard, she said, the establishment of the agency will create the capacity to strengthen regulation around borders to reduce challenges with the quality and control of medicines in sub-Saharan Africa.

The agency will help African countries to strengthen their control capacity by exchanging experiences.

Historically, Africa has lagged behind in the area of medicines regulation, which compromises the continent’s ability to provide affordable access to lifesaving, essential medicines in the global quest to advancing the right to health for all and to achieving Universal HealthCare (UHC).

This challenge is multi-faceted and cannot be resolved using a singular approach, it was indicated.

Hence, the need for methodical and in-depth analysis of the public health system on the one hand, and formulating sustainable mechanisms deliberately designed to chip-away at the challenge from different vantage points on the other hand is vital.

So far, 26 countries in Africa have approved the treaty to establish the African Medicines Agency.

The Ministry of Health of Ethiopia in collaboration with other stakeholders is hereby empowered to implement the Treaty both establishment of the African Medicines Agency, ENA reported.

## EthSwitch to implement National Payment Gateway

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

**ADDIS ABABA** – Ethiopia’s National Switch (EthSwitch) disclosed that preparations are being finalized to implement national payment gateway system in all banks and financial institutions to ensure safe online transactions and digital inclusion.

The national payment gateway is the national modern digital payment strategy of Ethiopia which aims at promoting the use of digital payments among merchants and financial institutions as well as ensuring digital inclusion of the society, so stated Yilebes Addis, CEO of EthSwitch.

Speaking to the media regarding the successful completion of pilot testing of National Payment Gateway, he said the national payment gateway system helps the merchants and financial institutions to apply digital payment and safeguard transactions.

The platform equally serves all banks in an online interoperable payment system and securely transfers online payment data to the processor and it is working with all financial institutions to implement a digital domestic payment system, he expressed.

The platform boosts transaction, facilitates fast payment systems with low cost, enables digital service providers to make fast, secure online



Yilebes Addis

payment using channels and payment methods of cards, account, Alias, Wallet and QR, he noted.

EthSwitch has created interoperability between financial institutions and served as a central interconnector for clearing, settlement and shared platform, Yilebes said, adding national switch is progressing to start full scale implementation of the national payment gateway.

“The people can pay and buy online without cash during the transaction from anywhere by using smart phone and PC via card, QR, Wallet and account,” he noted.

This also improves banks’ capability to get onboard and helps merchant’s transactions with multiple payment methods and increase sales volume as well, the CEO stated.



Yeshurun Alemayehu (PhD)

Innovation and Technology State Minister Yeshurun Alemayehu (PhD) on his part said that the new payment system plays a significant role in the nation’s digital journey towards digital transformation, development and financial inclusion.

He mentioned that the National Payment Gateway platform is processing electronic finance enabling secured transactions across various channels and payment systems. A national digital strategy will ensure consumer rights, promote trust and confidence in the digital payment ecosystem.

“This initiative not only simplifies the payment process among businesses and individuals in the country, but also creates transparency of financial transactions,” Yeshurun said.



# News

## Ethiopia's quest ...

"During the reign of Emperor Haileselassie I, Ethiopia regained its access to the sea through a meticulous diplomacy and negotiation at international level and the current quest for sea-gate is a national demand that has been passed down through generations."

The scholar further pointed out that it is proper to make the appeal at this time, as the country has spent about 25 percent of its total budget on port fees. On the other hand, it is legitimate to claim sea-outlets for a nation with more than 100 million population and one of the fastest growing economies in the world.

Access to sea is the major solution to cut poverty, attain sustainable economic growth and ensure the country's existence amid the fastest growing population.

Ethiopia's coastal neighbors are expected to see the former's aspiration to port access positively and consider the request from the perspective of mutual growth and as a tool to ensure peace and stability, the historian emphasized.

The East African countries could protect the Red Sea together for mutual benefit which ensures sustainable peace and partnership amongst them. Therefore, it is possible and proper to achieve mutual benefits through applying a win-win approach and there are ample experiences to share from different countries' success including Bolivia and Chile, Mali and Senegal, he remarked.

## Nordic Black Theater...

promote tourism potential and build Ethiopia's positive image as well as to share experiences.

"The shows will also have a great opportunity to promote Ethiopia's tourism and investment sectors."

Lensa stated that such kind of performances would create a great opportunity to promote Ethiopia's tourism resources and asked members of the group to promote Ethiopia's tourism potential in the countries they would visit.

The Nordic Black Theater Production

Deputy Director Cliff Moustache for his part said that Norwegians today are really proud to come to Ethiopia, motherland of the world people. "We can promise you all to stage a strong performance at the National Theater and other places."

Ethiopian National Theater Representative Michael Tamere extended his warmest welcome for the group. "I hope the show is going to be successful and we are very much happy with the group's presence in Addis Ababa."

Furthermore, members of the troupe will visit the tourism destinations and other

investments of the country.

In its ten days stay, the group would stage theatrical performances at the Ethiopian National Theater, Yared Music School, African Union (AU) and other places. Black Woman Rising, a musical drama that narrates or tells the life of Maya Angelou, was staged yesterday at the Ethiopian National Theater, it was learned.

Members of the Nordic Black Theater group will travel to different African countries and present their art works, it was learned.

## ECWC striving to...

other African countries.

ECWC CEO, Engineer Yonas Ayalew told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the corporation is undergoing a transformation triggered by institutional reform focusing on industrialization and digitalization aimed at addressing gaps to become a competent national and continental construction institution.

He emphasized that the corporation has been working on digitalization in project monitoring, citing successful solutions to project management issues through surveying the national and international experiences - intended for building a construction institution and industry that can lay a foundation for Africa.

He expressed that the corporation is striving to provide its services in other African countries so that the construction of its branch office is being undertaken in Djibouti.

ECWC has also planned to expand more branches in Kenya and South Sudan to deliver services, he added.

According to the CEO, market promotion and communication works will be done to popularize the corporation among other African countries.

To this end, the corporation has promoted its works on international platforms in the presence of various pertinent bodies. Moreover, a foundation is being laid for Africans to have a desire to work with the institution, he mentioned.

"There are Chinese, Indian and European companies in Africa. There is no such African-based institution as an African. Now the vision is that we have to make the institution (ECWC) African," he said.

International competitions have fostered cooperation among manufacturers, factories, and institutions, allowing for collaboration and opportunities to cooperate with foreign institutions, Yonas stated.

Engineer Yonas also stated that the activity of enabling the institution capable of exporting products is progressing well.

Accordingly, an agreement has been reached with Indian, Chinese and Dubai companies to work together to open a joint factory this year, he expressed.

## Ministry spotlights...

and resilient world, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) said.

Addressing the COP28 climate dialogue series yesterday, MoFA State Minister Misganu Arga (Amb.) noted that empowering women in the public sphere and addressing climate change are two sides of the same coin. "Indeed, empowering women is central to combat climate change effectively."

The state minister further highlighted that women empowerment and climate change are the two pillars of universe that require utmost attention and collective demands towards a commendable and sustainable future.

"Empowering women is unlocking the wealth of talent, creativity and resilience that is essential for our path towards fighting climate change as it is becoming an existential threat impacts vulnerable communities. Women play a crucial role in conservation and sustainable agriculture and community resilience as well.

Currently the issue of climate change has been an undeniable global challenge



Misganu Arga

for long and continuing to surface in several parts of the world especially in the developing countries including Ethiopia.

Moreover, Ambassador Misganu expressed optimism that the gathering is expected to mark an essential milestone towards tackling the existing challenge and find out the way to

drive women as a catalyst for positive global change.

"Ethiopia is taking a bold step to bring about a resilient climate economy through our initiatives and national adaptation plans. Also, its Green Legacy initiative aims to plant 50 billion seedlings in line with the

active participation of women across the country."

He reaffirmed government's commitment to support and create an enabling environment for women to take climate action. Also, it is the collective endeavor of all actors to create an enabling environment in every aspect to build a sustainable future.

Misganu also lauded the UAE's endeavor to enhance the role of women and being on the right path towards addressing the climate crisis.

The UAE's Charge'd Affairs to Ethiopia Suood Al Taniji on his part said that his country is always committed to empower and integrate women at all levels.

Taking the empowerments of women into consideration and gender equality to climate diplomacy, the UAE is keen to provide financial assistance to ensure on addressing climate change and technical training, he added.

"The UAE is always committed to the empowerment of women as an integration of women in science and technology fields are critical in our government's goal."

# Opinion

## Applying traditional skills to the National Dialogue

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Ethiopian elders have traditional skills of infusing local content in mediating skirmishes among neighbors. They develop ideas from events that took place among quarreling people in the locality. This tradition, sometimes, extends to solving thorny issues among ethnic, tribal and religious groups. These social groups consist of people of the same race who have the same beliefs, customs, language, culture and usually live in a given particular area ruled by their leaders. The study of the ideas and events from the standpoint of these groups of Ethiopians as key players in their internal affairs is very crucial.

However, divisive external intruders deny this natural fraternity and affinity among Ethiopians. The failure of understanding the purpose of such external intrusion has to be analyzed within the local context. Colonialists and neocolonialists have identified the people of Ethiopia as impediments to their full exploitation of the continent of Africa. Ethiopians have always defended their freedom through dialogue amongst themselves. The leaders of the country from the Worda to the Federal levels have tried to maintain law and order by peaceful means and local dialogue.

Ethiopians have created and maintained the evolution of more effective institutions. However, alien forces have tried to incapacitate leaders and political actors at all levels from integrating domestic and home-grown ideas and institutions into peaceful entities. This is one major reason that the country has seen suffering from.

Currently, Ethiopia is embarking on a discourse to mitigate the efforts of these alien forces to disintegrate the country. These forces are behind all accumulated political, economic, and social disputes, which Ethiopia is trying to resolve through a national dialogue. After a turbulent recent period with the replacement of government of the EPRDF with Prosperity Party, all the conflicting parties have finally accepted the need for a national dialogue. All concerned parties are making efforts to make the national dialogue a fruitful one. It is believed that it will contribute to the reconciliation and healing process. The real question is related to seriously examining a realistic and local approach to the national dialogue. This brings Ethiopians closer to solving their problems without intrusion.

A very critical means of a dialogue is the skill of communication. It is an interface and relation-based human effort to generate, develop meaning, and share it with stakeholders. Everything Ethiopians aspire for revolves around this necessary concept of communication. The first means of communication focuses on conveying, spreading, and launching the process of dialogue. Experts argue that this represents a common culture in the developing countries, including Ethiopia.

It is an enormously multicultural country with over eighty ethnic entities. Among these

ethnic entities, one common premise is a focus on the communal legacy, tradition and mutual identity. This provides the opportunity to react to crises and disagreements through customary dispute resolution tradition promoted by the elders. These traditions may be known differently in different regions and their practices may be found in the rural parts of Ethiopia. For example, anthropologists have identified the “Shengo” in northern Ethiopia, the “Gar/Haajo in Somali, the Gadda in Oromia and Makbaninna in Afar. These and other social platforms are means of cultural communication to handle issues through dialogue.

One can, therefore, safely deduce that traditional communication strategy provides Ethiopians with active role in the process of dialogue. Any dialogue method reverberates with ordinary people in the country. This reality gives emphasis to sharing, partaking, alliance, partnership, association, trust and reliance. These traditional and communal values contribute immensely to the process of the national dialogue.

In contradiction to these values, the Ethiopian political elites focus on issues on nationalism, whether it is ethnic or Ethiopian-focused and on issues related to the Constitution and the formation of the State. Political scientists think that the different aspects of these positions reflect long-term dialogue, discussions and narratives. It is believed that bringing concerned people together creates a common narrative with which differences and disparities can be resolved. In other words, the national dialogue in which the right people do participate is a valuable process to achieve the desired outcome.

This implies that the method with which the dialogue is conducted and how it is managed is crucial to its outcome. The performance of the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission since its establishment is quite commendable. The members of the Commission have travelled to different regions of Ethiopia, except a few. It was reported that branch offices in all universities of the country would be useful.

The Commission also revealed that groups may propose topics for dialogue. The first consultation session on “Policy Options for Transitional Justice” was started by the government in which various issues were raised. Both the National Dialogue Commission and the Transitional Justice process are established by the government and are supported by external donors, with the Commission securing fund from these sources. In spite of this, the slow and very limited progress report given to the public has caused doubts that this process will come to an end. Elites fear that it is being mainly procedural, dependent on a few politicians, instead of the masses that might lead to sustainable change.

The UN, in its research on other National Dialogues identified the issues that “make or break” a national dialogue. This research has been based on seventeen National Dialogues held between 1990 and 2014. It reported the political context involved: the resistance or support of the national elites; mass support

or dissatisfaction; the support or resistance of local and global actors; local dialogue expertise; and, experiences from previous negotiations are among the decisive factors that shaped National Dialogues.

Based on these global experiences, the Ethiopian actors have the opportunity of taking advantage to make the National Dialogue effective using indigenous communication strategies. The assistance of Ethiopian elites can be obtained through a genuine trust-enhancing process. This guarantees that communication is imparting meaning from the centre, with an open-hearted approach to share ideas. This may lead to building a communal political faith in the wider mission of greater Ethiopia.

The ethnic-based politicians, federalist groups, and the All-Ethiopian political elites in and out of the country are seen as the key players in Ethiopian politics. It is important to include these elites in the circle of trust. In other words all the ethnicities of Ethiopia have to join this circle of trust for a genuine dialogue. This will change peoples’ frustration to optimism, anticipation and prospect for creating purpose for all Ethiopians. This also creates the opportunity to communicate and develop importance and relevance in every Ethiopian at the negotiating table. Of course, this must include representatives of all citizens.

The globally applied indirect representation of the people can be minimized through the direct participation of citizens. This should be done despite the fact that it makes the dialogue process an extended one. In Ethiopia, the rural people are still meeting under a tree to discuss community issues and challenges. Normally, they come up with alternative solutions acceptable by all contending parties. These traditional and communal deliberations are unadulterated, legitimate, responsible, and genuine approaches that exclude no one.

In the process of dialogue support from regional and international agents is very critical. But it is also dangerous if these agents dictate the modality of the dialogue. These agents think that whatever has worked elsewhere should be implemented in Ethiopia, even if it is incongruent to the reality in the country.

Concerned agencies, regional organizations, and academia have been among the stakeholders that have taken part in the Ethiopian national dialogue. These groups insist on top-down approaches. But, these need to be integrated with bottom-up ones.

There might be stages, for example, in the process at which progress requires attitudinal change among the concerned political parties. This means that slower processes of consensus building are required. Therefore, the regional and international agents should focus on reconsidering the global best practices that reflect the local realities in Ethiopia. In this respect, the AU and other relevant continental agencies have to initiate more pertinent and realistic approach.

Local forms of dialogue initiated by elders, religious leaders, and community groups may

also help the national dialogue. These people are widely accepted by their communities and have garnered experiences including conflict resolution and reconciliation over a long period of time. The selection of these leaders should be transparent.

Public selection of community leaders and dialogue leaders in every locality should be done transparently and critically to ensure that they are not supporters of a given political party. They have to be recognized and accepted by their own people. It is an extra benefit to the community that it has its own leaders in the dialogue process. This is very true when integrating local and national processes that demand deeper and ceremonial dialogue. This process may directly engage the public while it guarantees that it moves to achieve its end. The end of the dialogue is to achieve peaceful resolution of political differences at all levels within Ethiopia. To this end, the media plays a critical role.

The Ethiopian media has the responsibility of ensuring that the public dialogue is transparent in its process. This endeavor enables the people, the elites and stakeholders to evaluate if their political interests are addressed in real terms. This surely takes a long time of extended dialogues, restructuring of programs, and promoting of the process of healing and reconstruction.

Social scientists have recorded how communities can solve conflicts over resources through passionate, intense, and genuine dialogue in public gathering. It is through the modality of harmonious discussion, including pleading, appeals, concurrence, compensation, and community building that dialogue brings divided parties to the center. This cultural approach to communication, if applied to political discourse, it can bring curative, remedial, and effective unison to the seemingly fragmented nation of Ethiopia. With the passing of time the thorny national issues that seemed unresolved will come to their end through the process of discourse.

It is useful to realize that the process of dialogue will not be simple. National dialogue will provoke grievances as well as solutions. In this process, the key stakeholders and communities have to be given time to heal. The healing process requires tapping into the values of social and ritual communication during local negotiation. This includes mutual trust and benefits, and unity in order to promote long-term reconciliation.

It is, therefore, advisable to engage in grassroots and top-down and inclusionary process. It is important to recognize that Ethiopia’s very future depends on this process. This approach will serve as a reminder to the rest of the world. The indigenous practices of communication that bind Ethiopians together will be used to enable other national dialogues achieve their intended goal of promoting peace and prosperity.

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



# Editorial

## Feasible step for driving economic wheel well

Thinking out of the usual trend of running business and endeavoring to seize the ladder of economic sovereignty and technological success is the call of the day. Cognizant of the fact that adjusting the socio-economic balance with the pace of either the fastest growing nations or that of industrialized ones is a viable avenue towards prosperity, Ethiopia has diligently capitalized on science and technology. Its relentless effort for boosting Artificial Intelligence is part and parcel of such an audacious move. For instance, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) of late inaugurated an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Center aiming at making Ethiopia Africa's AI whopping.

The center is strongly believed to provide the agriculture, education, health and public security sectors across the nation with prompt services. Unequivocally, the country is working hard to boost Artificial Intelligence (AI) as the latter helps drive economic growth by stimulating gains both from the supply side and the demand side. It can also push businesses forward via snowballing productivity through automation of processes with the use of robots and autonomous vehicles, and improvements in the existing labor force by equipping them with AI technologies.

True, the use of artificial intelligence for day-to-day tasks has rapidly increased across the globe and it is becoming easy to predict the impact of AI on global economic growth and unemployment rates in many countries of the world. Yes, AI is generally acknowledged to be an engine of productivity and growth as well as its potential to boost the efficiency of economic operation and business maneuvers. That is why Ethiopia has been strenuously working on it.

As learnt from the outcomes gained out of AI full swing process, it will increase global economic growth and lead to an increase in productivity and thus higher economic return.

Yes, AI is a wide-ranging tool enabling people to rethink how they integrate information, analyze data, and use the resulting insights to improve decision making. Since AI is transforming every walk of life across the globe, Ethiopia has been capitalizing on it with a view to addressing issues related to economic development and scientific engagements.

If the country has arduously worked on the area, the aforesaid Artificial Intelligence Center can be a site for development of functional and problem solving technological innovations thereby immensely contributing to the economic development of the country. Artificial Intelligence can be an engine of productivity and economic growth, and the government is taking great strides to balance the macro-economic environment through the introduction of technology.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, especially computer systems, and specific applications of AI include expert systems, natural language processing (NLP), and speech recognition and machine vision.

True, AI reduces errors, increases the chances of accuracy and makes the level of precision quite high. Ethiopia is now well capitalizing on having the first-ever Ethiopian Artificial Intelligence center shouldering the ambition stating Artificial Intelligence for All.

Though Artificial Intelligence is a new phenomenon in Ethiopia, the country has been registering commendable achievements that would help it accelerate its economy, technological innovation, knowledge transfer and other related developmental moves.

In sum, it is important for Ethiopia to draw the best experiences and expertise from countries entertaining highly reputable innovation and technological expeditions. If the country is to bring about real change, expressive technological intervention, economic growth and pertinent knowledge transfer, it must attach due emphasis to AI and related advancements thereby seizing eloquent socio-economic growth. Such a gigantic technological endeavor and gallant scheme is vividly or significantly useful in bringing about real change in all aspects.



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The Ethiopian Herald

# Opinion

## Ethiopia's quest for port, historical and legal perspective

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

The main purpose of this contribution is to highlight on the historical and legal rights Ethiopia has towards obtaining ports on the Red Sea coast from the perspectives of international law on access to ports by landlocked countries.

Ethiopia owned ports for centuries but is denied one because of political decisions made during the independence of Eritrea. In the advent of the Axumite civilization, during the reign of Emperor Kaleb of Ethiopia ( circa 514-543 ) also known as Atsebha, Ethiopia had a major naval force that managed to conquer and subjugate empires in and around the Red Sea and South Arabia including Yemen with a naval fleet which some historians estimate to be 4000. The Port of Adulis was the main outlet of Axum to the sea in which trade in ivory, spices, gold and emerald, silk flourished.

Ethiopia reacquired a coastline and ports on the Red Sea in 1950 when the United Nations decided to federate Eritrea with Ethiopia. In 1955, the Imperial Ethiopian Navy was founded, and its first (and primary) base the Haile Selassie I Naval Base was established at Massawa in 1956.

Although Ethiopia had a natural outlet to the sea through its former ports of Assab and Massawa, as stated above, it lost access to the Ports and the sea following the cessation of Eritrea from Ethiopia and becoming an independent state in May 24, 1993.

What makes Ethiopia's accession to ports an important component of its socio-economic, diplomatic, political, historical and socio-cultural development? Why are ports so important for Ethiopia? It is useful to give adequate answers to these important questions and related issues to clearly understand the raison d'être for highlighting on the issue.

There are a number of important reasons for the urgency and topicality of the issue at this point in time.

Ethiopia's strategic and geostrategic location and its proximity to the Red Sea which hosts 10% of world trade with the length of 2,500kms linking the Mediterranean Sea with the Indian Ocean, Middle East, Persian Gulf and Far East Countries. Ethiopia is at close proximity with major important ports on both sides of the Red Sea including the ports of Jeddah, Port Sudan, Massawa, Assab, Djibouti, Berbera, and other ports belonging to Saudi Arabia, Somalia and Kenya.

On the other hand, 40% of global fossil fuel trade is transacted through the Red Sea which makes access to ports on the Red Sea highly critical for Ethiopia. Second, access to ports has a critical bearing on the national security of the country. Given the power rivalry on the Horn of Africa with the presence of 14 foreign naval bases in Djibouti, Ethiopia cannot be indifferent to

any level of threats to the national security, peace, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. Ensuring national security of Ethiopia as an important diplomatic, political and economic center linking the Horn and the rest of Africa, the issue of access to ports peacefully and through negotiations, " is not a matter of luxury but survival" according to a recent presentation delivered to the MPs by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

Moreover, having access to ports would enable Ethiopia to share its own natural resources with Africa and the rest of the world thus contributing to the global economic development in the context of BRICS, Belts and Roads Initiative, Agenda 2063, AfCFTA and African economic integration.

In addition, access to ports will further promote Ethiopia's cultural and historical relations with port owning neighboring countries, EU, the Arab League, countries of the Middle East, Persian Gulf and the Far East.

Furthermore, Ethiopia has now reestablished its national naval force, with accessing ports in partnership with Red Sea littoral states, the nation can contribute to the protection of safety of commercial ships by combating sea piracy and sea terrorism.

Moreover, unfettered access to the Red Sea will enable Ethiopia to export its processed and semi-processed agricultural products, manufactured goods, IT products and other commodities that the country is producing.

Nonetheless, Ethiopia will further enhance her political assertiveness among the countries of the world and could advocate for economic pan Africanism in which African countries can use their own resources for developing their collective and national economies instead of serving only as raw material resources for the more advanced countries in the west.

Some disgruntled citizens may consider that the issue of ports is long closed and even take it as a taboo but the reality of the ground shows otherwise.

The issue of ports is therefore a matter of concern for the nation as a whole and the entire citizenry here and overseas. The author would like to cite a quotation from Prime Minister Abiy's presentation delivered to the MPs.

"Ethiopia is endowed with population, resources and skilled manpower. There are some remaining things that should be addressed through time. However, this matter prevents Ethiopia from acquiring its place and position in Africa as it is locked. We need access to the sea. We need the Red Sea. We need Indian Ocean. However, it is important to explore options. Is our option one and only one? It is important to explore alternatives by inquiring the type of options

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**Editor's Note: The author of this article is Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**



# Business & Economy

## Invigorating the manufacturing industry's role for sustainable development

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Though Ethiopia is still categorized as an agrarian economy and the sector holds nearly 80 percent of the labor force; it is the major foreign currency earner; supplier of raw materials to the agro-industry and food items to the local market. In fact, the sector kicked in the lion's share for the economic growth the nation has registered in the last few decades.

Utilization of inputs such as fertilizer, pesticides and herbicides which are imported from abroad played pivotal role to enhance the sector's productivity. Nevertheless, the sector is still more of rain fed and vulnerable to extreme climate condition. Many scholars in the field agree that, bringing sustainable development is hard while subsistence agriculture plays the leading role in the economy.

Therefore, phased actions to bring structural change have been taken as a way out. The emerging economies such as China, Brazil, South Africa, Turkey and India's modern history relates that they achieved structural change by reducing the role of agriculture in their Gross Domestic Production and enhancing the manufacturing sector. They shifted the labor force stranded in the agricultural sector to the non-farming sectors such as the manufacturing and the service.

Manufacturing sector by its nature is more capital and technology intensive which make it highly productive. Unlike in agriculture, workers in the manufacturing industry engage in production day and night throughout the year. It also utilizes relatively well trained labor. Compared to agriculture, it needs small area for the installation of machineries and working activities. On the other hand, it can create job opportunities to hundreds of thousands.

The successive governments in the last two decades and a half have aspired to attain economic structural change and accordingly, invested more money, time and technology. However, the result achieved can be said below the expected. Among the factors can be mentioned for the low performance are ever growing of high cost of manufacturing machineries in the world market, shortage of hard currency, lack of interest from the foreign investors side due to security reasons and some bureaucratic bottlenecks in some government institutions and corruption to mention but few.

Even though there are challenges, the government is trying its level best to attract foreign investors and to engage in the manufacturing industry sector. To



Industrial parks play key role to transform Ethiopia's economic base

this end, it has worked energetically since long ago to boost the energy sector which is extremely vital for the expansion of the manufacturing industry. It has gone long distance to generate power from all possible sources such as hydro-power dams, wind farms, solar energy and geothermal.

Side by side with these, it invested billions of Dollars for establishing industrial parks in various parts of the country. So far, investors from China, India and Turkey have engaged in the sector and begun production in the parks.

Recently, government's higher officials visited manufacturing industries in the industry parks located in Sheger city aiming to inspect investment activities and discussed over the needs for expansion area requested by the parks.

Speaking on the occasion, Melaku Aabel, Minister of Industry said that necessary support and capacity building is being provided to investors engaged in the manufacturing sector. The government is working on ways to enhancing the production and productivity of investors engaged in the sector, the Minister added.

He stressed that all kinds of support is being provided to those engaged in various sub sectors of the manufacturing industry. And he further stated that efforts are underway to enhance import substitution and promotion of exports based on the Home Grown Economic Reform program.

Vice President of Oromia Regional State, Awelu Abdi, on his part confirmed that the regional state is ready to provide every support for the entrepreneurs engaged in the manufacturing sector. He added that requests forwarded regarding expansion areas will be addressed through proper assessment.

State Minister of Industry, Tarekegne Bululta remarked that the purpose of the working visit paid to the parks was to assess the accomplishments made so far and to seek possible solutions to the challenges the investors face.

The manufacturing sector has numerous values to the nation's economy. It creates job opportunity for thousands; links agriculture with the agro-industry; boosts export and supports import substitution scheme. At the peak of their performance, the parks are expected to provide employment opportunities for 10,000 persons.

Generally, it plays pivotal role in developing self-sustaining economy relied in fierce competition.

According to economists, currently, the nation's macro-economy faces various challenges and among others; foreign currency crunch, illegal trade, inflation, unemployment, the devaluation of local currency, corruption and others. Hence, to alleviate shortage of currency, boosting export and enhancing the nation's foreign currency earning capacity has been taken as a way out.

So long as the nation earns more hard currency, tackling inflation can be possible. The other thing which should be underlined is that substituting import in order to enhance the nation's hard currency reserve. Manufacturing plays pivotal role in substituting imports. According to the Ministry of Industry, in the last two years, 95 kinds of import products could be produced locally.

As a result of the manufacturing sector's pivotal role in broadening the involvement of local and foreign private investments; the government's aspiration to reduce its role in the sector has become a success story. According to the economic theories, privately owned companies and enterprises have a potential to be competent both in the local and international markets. The owners of the companies develop sense of ownership and cautiously do their day to day business. They show great concern to the quality and quantity of their products not to miss the market. To this end, they always do their cost benefit analysis which means they make balance between what they spend for the production process and the profit they

*The fact that most public owned companies fail to engage in production in their full capacity and fell into bankruptcy emanates from negligence of ownership*

secure from the market.

On the contrary, as to the economists, public owned companies relatively lack sense of ownership that resulted from the employee mentality of the personnel from top to bottom. In addition, more reason that contributes to substandard performance and less competent of public owned companies is the managers might think wrongly that if the company is bankrupted, the government would subsidize the company so that they secure their job.

The fact that most public owned companies fail to engage in production in their full capacity and fell into bankruptcy emanates from negligence of ownership. Two decades ago, for instance, most of food and beverage factories and other medium size enterprises were owned by the government and almost all were bankrupted and some of them were survived by the government subsidy. This failure accompanied with other reasons, initiated the government to apply privatization. Following the transfer of the factories to the private sector, they were reinvigorated and began to produce with their full capacity.

Consequently, privatization of the public enterprises attracted both local and foreign private investors. Side by side with such venture, the government introduced new helpful laws to create enabling environment for the private sector to unleash its potential.

In a nut shell, as the agrarian country, most of the country's labor forces reside in the rural part and engaged in the subsistence farming. Besides, the sector is vulnerable to climate change and keeping on the economy relied on such subsistence farming is unrealistic. Therefore, shifting the rural labor to the urban center where the manufacturing is flourishing is feasible.

Therefore, the ongoing effort exerted by public-private partnership for the expansion of the manufacturing sector should be invigorated, it was underlined.



# In the Sphere of Diplomacy

## The thriving partnership between Ethiopia, Gulf nations

BY EYUEL KIFLU

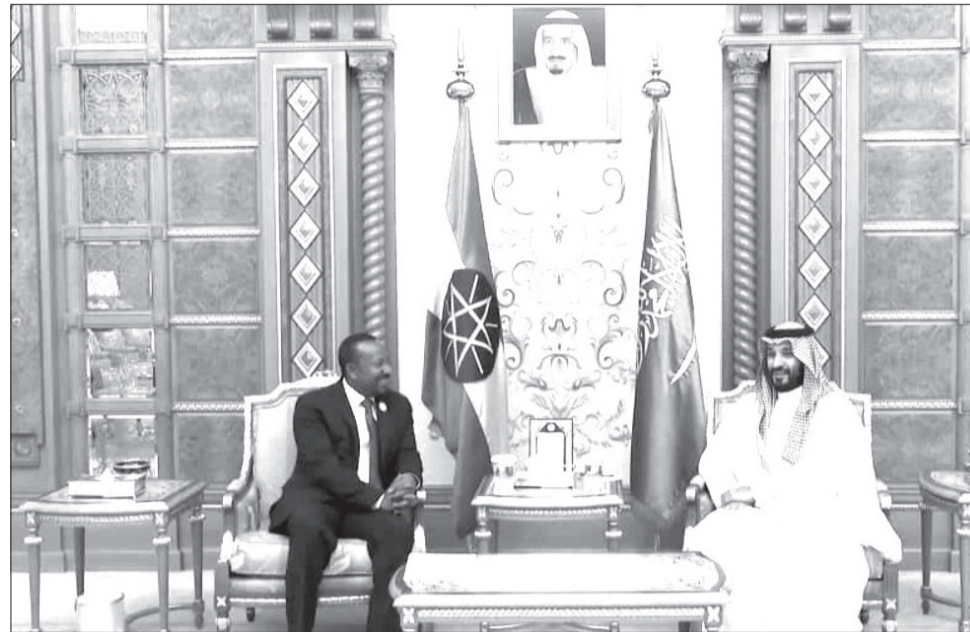
Months ago, Ethiopia rolled on the yellow and green painted carpet adorned by Enkutatash or adeyabeba a seasonal flower that blossoms in the September month of Ethiopia. Prime Minister Abiy Ahemd, flanked by flower girls, has greeted UAE President Mohamed Bin Zayid at Bole International Airport. The scenic and warm welcome speaks volume about the growing friendship between Ethiopia and Gulf nations, with the latter finding itself in the doorsteps and highly engaged in the socioeconomic as well as political affairs of the Horn of Africa. While Ethiopia's geographic proximity and significant influence in Africa make the nation a major partner of the oil-rich nations, the relation has witnessed a boost in recent years.

Unlike previous times, Arab nations have been taking bold steps to bolster their involvement in global matters as they also vie to assert their influence in the Horn of Africa as well.

Over the years, Ethiopia's all-rounded ties with the Gulf nations have been going through a rosier period, with the latter stepping up its presence and engagement in the Horn of Africa. Turbocharged by petrodollars and influential leaders, Gulf nations have positioned themselves to be an emerging actor in an increasingly multipolar world. And, being an anchor state in the strategic yet volatile region of the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia remains to be at the first rung in the ladder of Gulf countries' foreign policy. The last five years have only seen bilateral cooperation gain a boost as Ethiopia tries to navigate through the opportunities created by the rivalry of alliances being formed in the region.

It is to be recalled that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's personal comradery with the leaders of Gulf nations, particularly the UAE and Saudi Arabia, and his country's importance to the peace and tranquillity of the Horn made it a staunch ally and a decisive partner for the desert garden nations. The nations, besides funnelling much-needed forex through credit and loans to back the early days of Abiy Ahmed's leadership when he took over the premiership of the cash-strapped economy, both kingdoms have also provided relief and humanitarian assistance in Ethiopia. In the last couple of years, there have only been high-level visits between the nations.

And, last week, Abiy arrived in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to take part in the inaugural Saudi-Africa Summit, another testimony to a partnership witnessing a new height. The summit showcases the big appetite of the Gulf countries to push for cemented ties with African nations.



***Relationships between Ethiopia and the Gulf nations are occasionally improving in areas of multilateral collaboration. The nation has a multi-cooperation agreement, particularly with regards to its connections with Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia***

Abiy and his delegation demonstrated the growing cooperation between the two nations. 1948 marked the start of diplomatic ties between the two nations when Saudi Arabia became one of the first Arab nations to open an embassy in Addis Ababa, reported Ethiopian News Agency.

Regarding this, Prime Minister Abiy and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia discussed strategies to strengthen the two nations' diverse alliances and partnerships after the summit. These strategies were anticipated to center on bolstering cooperative efforts, improving political synchronization, and tackling threats to regional security. It is well known that the two nations work closely together in a variety of fields, including trade and investment. Ethiopia is the country that imports the most oil from Saudi Arabia and exports the most cereals. Saudi Arabia employs a large number of Ethiopians, ranging from highly skilled to low-level human resources.

Beyond Saudi Arabia Relationships between Ethiopia and the Gulf nations are occasionally improving in areas of multilateral collaboration. The nation has a multi-cooperation agreement, particularly with regards to its connections with Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia.

The country's economic (trade and investment) relations with Gulf countries have shown significant

progress in the last two decades. The oil-rich countries have strong economic power and vast potential for foreign direct investment (FDI). These countries are working to minimize their oil dependence by diversifying their economies. Ethiopia, on the other hand, has offered investment opportunities in agriculture, manufacturing, and service sectors for the countries that are compatible with the latter's goals of diversifying their economies, according to a study published in 2021.

Further, providing investment opportunities Ethiopia is the second-most populous country in Africa. So, this creates the opportunity for high-market destinations and human power for the Gulf countries.

The recent bolster relations between the UAE and Ethiopia from the two sides reassure how the countries relations are deepening in various sectors. The UAE president Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan's visit to Ethiopia strengthened not only the two countries relations but also sent a message about how Ethiopia's and Gulf countries relations have increased. The president's visits also strengthen long-standing ties between the two countries.

The UAE is also another provider of oil products for Ethiopia and participates in Ethiopia's development efforts as well as humanitarian service. The UAE is one of the key trading partners of Ethiopia, and the trade exchange has witnessed

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

State Minister Ambassador Mesganu Arga's report from last year indicates that the non-oil trade volume between the two countries reached USD 1.4 billion in 2022. The Ethio-UAE non-oil trade has surged by 180 percent over the last 10 years. Besides, about 130 UAE companies are active in Ethiopia, working in various sectors of investment. Out of these companies, most of them are huge companies with international reputations. UAE companies are active in the fields of real estate, trade, aviation, renewable energy, agriculture, mining, logistics and infrastructure, health, education, environment, and technology.

Also, one of the biggest economy owners and Gulf countries' Qatar has exemplary relations with Ethiopia and has deepened their relationship, especially in recent years.

Recently, State Minister Ambassador Mesganu Arga received the Deputy Head of Mission of the State of Qatar to Ethiopia, Jaber Jemal Al-Awami, at his office. Highlighting the strong political and economic cooperation between Ethiopia and Qatar, Ambassador Mesganu stressed the need to capitalize on the existing potential for investment and development cooperation between the countries. Jaber Jemal Al-Awami, on his part, stated that Qatar attaches great importance to its wide-ranging relations with Ethiopia.

With the high consumption of oil in Ethiopia and food from the Gulf, the two sides are interdependently tying their relations together for mutual benefit. Ethiopia's comfortable climate and land resources for agriculture attract the Gulf countries' detachment from their only oil production. Ethiopia's rapidly growing economy and population are also important factors in the two regions' growing relationship. Beyond economic and political relations, the two sides' religious history is the basis for their robust relation. The era of unipolar world has been over, new world order is fledgling, blocs like BRICS, South South and others have been presenting themselves as an alternatives of international cooperation and this opens a window of opportunities for countries like Ethiopia in terms of financial source and political partnership. In fact for African nations, there should not be Eastern or Western blocs, as developing nations, African nations should make use of every penny available and help coming from either sides.



# Law & Politics

## Ethiopia's growth narrative: Boosting production as means to assert sovereignty

BY SOLOMON WASSIHUN

In its relentless pursuit of economic development and the related assertion of its sovereignty, Ethiopia is wholeheartedly committed to promoting industrial growth. A robust and diversified industrial sector is critical to achieving self-sufficiency and securing the country's sovereign rights on the world stage.

With this vision in mind, Ethiopia has implemented comprehensive policies and strategies to boost industrial production in various sectors while ensuring the continuous improvement of agricultural productivity.

The government has actively encouraged domestic and foreign investment, revised laws, created a favorable business climate and offered attractive incentives for companies investing within the country's borders. This approach has led to the establishment of numerous production facilities.

The country is making sustained efforts to increase production, create new job opportunities for its citizens, arrange technology transfer and attract foreign investment.

The government's efforts to boost production are multi-faceted and involve various sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing and infrastructure development. Targeted investments in key industries are intended to boost growth, create employment opportunities and increase the country's overall prosperity.

An example of Ethiopian government's commitment to industrial expansion is the establishment of industrial parks throughout the country. These parks, most of which are built by the Ethiopian government, serve as nucleus for the burgeoning manufacturing sector, centers for technology transfer and ideal work spaces for companies, most of which come from abroad and have limited time and resources before resuming operation.

Furthermore, the Ethiopian government has also introduced an initiative called 'Ethiopia-Tamret', which means 'let Ethiopia produce', to create a competitive manufacturing industry by solving the challenges in the sector in a sustainable and comprehensive manner. By promoting local manufacturing, Ethiopia can reduce its reliance on imported goods and promote sustainable production practices.

The national initiative is being led by a steering committee comprising senior federal government officials and headed by the Deputy Premier. This is in itself indicative of the level of urgency and importance the government attaches to the initiative.

The steering committee was convened last week to conduct an appraisal of its activities,



***So Building robust export-oriented manufacturing capacity is not only a matter of economic progress, but it is also a matter of asserting a nation's sovereign power as a free state, that is why Ethiopia now is struggling not to fall into the foreign debt traps, and stay away from the curse of Foreign aid/loans***

which was found to be satisfactory. "The initiative has solved the problems faced in the manufacturing sector through coordination and achieved great results," said the Deputy Premier

The initiative is expected to further improve the working environment and the market conditions for the manufacturing sector by improving policies and directives and addressing such issues as bureaucratic red tape and corrupt practices.

The initiative has been instrumental in creating favorable conditions for the manufacturing sector to make remarkable progress in such areas as import substitution with locally manufactured similar products, as well as value addition and quality improvement of export items to diversify and increase export volume. In that regard, the Industry Minister has indicated Ethiopia substituted import products worth 350 million USD in the first quarter of the current Ethiopian fiscal year alone.

Ethiopia's manufacturing sector has been growing steadily in recent years, driven by investments in such industries like textiles, food-processing, pharmaceutical industries. The government has implemented policies to encourage more investment in these sectors by providing incentives such as tax holidays, land leases, and access to finance.

The initiative to boost manufacturing production has already shown promising results. Ethiopia's manufacturing sector has been growing for the past several years. For instance, Ethiopia's manufacturing output for last year, 2022 was \$5.38B, a 4.92% increase from 2021.

This growth trend of manufacturing production both in quality and quantity would subsequently enable the nation to save the billion dollars it spent to import products while increasing its export volume. This trend implies that the nation's trade balance would be improved greatly, and so does its foreign currency reserve.

Achieving these targets means, Ethiopia would reach at better position it does not have to expect desperately donor governments and international agencies to finance its socio-economic development plans. That will set the country free from the political pressures and unwelcome interferences attached to the financial aid/loan.

So Building robust export-oriented manufacturing capacity is not only a matter of economic progress, but it is also a matter of asserting a nation's sovereign power as a free state, that is why Ethiopia now is struggling not to fall into the foreign debt traps, and stay away from the curse of Foreign aid/loans.

A rising number of African political economists are joining the chorus of advocates that warn against the resultant detrimental effect of foreign aid/loans, and stress the need for African states to adopt strategies that effectively extricate them from foreign loans/aid.

Dambisa Moyo, a Zambian economist in her book, *Dead Aid*, wrote "The receipt of concessional (non emergency) loans and grants has much same effect in Africa as the possession of a valuable natural resource: it's a kind of curse because it encourages corruption and conflict, while at the same time discouraging free enterprise."

Equally important to asserting sovereignty is the need to ensure food self-sufficiency by improving agricultural productivity.

This fact makes it clear why the Ethiopian government has made agriculture one of the focal areas of development in its Homegrown Economic Reform Agenda.

President Mohamed Ould Ghazouani of Mauritania once said "Food self-sufficiency is a matter of sovereignty and national security and that achievement is a crucial way to concretize the true independence of countries. Agriculture is both an essential pillar and a solid foundation for any renaissance."

In a speech he made last year at the African Union, Premier Abiy Ahmed of Ethiopia underscored the huge potential of Africa, in particular Ethiopia, for agriculture, and the urgent need to be free from food aid by modernizing agriculture.

"With 60% of the world's arable land in Africa, it is of utmost importance that we need to use our natural assets to maximize agricultural output and feed our people without reliance on external assistance. Over the last few years, Ethiopia has made substantial investments in intensifying summer wheat production through irrigation. Our farmers have been able to control and manage production factors to maximize yields using irrigation. These efforts are generating great results and will, in the imaginable future, begin to contribute to our food security and self-sufficiency," he said

Boosting manufacturing capacity and modernization of agriculture could not be realized without the availability of adequate energy supplies. Cognizant of this fact, the Ethiopian government has invested billions of dollars to transform Ethiopia from a power-hungry to a power-surplus economy by developing green energy resources the country is richly endowed with.

For instance, the ongoing construction of the GERD, the most powerful hydroelectric power plant in Africa, is being financed by the Ethiopian people and government without the aid/loan of any donor agency. That is hard evidence for the Ethiopians' determination to build a robust self-reliant economy by their own means.

Even the private sector is now allowed to participate in energy development in Ethiopia. In a matter of few years, Ethiopia would be energy-rich country, with a combined output of its mega dams, windmills, geothermal, and gas fields.

Ethiopia's aspiration to become a self-reliant economy would soon be a reality. Ethiopia now confidently looks into the future with asserted sovereignty, and charts its course into prosperity. However, achieving this requires continued investment in critical sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and infrastructure, addressing challenges, such as national /regional peace and security, the effects of climate change, and harnessing the youth through education and skills training.



# Society

## Successful interventions for successful outcomes

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Ethiopia's Health Extension Program (HEP) that was introduced years ago to ensure equitable community-level healthcare services and achieve universal coverage of primary healthcare services has been one of the strategies that registered a number of success stories in the health sector.

The program enabled Ethiopia to expand many health posts and recruit thousands of health extension workers who put utmost efforts to the success of the program. In response, the country enabled to improve access to essential healthcare services, advance maternal and child health, increase coverage and utilization of preferred contraceptive services. In the same way, it was possible to decrease malaria epidemics and malaria-related deaths, expand access to clean water, hygiene and sanitation, create awareness about disease transmission and practice good hygiene habits among others.

As a result, according to documents, the country achieved the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) three years ahead of the target year, with under-five mortality at 68 per 1,000 live births in 2012.

The success not only advanced the country's healthcare system, but also has become a model program for other countries. Just to mention, some years ago, on the sidelines of the 71st World Health Assembly held in Switzerland, Ethiopia's Health Extension Program was appreciated for advancing primary health care and it has been stated that there are many experiences that the international community should learn from the effective health system of Ethiopia.

Recently, at the panel discussion the Ministry of Health and Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa-CDC) held with the Lancet Commission on ways to address global health threats, Ethiopia's Health Extension Program was hailed as a model experience for African countries.

Speaking on the occasion, Africa-CDC General Director Jean Kaseya (MD) said that African countries should draw lessons from the Ethiopia Health Extension Program.

According to him, Africa-CDC is working in collaboration with the Lancet Commission in a number of areas.

He mentioned the accomplishment of Ethiopia's Health Extension Program is productive and the rest of African countries should learn lessons to expedite the health services to the communities in the hinterlands and create informed communities.

As to him, it is high time to strengthen and put in place health information practices in Africa's health system. To meet the demand, Africa-CDC is working along with the Lancet Commission and other pertinent stakeholders.

The General Director called on African



countries to invest in the health sector and improve health services.

Health Minister Lia Tadesse (MD) for her part said that the Lancet Commission's effort to address the 21st-century global health threats as well structuring it to the Commission level is instrumental. It is also encouraging that Africa has representatives in this area.

She further noted recurrent incidents like conflicts; pandemics, flooding, drought and food items hikes are creating multiple burdens on the sector.

In an exclusive interview with Bahata Health Center Medical Director Yeshiwas Mitiku said that the program attested to making Ethiopia's health system more inclusive and accessible in providing services to the communities at the grassroots.

Ethiopia's success in implementing the Health Extension Program is attributed to the government's strong commitment to improving the country's healthcare system. "In my view, political willingness and leadership commitment are the assets that could help the program; and are crucial in driving the implementation of community-based healthcare programs the government applied through the years. Other African countries can learn from Ethiopia and prioritize healthcare as a national development agenda."

Moreover through the program, the Ministry is able to actively engage local communities and empower them to take ownership of their healthcare. Involving communities in decision-making processes, providing training for local health workers and encouraging participation in the healthcare activities fosters a sense of ownership and sustainability. African countries can learn from Ethiopia's community-centered approach and involve communities as partners in healthcare initiatives.

He further noted that Ethiopia's Health

***The success not only advanced the country's healthcare system, but also has become a model program for other countries***

Extension Program successfully trained and deployed a large number of Health Extension Workers (HEWs) to provide primary healthcare services at the community level. Investing in the training, deployment, and ongoing support of community health workers is crucial for expanding healthcare access in rural areas. African countries can adopt similar strategies to build a strong cadre of community health workers who can deliver essential healthcare services.

He underlined that the Health Extension Program in Ethiopia has placed a significant emphasis on preventive healthcare approaches and health education. This approach is helpful in tackling the root causes of diseases and promoting healthy behaviors. In this regard, African countries can learn from Ethiopia's approaches that focus on disease preventive mechanisms and prioritize health education and health promotion in their community-based

healthcare programs.

He said that Ethiopia's Health Extension Program recognized the importance of expanding healthcare infrastructure in rural areas. Establishing health posts and improving water and sanitation facilities were critical components of the program. African countries can learn from Ethiopia's approach and prioritize the development of healthcare infrastructure alongside the deployment of community health workers.

He finally said that Ethiopia implemented a robust monitoring and evaluation system to track the progress and the impact of the Health Extension Program. Regular monitoring and evaluation help identify gaps, measure outcomes, and make data-driven decisions to improve healthcare delivery. African countries can adopt similar systems to ensure accountability and continuous improvement in their community-based healthcare programs.

In general, he underlined that, while each country has its unique context and challenges, considering these lessons from Ethiopia's Health Extension Program should provide valuable insights for the successful implementation of community-based healthcare initiatives in other African countries. It is obvious that adapting and contextualizing these lessons to specific country needs resources to achieving sustainable healthcare improvements.

It was learnt the Health Minister is keen to work with the Lancet Commission to address the global health threats through collaboration.

The panel discussion was attended by the Lancet Commission Chairperson and Commissioners and Africa-CDC, Ministry of Health as well as international development partners. Africa-CDC is a specialized technical institution of the African Union which supports Member States in addressing health services challenges.



## Ethiopia's effective strides...

conserving forests, encouraging reforestation, and implementing sustainable land management techniques.

The nation has developed extensive policies and frameworks to promote resilience, realizing the urgency of addressing climate change. One of the most important national initiatives is the Climate Resilient Green Economy strategy. This plan seeks to support an economy that is both climate-resilient and carbon-neutral. This focuses on important industries like forestry, energy, transportation, industry, and agriculture. Ethiopia is aiming for a more resilient and ecologically conscious future by pursuing sustainable development and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The Director of the Ministry of Planning and Development's Climate Change Planning and Implementation Coordination, Mohammed Andoshe, said in an interview with *The Ethiopian Herald* that Ethiopia is in favor of this initiative to foster unity.

"A diverse array of experts, researchers, and practitioners from various sectors have come together for the workshop with a shared sense of urgency and commitment to safeguarding the future and wellbeing of Ethiopia's communities" he stated.

He emphasized further that addressing the urgent need for resilience in the face of the escalating climate disaster is a shared goal. According to him, bringing together professionals, scholars, and practitioners from different fields will enable them to face the pressing issue of climate change resilience with

confidence.

To increase agricultural output and food security, the nation has put in place a number of projects, such as the national Green Legacy Initiative. These programs support the growth of drought-tolerant crops, agroforestry, conservation agriculture, and watershed management.

Water scarcity and decreased hydropower generation due to climate crises are the results of irregular rainfall patterns and higher evaporation rates.

The effects of climate change on Ethiopia's agriculture, according to Dr. Sisay Sinamo, Senior Program Manager at Seqota Declaration, are endangering crop yields, livestock health, and food security, especially for susceptible segments of society such as children and women.

In addition, Sisay stated that due to inadequate sanitation and contaminated water supplies, which can also lead to a shortage of water and restricted access to clean water sources, climate change would expose people to waterborne diseases like malaria and diarrhea. He said that developing resilience to climate change and putting effective solutions in place are very helpful in protecting the future and well-being of citizens.

Ethiopia has made integrated water resource management a top priority. This includes promoting effective irrigation methods, restoring watersheds, and building small-scale water conservation infrastructure. In addition, the nation is working to lessen its reliance on hydropower by developing renewable energy sources like solar and wind

power in an effort to diversify its supply of energy.

The head of the Max Foundation, Kokeb Birhanu, stated that the organization would prioritize Food Nutrition Security (FNS) and WASH in addition to encouraging cooperation and creating practical, approachable solutions to solve the growing climatic concerns.

"We are working together with the regional Health Bureau, Water Bureau, and other partners to ensure food security and sanitation in the districts covered by the Seqota declaration framework, especially in the Amhara region and certain districts in Tigray," she said.

She remarked that Plan International Ethiopia and Max Foundation Ethiopia have developed an innovative five-year integrated WASH and FNS program called the Healthy Village Programme (HVP), which aims to combat water- and fecal-borne infections and stunting in vulnerable areas.

In order to provide the community with access to food security and sanitation, we have to inform and increase community knowledge of the need to address climate change-related issues and preserve and take care of natural resources, she added.

Furthermore, to address the climate change crises in a nation 10 technology instruments have been put in place to monitor Addis Ababa's air quality, according to General Manager Dida Diriba of the Addis Ababa City Environmental Protection Authority.

He mentioned that taking this action will reduce the health risks related to the gases and dust that cause air pollution.

According to him, air quality is being protected through the implementation of the clean air initiative in African cities. Installing and measuring the proper air quality technology in African cities will yield data, which will allow for monitoring and improvement. This will contribute to improving the air quality in African cities.

In order to reduce emissions and improve the general livability of urban areas, the government is actively pushing the development of green cities and sustainable transportation options. Building climate change resilience in Ethiopia requires the active engagement and participation of communities.

The nation has placed a strong emphasis on community-based adaptation strategies that empower local communities to identify and implement climate change resilience measures through promoting climate-smart practices, providing training on sustainable agriculture, and strengthening early warning systems to enhance the capacity of vulnerably exposed communities.

Besides this, through the implementation of integrated policies, sustainable practices, and community engagement, Ethiopia is making significant progress in adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change. However, continued international support and collaboration are crucial to further strengthening Ethiopia's resilience efforts. By investing in climate change resilience, Ethiopia can secure a sustainable and prosperous future for its people while contributing to global climate action.

## Ethiopia's quest for port..

as it will enable us to comprehend the matter better."

The urgency of Ethiopia's request for ports is directly linked to the fast growing economy of the country in which international trade would naturally grow with the development of the multi-sector growth of the economy. Ethiopia expects to export a number of agriculture and industrial products that are needed in the most competitive world economic system.

Ethiopia's demands for ports is essentially based on meeting the national interest of the country in which promotion of peace and economic development play an important role. Lack of ports certainly limits Ethiopia's growing international trade and will continue to increase logistics expenses including exorbitant payments for port services payable only with hard currency.

As a landlocked country in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia has long sought access to the sea for the purpose of facilitating international trade and maritime activities. Its quest for ports is based on international law, primarily under the principles of landlocked states' rights and customary international law. From the perspectives of international law, what are the major instruments that provide for Ethiopia and

other landlocked countries to own and have access to ports?

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) recognizes the rights of landlocked states to have access to and from the sea. This right is based on the principle that landlocked states should have freedom of transit through the territory of transit states to reach the nearest seaport.

Even before UNCLOS, customary international law recognized the rights of landlocked states to access the sea. Ethiopia's quest for ports is grounded in these customary principles, which grant landlocked states access to the sea and ensure their freedom of transit.

Ethiopia has historically been negotiating bilateral agreements with neighboring countries to secure access to ports. For example, Ethiopia has agreements with Djibouti and Sudan for access to their ports, allowing it to transport goods to and from the sea.

International law emphasizes peaceful and negotiated solutions to access to the sea for landlocked states. This means that Ethiopia's efforts to secure access to ports should be based on diplomatic and negotiated agreements with its neighbors.

While landlocked states have rights to access the sea, they also have responsibilities, including respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of transit states and complying with international law. Ethiopia must work within the framework of international law and respect the rights of transit states.

Ethiopia's quest for ports has primarily involved negotiations and agreements with neighboring countries, such as Djibouti and Sudan, to secure access to the Red Sea and Indian Ocean. These agreements have been important steps in addressing Ethiopia's landlocked status and ensuring access to maritime trade routes in accordance with international law.

It's essential for Ethiopia to continue diplomatic efforts and negotiations with its neighbors and to comply with the principles of international law as it pursues its quest for ports.

The author of this contribution would like to stress that all global partner agencies and regional arrangements like the AU need to support the demand for ports voiced by African countries particularly Ethiopia.

Ethiopia is already standing out as the major supplier of renewable energy for African neighboring countries playing

a major role as an African power hub. Power sharing is an important prerequisite for African economic integration and if Ethiopia gets access to more ports and even own some of them, the nation can play an important role not only in the context of African economic integration but also in helping to enable African countries to own and share their natural resources including outlets to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

Among other things, access to ports will help to boost Ethiopia's longstanding cultural and historical relations with countries of the Horn of Africa, the Middle East, Persian Gulf and countries of the Far East.

Some of our politicians contest the issue of accession to ports as an untimely demand but when in reality will the time come if not now to raise the issue of acquiring ownership of ports?

If international partners and UN systems are ever interested to see developed and prosperous Ethiopia, they need to provide a meaningful diplomatic support for Ethiopia, a country that is still active in peace keeping missions of the UN. Ethiopia deserves to own and have access to ports as provided by international law.



# Planet Earth

## Ethiopia's effective strides to overcome climate change impacts

BY FIKADU BELAY

Ethiopia is one of the countries in the world that are highly vulnerable to the impacts of a changing climate, such as increased temperature, erratic rainfall patterns, drought and a heightened frequency of extreme weather events. These changes have far-reaching consequences for the country's ecosystems, economy, and the livelihoods of its people.

Ethiopia's heavy dependence on rain-fed agriculture, delicate ecosystems, inadequate infrastructure and high rates of poverty are some of the reasons contributing to its susceptibility to climate change. The majority of the population in the nation is employed in agriculture, making the country's economy particularly vulnerable to climate change. The regular occurrence of droughts, floods and desertification has had a detrimental effect on Ethiopian populations' access to food, water resources, and general well-being.

Ethiopia's efforts to be resilient to climate change also heavily depend on maintaining its rich biodiversity and safeguarding its forests. Unsustainable land use practices



and population expansion are the primary causes of deforestation and forest degradation, which pose serious challenges to the ecosystem and climate.

Ethiopia has been actively attempting to

improve its climate change resilience in order to save its population, ecology, and economy while also aiming to create a future that is sustainable and adaptable.

The country is working toward restoring

degraded landscapes, enhancing carbon sequestration and protecting biodiversity through a number of initiatives aimed at

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