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BRI well-cementing Global South: *Economist*

BY MENGESHA AMARE

ADDIS ABABA-Through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China presupposed that common growth and sustainable development of the Global South would be

possible via paving ways for cooperation and championing the world economy, an expert said.

Many scholars expressed conviction that the initiative has now been instrumental in connecting the Asia, Europe and

African continents through land, air and sea infrastructure. The scheme is also said to connect the Global South via trade, investment, tourism and other related sectors.

Approached by the Ethiopian Press (EPA),
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NDC working on conducting exemplary Nat'l Dialogue

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA-The National Dialogue Commission (NDC) said it is working to conduct a successful a National Dialogue that would be an exemplary in Africa involving numerous people on various agendas.

In an interview with Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), NDC Commissioner Ambassador Mohamud Dirir said that Africa has experienced several national dialogues.

However, the agenda of all the dialogues were to fix a single or a few problems that is how the

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Association toiling to hone tour operators' skills

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Tourism, Hospitality Exhibition attracts diplomats' profuse attendance

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA- Over 3,000 members of the diplomatic community based in Addis Ababa visited the first-of-its-kind Tourism and Hospitality Exhibition at the Science Museum, the Tourism Ministry disclosed.

The closing program of the National Tourism Exhibition and Hospitality, which has been held for about a month, was held yesterday.

Speaking at the occasion, Tourism State Minister Seleshi Girma stated that the exhibition provides the opportunity to promote Ethiopia's historical and natural

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Photo :Eyob Teferi

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News



Cargo services constitutes 35% of Ethiopian revenue: CEO Mesfin

ADDIS ABABA - The Cargo and Logistics Services constitutes about 35 % of the Ethiopian Airlines Group's total revenues, Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mesfin Tassew said.

In an exclusive interview with ENA, Mesfin said that Ethiopian currently has 16 fully dedicated cargo freighter aircrafts and will soon receive a new cargo aircraft.

Unrivalled in its network coverage, Ethiopian Cargo and Logistics Services provides a transport service to 60 plus destinations in Africa where more than half of the cities are served with a mix of freighter aircraft ensuring the safe and fast transportation of the goods within and beyond the continent.

"The cargo business today constitutes about 30 to 35 % of our total revenue. Total revenue in the last fiscal year that ended in June was 6.1 billion USD and around 2 billion USD of revenue was generated from the cargo and logistics services," Mesfin elaborated.

Ethiopian is providing freight services to global customers in more than 125 international destinations in Africa, Middle East, Asia, Europe and the Americas with belly hold capacity and dedicated cargo destinations.

The Cargo and Logistics Services operates with a state-of-the-art cargo terminal, which is the largest in Africa, and is fully automated with one of the latest Cargo IT systems by adopting the latest aviation systems and technologies to provide efficient freight service across the globe.

Ethiopian is the largest cargo network operator in Africa and one of the major global cargo carriers with a modern warehouse of 1 million tons storage capacity.

"Today we have two facilities and big warehouses specifically designed for cargo and perishable goods. And we are going to add a certain facility to support with E-commerce. These are the facilities being built specifically to conduct e-commerce and it will be commissioned in the coming month; by December 15, we will inaugurate that and it will help us to go into e-commerce business for the first time and it will add to the growth plan of cargo business," the CEO pointed out.

With Vision 2025, where most the parameters have been attained ahead of time, Ethiopian Cargo and Logistics Services is now on an even greater road to achieve its new vision 2035.

Ethiopian seamless air cargo service plays significant role in boosting Inter-African trade and the active implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Addis drafts vehicle emission control regulation

• Installs air quality monitor over 10 places

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - A new vehicle emission control regulation has been drafted to monitor air quality and tackle air pollution in the metropolis, the Addis Ababa Environmental Protection Authority said.

The authority in collaboration with C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group has been offering awareness creation training for air quality and communication experts that were drawn from various countries.

Speaking at the occasion, Addis Ababa Environmental Protection Authority Executive Director Dida Dirriba stated that various measures would be taken to reduce vehicle emissions, improve public transport, and enhance green climate. These initiatives are instrumental to monitor air quality and alleviate air pollution in the city.

Reference-grade air quality monitors have been installed at more than 10 places in the capital. Vehicle emission testing designed to identify and remove high emitting vehicles from Addis Ababa roads and development of Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) to outline a range of measures to improve air quality, the director elaborated.

Despite the challenges, the city administration has made significant progress in curtailing air pollution and tackling climate change in recent years.



One of the biggest challenges is lack of awareness among the public about air quality and climate change. "This is why communication is so important. We need to be able to communicate the challenges we face and potential solutions in a clear and impactful manner."

According to him, the training aims to mobilize the communication experts to drive change through effective outreach. "Since vehicles have an immense impact on air quality, vehicle owners should either install emission reduction devices or gradually change used cars that release high emission by the new one in the future."

The C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group have been assisting the Addis Ababa's administration in the formulation code that will force buildings to entail green spaces and other climate-friendly structures. The partnership is a significant step towards creating a sustainable urban environment, making the metropolis a lively place to live in improving the design of buildings, and associated facilities, Dida remarked.

The Group's Regional Air Quality Technical Advisor for East Africa Tibebe Assefa for his part said vehicle energy usage adversely contributes to the air quality in Addis Ababa; calling for strong cooperation to address such a challenge.

Ministries pledge to boost maritime cooperation

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA - The Ethiopian Ministries of Defense, and Transport and Logistics have vowed to exchange maritime security information and safeguard shipments.

Briefing the media on Monday, Defense Minister Abraham Belay (PhD) said that the accord would enable the ministries to exchange views and information on maritime and naval force securities and also strengthen horizontal and interwoven capacity building engagements in the sector.

The minister further remarked that the agreement would bring a significant platform to apply global-reached technologies, knowledge, and research among others.

"It also brings an opportunity for retired naval forces and defense staff with minor injuries to rejoin the maritime sector," he added.

Minister of Transport and Logistics Alemu Sime (PhD) for his part emphasized that the agreement is an instrument to ensure the security of



country's logistics shipments and offer training to equip the sector with trained manpower recruited locally and overseas.

In addition to the information exchange

and shipment security, Alemu (PhD) added that the cooperation would be an ideal mechanism to undertake occupational disciplines, experience sharing and suggest solutions on the ways forward to better serve the nation.

News

Organization calls on stakeholders for equine safety

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – BROOKE ACTION for WORKING HORSES and DONKEYS stated that concerted efforts and policy-based measures need to be taken to curb illegal donkey's skin trade (DST.)

Presenting a discussion paper at a half day event targeting at raising media awareness on how to preserve donkeys in particular and equines in general, Program Performance and Capacity Development Senior Manager, Tewodros Tesfaye (PhD) exhibited that the number of donkeys is gradually decreasing across the globe. If countries do not work hand in glove to curb the threat, donkeys will be in a state of extinction within finger counted years. Now a day, there are more than 116 million equine across the world. Of this total number of equines, 57 million are horses, 55 million donkeys, and 7.9 million mules.



“Currently, Ethiopia has over 2.2 million horses, some 8.8 million donkeys, 0.4 million mules, 1,000,000 cart donkeys and 250,000 cart horses. Despite campaigns and sensitization efforts in Ethiopia in favor of animal welfare by charity organization like Brooke, the government of Ethiopia has allowed the Asela donkey abattoir to reopen after seven years of closure, which slaughters some 300 donkeys a day,” he

noted.

He underlined that slaughtering donkeys will bring the socio-cultural damage among Ethiopians in the long run though it generates revenue for the government for the time being. Countries like Burkina Faso, Senegal, Mali, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria, and Ghana have banned the donkey skin trade (DST) due to its negative impact on the animals and the entire society.

However, Ethiopia's donkey wealth is still unknowingly smuggled to other countries through Kenya and Sudan borders.

Country Director, Yohannes Kasim on his part said that Brooke Ethiopia has been undertaking various activities to protect equine animals since its inception. Oromia, Amhara, and the former Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' state are the main focus areas of Brooke Ethiopia. Of the various activities of Brooke, animal management system, improving the livelihoods of the society, and capacity building have been the major activities in which the organization has been engaging since years back.

He advised that Ethiopia should attach due emphasis to donkey protection so as to safeguard the majority of the community as they have strong association with the animals especially in rural parts of the country.

BRI well-cementing...

Dilla University Economics Assistant Prof. Dawit Hayeso (PhD) noted that the BRI, which has been operational for the last 10 years, is bearing fruits in bolstering the socio-economic and political relations of the Global South. The initiative is also of paramount significance for African countries.

“For instance, if we consider the case of Ethiopia, the initiative is behind the construction of the railway line that connects Addis Ababa with Djibouti ports. The railway line is instrumental to avoid the sluggish pace of transporting commodities using trucks.”

Laid on the principle of mutual growth, the BRI has greatly helped Africa and enshrine concrete changes in all aspects in the continent over the last 10 years, Dawit added.

It is to be recalled that over 10,000 representatives drawn from 151 countries and over 41 international organizations participated in the BRI forum that was held recently in connection with the 10th anniversary of the scheme.

Opening the conference, Chinese President Xi Jinping said the initiative has been stretched from Asian to Africa and Latin America as over 150 countries and over 30 international organizations signed the cooperation framework. In addition, more than 20 special multilateral cooperation forums have been set up under the program.

Under the auspices of the initiative, world countries made the pledge to open economic corridors, international transport, roads, railways, airports, ports, tunnels and power generations.

According to the economist, the West's criticism of the initiative emanated from their sheer interest to solely exploit Africa's raw materials and supply their industries. “As the BRI is based on cooperation and mutual benefit, some West countries see it as a threat to their greedy interest to exploit the Global South's raw materials.”

The BRI was framed based on the ‘silk road,’ which had been connecting Asia, Middle East, Africa and Europe in trade for 2000 years, it was learned.

Association toiling to hone tour operators' skills

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA - The Ethiopian Tourist Guides Professional Association said that it is contributing to the tourism sector development in collaborating with pertinent stakeholders through nurturing skilled tour operators with enhanced industry expertise.

Association Vice President Kibrom Tesfaye, told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the Association is working with Addis Ababa Culture, Art, and Tourism Bureau and other institutions to produce competent tour operators through providing training and awareness creation about the sector, professionalism.

As to the Vice President, the association is doing this to fill gaps it has observed as some tour operators are working without experience, the required knowledge or education.

Apart from this, he stated that some tour operators have been engaging in the field of tourism introducing their country to

foreign tourists and making visitors have a good memory of Ethiopia.

They are now making great progress and it is an encouraging move to prevail, he noted.

“Currently, many universities are training people who work in hotel and tourism. This will create a good opportunity to produce better professionals in the field and for the development of the tourism sector,” he expressed.

By its nature, the tourism industry grows gradually, Kibrom said, adding the association is working hard in this regard providing training, awareness creation activities to tour guides about professionalism and ethics in order to empower them and contribute to the sector development.

In addition, the association is working with Addis Ababa Culture, Art, and Tourism Bureau in 10 sub cities to motivate the domestic tourism by mobilizing residents to visit tourist destinations in the city, he stated.

Tourism, Hospitality...

tourist attraction sites to the diplomatic community. It has also played a vital role in stimulating the tourism and hospitality sectors.

“It was possible to achieve the desired results in the exhibition and it enabled actors in the tourism and hospitality sectors to render their services under one roof.”

The state minister further noted that about 154,799 local and foreign visitors attended the exhibition for the last 30 days. Also, the fair has been visited more than nine million times through various digital alternatives.

He also praised the media's extensive coverage of the event and providing timely information for a diverse audience. Over 100 media outlets have given media

coverage to the fair.

At the sidelines of the exhibition, a tourism investment forum, ambassador's forum and other gatherings were undertaken, it was learned.

At the end of the program, a book commemorating Habteselassie Tafesse, who contributed immensely to Ethiopian tourism, was inaugurated.

Certificates of appreciation were given to those who contributed to the success of the event.

It is to be recalled that the National Tourism and Hospitality Exhibition was opened at the Science Museum in the presence of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD).

NDC working...

forthcoming Ethiopian National Dialogue will be the first event to table several agendas at a time, he said adding that the number of participants is also projected to be the largest.

“We cannot clearly define what agenda will be discussed in the dialogue, because preparations to identify agendas are yet incomplete. But, public comments indicate the existence of several agendas which need a dialogue,” he noted.

For him, the Rwandan National Dialogue appears to be one of the best National Dialogues conducted in Africa as it was held to resolve a destructive conflict between two ethnic groups.

Ambassador Mohamud relates this experience with the upcoming Ethiopian National Dialogue that would involve many ethnic groups.

He also indicted that preparations are being carried out to make the Ethiopian National Dialogue more participatory and inclusive.

Preliminary discussions with political parties, civil society organizations, community leaders and governmental officials are being held, he mentioned.

The commissioner also urged all Ethiopians and Ethiopian Diasporas to take part in the National Dialogue processes as it is the ultimate solution to resolve disputes happening in the country.

Opinion

Consolidating

the Pretoria Agreement for sustainable peace

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

It has been one year since the Pretoria Peace Agreement was signed between the federal government of Ethiopia and the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) which ended the war that took place in the northern part of Ethiopia for two years. As a result, people now can move from place to place without fear, do their business, hearing no rumors with regard to sexual violence and rape.

Transportation service from the central part of the country to Tigray region is resumed. Aid convoys frequently move there and supply aid to the needy with no hindrance. Ethiopian Airlines resumed flight to Mekelle and Shire air ports three time per week and transport people and commodities.

Schools are opened; have registered students and restarted teaching learning process. Health facilities also resumed working by their capacity though they faced shortage of medicine and equipment. The federal government has allocated the necessary budget to the Tigray interim Administration. Banks have also resumed their business and people began transacting their money. People who were denied access to their bank account because of the war now could transfer it for their own purposes.

The opening of the telephone service enabled people to contact and talk to their relatives in Ethiopia as well as outside Ethiopia. The starting of the internet services also boosted communication through digitization and social media. It also accelerated money transfer from abroad to their relatives here and within the country.

Agricultural inputs such as fertilizer, pesticides and herbicides are also distributed to farmers and currently, they are harvesting their crops. This, as a part of the fruit of the peace agreement, is a big success for the farmers refrained from farming for about a couple of years.

The war caused loss of life of hundreds of thousands of people both combatant and the civilians; demolished infrastructure and thereby incurred the nation and the region economic crises; displaced millions of people and consumed time that would have been allotted for the development endeavor.

According to the Ministry of Finance, billions of Dollars is needed to reconstruct the demolished infrastructure and to rehabilitate the displaced people. Maximum effort has been exerted to mobilize finance that covers the cost from the sources both local and abroad. In these regard, donor countries are expected to stretch their hands to fulfill what they pledged as a part of their duty

for humanity.

Currently, infrastructure such as roads, airports, and facilities like schools, and health institutions are being repaired. Some industries are also becoming operational but due to shortage of inputs, they do not produce in their full scale capacity.

Based on the Pretoria Peace Agreement, new interim administration led by President Getachew Reda is established. It has a power to enact new laws, revoke old laws which have hindrance effect on the implementing of the peace accord, and appoint officials up to the Woreda level. The judiciary system also has been operational even though there are gaps in enforcing some laws. It established its own police forces and security departments.

However, there are some inconsistencies in implementing the Pretoria peace agreement. According to some lawyers, the agreement stipulates that the interim administration to be established through comprising all political parties legally registered to function in Tigray and civic organization but the way the interim administration established did not go in line with stipulation.

It ignored almost all the parties including the known opposition party, Arena Tigray. Besides, civic organizations have not been included in the interim administration. Such situation created uncertainty on the part of the Tigrian elites and put question whether they harness the dividend of the Pretoria agreement or not.

They also criticize that, the inconsistency opened the door to TPLF to disrupt the transition process and currently, it has challenged the interim administration through using its party structure up to the Woreda level. Because of these, some Tigrian political forces demand the establishment of new interim Administration.

The Pretoria peace agreement stipulated the federal government to halt military operation targeting the TPLF combatants, expedite and coordinate the restoration of essential services in Tigray region within the agreed time frame, facilitate the lifting of the terrorist designation of the TPLF by the House of Peoples Representatives, mobilize and expedite humanitarian assistance for all those in need in the Tigray region and other affected areas and ensure unhindered humanitarian assistance.

More or less, the government fulfilled the stipulated demands except some shortcomings witnessed in providing essential services due to shortage of budget.

The Pretoria agreement also stipulates that all foreign forces to withdraw from Tigray region however, according to diplomatic

sources, the presence of foreign forces still continued and the interim administration in Tigray also complains that the presence of foreign forces hinders the implementation of the agreement.

According to the agreement, TPLF shall respect the constitutional bodies and organs of the federal government including, the authorities of the Federal government to control the federal facilities, institutions, and the international boundaries of the country; refrain from supporting and abetting, or collaborating with any armed or subversive group in any part of the country; respect the constitutional mandate of the federal government to deploy the Ethiopian National Defense Force as well as federal security and law enforcing agencies to discharge their responsibilities under the constitution's relevant laws and regulation; refrain from conscription, training, deployment, mobilization or preparation for conflict and hostilities; halt undermining the sovereignty of Ethiopia, including unconstitutional correspondence and relations with foreign powers; cease all attempts of bringing about an unconstitutional change of government.

TPLF is an old party functioning in Tigray for the past fifty years. Currently, though it has been part of the interim administration, it is proved that engaged in some clandestine activities which do not go in line with the Pretoria agreement. It continued to utilize its media which were used as war propaganda machinery during the war time. Still they serve TPLF interest through disseminating war mongering songs which are against the Pretoria agreement.

Evidences also show that some armed groups which were formerly backed by TPLF have their own presence in Amhara region and found to disturb peace and security in the region. Some former armed groups of TPLF residing in the neighboring Sudan infiltrate the border and create havoc on the day to day activity of farmers residing in the border town, burnt crops and killed animals.

Such clandestine activities are totally unacceptable and do not go in line with the Pretoria peace agreement and must be halted. The Pretoria Agreement (PA) stipulates to disarm TPLF forces and let only the existence of one defense force at the federal level.

But some observers put question on the process of the disarming procedure. Last year, for instance, local and international media gave coverage while TPLF officials delivered their armaments and weapons to the federal government and showed pictures but it did not continued as it was predicted. Because of some of the weapons seen delivered were seen looked

like outdated and not functional, some still hesitate that whether TPLF had fully disarmed its combatants or not especially heavy artilleries.

Not only these, some TPLF officials while visiting their diaspora supporters residing in the overseas were heard saying that they have plenty of troops and weapons which can confront any forces and can reannex territories they claimed that occupied by the enemy and such assertion makes the matter worrisome and further hinders the implementation of the Pretoria agreement.

Based on the Pretoria peace Agreement, the federal government established the rehabilitation commission which carries out the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of TPLF forces with the civilian society. However, due to lack of finance which is pledged to be provided by donors, the commission unable to fully conduct its activities as per the agreement. Hence, to implement the elements of the above mentioned agreement which is core for bringing lasting peace in the country, it should be enforced without any delay.

Former TPLF combatants who are physically and psychologically traumatized frequently staged demonstrations asking for their rights to obtain compensation for what they sacrificed and to restart new life. The interim administration pledged to fulfill their demand but unable to do so because of financial deficit and such a situation created social chaos.

The other thing that should be settled based on the Pretoria Agreement but still not be implemented and might create tension is the restoration and rehabilitation of displaced people to their places where they resided for many years. Millions are still living in camps in appalling conditions.

According to the PA, territorial disputes between regions shall be settled based on the constitution through conducting referendum. The federal government also assured this through the statement released by Government Communication Service recently.

Many agree that if the Pretoria peace Agreement is properly implemented, it will bring lasting peace to the region and to the country at large. It also helps to the flourishing of constitutionalism and rule of law. Because many articles of the agreement regarded that the existing constitution serves as the cornerstone for bringing lasting solution step by step.

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

Editorial

Opinion

Commendable results due to effective implementation of CoHA

It has been a year since the breakthrough deal, the Signing of the Cessation of Hostility Agreement (CoHA), was made between the government and TPLF to end the two year long war and bring about lasting peace.

The peace deal was a critical step towards ending the war between the two parties and ensuring lasting peace.

Following the agreement, it was made possible to silence the guns, access unobstructed flow of humanitarian supplies to the people in Tigray and the surrounding areas, reverse the humanitarian crisis and secure lives, ensure the resumption of public services, establish an interim administration in Tigray and hand over heavy and medium weapons.

Similarly, a transitional justice policy that is acceptable to the majority of Ethiopians and expected to be productive was set up. The core responsibilities of transitional justice lie in dealing with the past wrongs, ascertaining the truth and holding accountability, prosecute, compensate and forgive past crimes, and in the end to achieve national reconciliation, which is key to foster mutual trust and confidence, promote peace and national unity among the people of Ethiopia.

Currently, various activities that are foundations to achieve the desired outcomes are carried out. In fact, the government of Ethiopia prioritizes peace; it has always been willing to bring conflicts to the table and resolve differences in a peaceful manner. Even before the outbreak of the war with TPLF, the government has been expressing its unshakable position and firm stand for peace by going the extra mile and beseeching to resolve differences through dialogue instead of military confrontations. Unfortunately, all was in vain.

In the same way, since the Pretoria Peace Agreement was signed, the government has been striving determinedly and unwaveringly to fully implement the stated terms effectively and uncompromisingly - to hold genuine national reconciliation, address all the challenges and ensure lasting peace throughout the country.

Government's increased commitment and dedication to effectively implement the Pretoria Agreement is also hailed as a milestone by regional and international actors. Congruently, the diplomatic and multilateral relations that were strained following the conflict with some countries and international organizations are normalizing noticeably. Today, global countries and development actors are showing their partnership and support to Ethiopia meaningfully.

In relation to the first anniversary of Ethiopia's Cessation of Hostilities Agreement with TPLF, Antony J. Blinken, United States Secretary of State, affirmed his administration's commitment to supporting peace and justice for all Ethiopians. "The United States remains steadfast in its commitment to working with the Ethiopian government and people toward our shared goal of a united, peaceful, and prosperous Ethiopia," he added.

In a statement issued last Monday in relation to the first anniversary of the Pretoria Peace Agreement, Government Communication Service (GCS) also stated the government's unwavering commitment to the implementation of the agreement through a number of bold and decisive measures to build trust and consolidate peace.

Reaffirming to redouble efforts to consolidate peace and ensure the full implementation of the Peace Agreement, the statement appreciated all entities playing part to sustain peace in Ethiopia. "Ethiopia counts on the continued engagement of our friends and partners for lasting peace in Ethiopia."

However, the idea of national reconciliation and achieving peace is not a thing realized overnight. Rather, it demands concerted efforts of all. In this regard, the collective efforts of all Ethiopians at home and abroad; partners and supporters' efforts are crucial to sustain the current commendable achievements due to effective implementation of Pretoria Agreement.

Quality education for quality generation

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Quality knows no boundary indeed as everything is highly preferable whenever it has comprised the best excellence, if not the relative virtuous aspect. Informed decision can be made; responsible, competent and patriotic generation can be produced through reliable machinery—quality schooling.

When it comes to education, its value has exceeded in manifold since such an audacious facet helps produce a generation that can confidently take over the country with its future and all rounded wealth. Education, with a particular reference to quality one, has been laying a solid foundation for healthy human development since long back. Ethiopia has been attaining impressive and rapid primary enrolment increase upon the stringent focus the government and policymakers have given to the sector. The country has capitalized on quality improvements through the Education Sector Development Plan and the General Education Quality Improvement Program.

As Ethiopia has recently experienced massive improvement in access to education especially at primary level, quality has now attracted due attention because the next scheme targets at ensuring quality and the required standard. In clear terms, extraordinary achievements, in terms of increasing enrolment and access at all levels, has been recorded. The next emphasis lies on quality phases. However, education quality still remains a daunting challenge across the nation. To address the challenges in educational quality, the government has recently devised many reliable solutions and working on it. Though increased access to education and school enrolment creates opportunity to all, accessing quality education has remained a significant problem in the nation.

Education quality is shaped by the firm linkages between/among the government, line ministries, universities and colleges, senior secondary schools, schools at all levels in general, and the general society as the combined effort of all matters the most and renders good quality education to all.

Education is a compulsory human need and a key factor for the development of a nation although the concept of quality in educational institutions is highly complex, difficult to define, and multi-dimensional. True, quality can be described as a system that constitutes the input, process, and output of the educational system, and it refers to the educational model, the institutional mission, and its goals, as well as to the specific standards of the system.

Deploying well experienced and trained teachers can absolutely contribute towards

enhancing and ensuring education quality and it will serve as a springboard for further improvement. Quality education has a direct bearing to quality of input, process, and output aspects thereby producing quality generation in all aspects.

Ethiopia is now working to help its educational institutions offer quality education for all as its pedagogy has focused on theoretical and practical aspects, and the country has to work to make itself continentally as well as globally competent. Of course, it is endeavoring to well improve its education system at all levels.

The education system in Ethiopia has to focus more on the practical side of knowledge, making students more competent to get create or get good jobs as per their preference. When its education system is valued well, the generation in the nation produced using such viable channel would be productive, ethical, and responsible, among others.

As Ethiopia is now home to over 120 million population, its desire for quality education is equaled by none. If the country firmly capitalizes on quality education, the top-class secondary schools, colleges and universities, qualified faculty, quality of living, and job opportunities will undoubtedly be the uppermost reasons to choose this great country—Ethiopia. However, it is left with a long journey to seize such a precious level peculiarly when it comes to education quality.

As access to safe, inclusive, quality education is a basic human right and an essential pillar of ending poverty, investing in quality education is an incomparable option and critical for developing the human capital that will end all perplexities with which Ethiopia has been challenged.

The Ethiopian government has invested millions of dollars in both access to education and its quality and working hard to come up with proven and measurable impact. Undeniably, education in the true sense is helping the individual to be mature and free, to flower greatly in love and goodness. That is why countries like ours are expected to be interested in shaping the generation in tune with their desire for real change.

All in all, quality education promotes the well-being of citizens. Yes, access to quality education enables children to develop and flourish, and educated generations have more confidence in themselves and their abilities to wholeheartedly render service to fellow citizens. Ensuring inclusive and quality education for all has promoted lifelong learning. The government and professionals have to strive to provide all citizens at all levels with quality education coupled with the necessary skills.

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



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The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy

From Trade Fair to Fair Trade: Ethical business revolution does it all

BY MEKONNEN SOLOMON

(Horticulture Export Coordinator)

As the global demand for products and immense competition continues to increase in our current business landscape, all modern businesses have started to prioritize moral and ethical solution in course of their regular business operations. Systematic and established ethical standards can help business significantly increase credibility and reliability amongst existing and potential customers by establishing trust and confidence.

Recent studies have shown that 73% of West Europe customers of agricultural products are willing to pay higher prices for produce from companies and firms that operate with transparency and standard. Although various unethical actions in the name of Trade Fair may be able to help business to increase return in the short term, they can often result in loss of viability in the long run due to forfeiture of trust and credibility. Therefore, businesses tend to comprehend and avoid various immoral and unethical dilemmas that may potentially affect organizational productivity.

The idea of Fair Trade has now evolved as an ethical platform to change the way trade and investment works through better price reward and improvement of working condition. It is a *trading partnership, based on discourse, transparency and respect that seek greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions, safe environment and securing the rights of marginalized producers, company workers and project area community.*

Today Fair Trade International, a product-oriented multi stakeholder group, has become a product labeling and certifying organizations in most developed and developing countries. This organization aimed at promoting the lives of company workers and producers as well as local community through establishing ethical standard. Those products that labelled by Fair Trade International as "Fair Trade Products" used to receive additional payment or a fair trade premium price payment, which is more than 10% of the prevailing market selling price through Bank to their independent association of producing and exporting companies.

Fair trade certification means workers who produce certified tradable commodity shall have improved working conditions, better pay, and protection of their basic rights, such as fixed employment and a safe working

environment, including the safe use of chemicals and a ban on dangerous pesticides by receiving fair trade premium or reward in the market. The fair trade premium is enabling flowers' workers to improve their lives and invest in social, education and infrastructure projects such as scholarships, school buildings and healthcare facilities.

In Latin America and African countries, the floriculture industry is an important source of hundreds of thousands of jobs yet most flower workers work for long hours, are poorly paid (with either no or a wholly inadequate minimum wages), and women do not even receive their basic rights.

The vast majority of flower sold in European consumer markets are imported around 80% of all roses sold in Europe, for example. In European super market and retail channel, the majority of these come from East Africa. In these countries, many workers do not even receive their basic rights, in Ethiopia for example, there is no legal minimum wage; in Uganda, the minimum wage set by the government is half of the poverty line set by the World Bank. Many workers are not able to enjoy labour union and have to work under unprotected working conditions – handling with pesticides without protective equipment, working for long periods and not receiving sick pay or maternity leave.

In Ethiopia, fair trade has come a long way in the last 12 years. The Fair Trade Revolution celebrates the movements achievement and takes up the challenge of improving more lives through fair dealing with flower producers.

In Ethiopia, Seven Rose and ornamental cutting producing and exporting companies, who operate in Zeway and Koka Floriculture cluster are registered by Fair Trade Organization since 2012. (Hurberg Rose Plc, Zeway Rose PLC, AQ rose PLC, Yasin Largesse Johansson PLC, Dumen Orange PLC and Maranque Plants PLC and Sher Ethiopia PLC). Their products are certified as fair trade products. In these companies, workers have got an opportunity to receive and administer additional fund which is derived from fair trade product buyers.

For the last 12 years, with support of Fair Trade Premium, different projects have been implemented in Zeway Koka cluster. The building of school from Kindergarten to high school which serve more than 12,000 students (the school serve also food for children between age of 4-6); the building of Hospitals and health clinic with capacity of 140 bed for patients with all medical facilities (major and minor theatres, dental clinic, gynecology, physiotherapy, x-rays, CT Scan, radiology, maternity, maternal



The idea of Fair Trade has now evolved as an ethical platform to change the way trade and investment works through better price reward and improvement of working condition

child health, HIV prevention services etc) use of biological crop protection agents to save the environment, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Construction of wetland systems to treat liquid waste and recycled in the farm construction of sport field and football stadium are among some of the projects which greatly benefit company employee, local community and project surrounding population.

Currently, an independent non-profit umbrella organization like Fair Trade Africa, Fair trade Australia and New Zealand are keen to leverage buyer interest in Europe and Australia to source from Ethiopia, to contribute to keeping farm workers employed to support themselves and their families and the fair trade Premium flowing to worker groups. The situation on the ground is exacerbated at present by sweeping price shock response to auction market and energy crisis in Europe.

To date, the concern of sustainable development has ignited a desire to make ethical revolution on existing trade partnership and need to focus on improvement of working condition. Flower Companies need to see themselves as part of the community and understand how their business backward and forward linkages impact the community that rely on them and global market throughout the supply chain.

Art & Culture

When a lost dear is found

BY ALEM HAILU G/KRISTOS

Thousand apologies
For my mistake
My slip of the tongue
Seriously don't take
Crazy, I did belittle
And fatuously insult
My cherished
Love object.
Honestly,
Since that cursed day
Our relation severed
Feel I lost sun's ray!
Please forget days by gone
For the harm I inflicted
I'm ready to atone.
Though forgiving



Is a tough task
Rising above petty feelings,
Magnanimous, please
Take me back.

Must draw your attention
Forgiveness' self-purification.
Please my better half
For me days have
Proven night dark
Night's winter long
Stricken from my
Emaciated self
Love's song.
Tumbling down
Before your feet
In your close
Ones' presence
My follies
I will admit.
I don't hide
I'm of the opinion
Once more nursing

Back into shape
Your wounded pride
I must allow it
An untrammelled ride.
Pleasure knows no bound
When recklessly
Lost dear is hard found.
Please the ball is
In your court
Decide not,
Vengeful, our love
To abort.
"My better half,
Honey, darling"
Love birds
Let us resume
To sing.

The miracle the passage of time does

(SHORT STORY)

BY ALEM HAILU G/KRISTOS

After a busy day in my office while I was taking a tea sitting on the veranda of a cafeteria found in the heart of Kazan chis I witnessed a girl, with a comely face, bending forward from her waist and begging by the door of a nearby pharmacy.

On the first day I saw her I felt pity and shoved a hundred Birr note into her, observably, domestic chores roughened hand. Stunned she gave me a cursory glance and turning back she rushed into the pharmacy after uttering "May the Almighty pay you back in abundance!"

Minutes later she came out with a drug rolled in a white paper and cleared out of the area.

After a fortnight in a similar episode I met the girl walking with a posture of a banana on the same spot.

"Hello! How are you?" I saluted her.

"I'm Okay," she unzipped her small lips that hid well chiseled white teeth.

"Haven't you got enough money to buy the drug you wanted last time?"

"I buy painkillers occasionally. You see I suffer from an excruciating back pain!"

"I see! Is that why you walk with a curved back?"

"Yes I get a relief when I take this. Specially at night the pain turns unbearable."

"Taking too much painkiller has its own side effect. It could be adverse to the kidney."

"A relief today has blinded me from a risk tomorrow," she moved her head sideways by of saying what else could I do.

"Is it a car accident?"

"No. For want of jobs here I was in Arab

countries the past seven years."

"But you seem young."

"Now I'm 28"

"It was illegally I went there by self-seeking brokers who packed the likes of me in a container and ferried us to the Ethio-Sudan boarder. Once more via illegal brokers crossing red sea a few of us found our ways to the Middle East. We were working there without a license"

"Isn't it difficult to lead a life like that?"

"Yes it was like cat and mouse with police I spent almost six of the seven years there."

"Did they dump you?"

"No. My last employer was a kindhearted person. When he saw my condition growing worse by the day he took me to a hospital. As the doctor said "she needs a long rest" my employer covering my air transport cost sent me here with modest money in my backpack."

"Are there good employers there? Many returnees paint them in dark hues."

"Though rare there are good employers. Some are genuinely Allah fearing. But the majority overexploit employees. They take employees to relatives or neighbors' houses to tackle extra task without extra payment."

"How cruel?"

"After working yourself to the bone they mercilessly saddle you with a backbreaking toil."

"Now I got the reason why you walk like that!"

"You see my parents and relatives sent me there pooling resources. I was sending them a lump some money occasionally when situations permitted."

"What do you mean by that?"

"As an illegal immigrant I could do that



when my employers permit me or when I became out of the radar of police. But I came back tragically aborting my relatives' dream."

"Were they dreaming milking the golden chicken?" I ironically laughed.

"They became disappointed. They couldn't hide their displeasure!" I read discomfort from her face.

"Did you have a boyfriend?"

"I was wiring him the better portion of my income so that he salts it away for our future wedding. It turned a bashed hope"

"What was your reaction when you returned back?"

"He shunned me like a bad day."

"How cruel!" I said.

"Did you ask him about the money?"

"My parents told me he was drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes and chewing chat with the money."

I tapped her back sorrowfully.

"Worse he fathered a child from my friend with whom he was often taking the nights out." She wiped tears breaking away from her big eyes that seem projected in a three dimensional space.

"I squandered the prime time of my life dreaming about the blissful marital years ahead of us," she ducked her head.

"I could guess the pain from an insult to injury."

"How cruel?"

"We began meeting with the café .During our rendezvous holding her hand and seeing her in the eyes I treated her with burger and milk. Love out of sympathy was welling up in my heart. It was at that moment in life I realized the veracity of the saying "familiarization is a great magician."

On our fourth meeting, I asked her name she said "I go by Mesale Solomon." I reflected it literary means proverb of Solomon.

I didn't exactly ask her address. But I remember she told me her house being around Olympia.

When she began to regain her normal posture she cut down the frequency of our meeting. When I asked her about that she said "I have become a chef in a restaurant owned by Aderes around Bole."

"Do your employers behave?"

He is a gentleman who fears Allah. He is a widower. "

Before I knew it she glitched our contact to a halt. It did create an irk on me for some time.

Four years later, in a big supermarket around Meskel Square I saw her with a chubby old man holding her hand affording a piggy shoulder to a kid. She was heavy with a child. She had held a bagful of baby clothes. When we crossed paths presumably she had to be indifferent. I have to follow suit wondering the miracle the passage of time does.

Global Affairs

Can creativity change the world?

It all fits into an off-road vehicle that can reach even the most remote parts of Southern Africa to bring cinema where the essentials are lacking, where there's no electricity to power a projector, and where perhaps no one has ever sat in front of a screen to watch a movie. With just the sun and a solar panel, a theater can be set up in areas where people struggle to access food and water and make a decent living. But what it truly requires is the courage to not view creativity as a luxury. Sydelle and Rowand, the founders of Sunshine Cinema, a network of mobile movie theaters, are not just entertaining people; they are crossing a bridge.

Crossing a bridge, that is what creativity leaders do, according to Lwando Xaso. She is a lawyer, writer, and storyteller from South Africa, and in mid-October, she was in Milan moderating a panel that posed a challenging question: "Can creativity change the world?" She was present at "A Creativity Revival," an "un-conference" whose participants shape the agenda and content. They are the "Creativity Pioneers," women and men whose work is supported by a fund from the Moleskine Foundation and who had gathered in Italy from various corners of the world. Much like Rowand and Sydelle, they answered that challenging question with a resounding "yes." "Creativity is not just something cute. It's not just something nice. But creativity is something relevant. That is the key element nowadays to transform society for the better," said Adama Sanneh, CEO of the Moleskine Foundation.

Crossing a bridge, that is what South Africa is doing as well. "Our starting point is a place of violence. We come from a history of inequality, injustice, indignity, and oppression ... We are moving across the bridge towards freedom, human dignity, equality, and justice. We're moving away from trauma toward healing," Xaso said.

According to "Assessing the Impact of Culture and Creativity in Society," a course and publication from the Impact Research Center of Erasmus University in Rotterdam, one of the most significant challenges in effecting social change is changing people's behavior. Or, perhaps, their "hearts," as Xaso emphasized. "A revolution can change regimes, but for transformation, we need to change hearts." Xaso also explained: "Creativity and art were instruments of liberation. At the core of the anti-apartheid movement lay creativity. The majority of the country was never going to win the war against the apartheid government with arms alone ... It was never going to happen. So, what are the other tools that can change the world? There was music. There was poetry. The ANC built a culture and a department for culture because they saw it as an instrument that can liberate the country ... Art and justice reinforces each other."

Rowand Roydon Pybus is also in Milan, sharing his experiences in crossing bridges. His tool is a network of solar-powered



Creativity pioneers in Milan, Group Photo. Credit: Luca Dimoon/Moleskine Foundation

theaters that screen films made in Africa for those who lack access or cannot afford it. These films spark conversations on critical issues such as land rights and gender rights, thereby fostering change. They shed light on often-overlooked subjects. It's not about just screening; Sunshine Cinema engages young people and trains them as facilitators for these discussions. They use a vast collection of African movies to address vital questions in hyper-local environments, where the impact is most significant.

However, assessing the scale of creativity's social impact remains a challenge. As Eva Langerak writes in Erasmus University's magazine, "The assumption that the cultural and creative sector adds substantial value to society is widely debated, and the discussion on how that value takes shape is quite controversial." The social impact of arts, culture, and creativity can be defined as "those effects that go beyond the artifacts and the enactment of the event or performance itself and have a continuing influence on people's lives." This definition draws from the 1993 multi-authored work "The Social Impact of the Arts: A Discussion Document." Measuring the social impact of creativity is not a straightforward task, but the significance of the cultural dimension has been recognized to the extent that participation in cultural life is considered a human right, as outlined in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration. This participation is crucial as it underpins 'the ability to represent oneself and exercise other rights, including freedom of expression.'

Representing oneself is closely tied to identity, which is one of the questions that "creative pioneers" in Palestine are addressing through the "Wonder Cabinet," a project in Bethlehem. Designed by architects Elias and Yousef Anastas, the Wonder Cabinet is a space for creative communities to come together and establish a safe place for Palestinian

voices to express themselves, not only with regard to creative fields but also to share, learn, and gain exposure to different experiences.

Art and creativity have a profound impact on society, encouraging critical thinking and prompting individuals to question their own experiences as well as those of others. This perspective is championed by authors such as François Matarasso, an artist, writer, and policy advisor, as well as Pascal Gielen. These insights hold particular significance in regions affected by conflict and warfare. In the words of Olena Rosstalna, the founder and manager of the Youth Drama Theater "Ama Tea" in Chernihiv, a city in northern Ukraine near the Russian border, the impact of art transcends the physical battlefronts. She observed, "It's not just the war on the land; it's also the war in the minds and for the minds, because the propaganda is very big. Brainwashing has persisted for decades." Countering propaganda is among Ama Tea's actions devoted to engaging the youth.

Olena describes herself as a "very small fish in a very big ocean," yet she believes that everything starts from the ground up. "That's why I'm deeply involved in grassroots initiatives in my work. Supporting local initiatives worldwide is crucial. It all begins with small steps and grassroots efforts. If we have a world of pioneers, one by one, all these initiatives will flourish into a beautiful garden," she said. Communities often play a pivotal role in propelling social change. Community-led art projects unite people to brainstorm solutions for local issues, according to scholars. Solutions even where it seems impossible – that's the essence of creativity, as Adama Sanneh eloquently wrote in *Folios*, the Moleskine Foundation's periodical: "Revealing and exploring what is possible in seemingly impossible contexts. It's about radical imagination and enlightenment during times of ignorance and resignation"

SOURCE:(INTER PRESS SERVICE)

"Creativity is not just something cute. It's not just something nice. But creativity is something relevant. That is the key element nowadays to transform society for the better"

Law & Politics

COHA- one year on

BY SOLOMON WASSIHUN

The Pretoria Peace Agreement, officially known as the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA), signed on November 2, 2022, ended two years of devastating conflict in Tigray, which subsequently spilled over into the neighboring regions of Amhara and Afar. The agreement was facilitated by the African Union with the Americans 'observer' role, and signed by the Ethiopian government and the TPLF.

The agreement not only ended one of the bloodiest wars in Africa in recent years, but also reaffirmed the long-held mantra to both friends and foes that Ethiopia's sovereignty and territorial integrity is inviolable by any means or power.

Both signatories of the peace deal have proved many skeptical political analysts wrong by staying loyal and committed to the accord they signed and making an unreserved effort to its full implementation. One year on, several fundamental works have been accomplished that took the peace process beyond the point of no return.

So far, in its one year the journey of the implementation Pretoria peace accord has translated into action such crucial tasks like the handover of heavy and medium weapons, the restoration of basic services, the resumption of schools and commercial activities in the Tigray region, and the National Commission for Reintegration.

While there is still much work to be done, the Pretoria Peace Deal has had a significant positive impact on the situation in Tigray. It has effectively silenced the guns in the region, bringing an end to months of violence and instability and creating a path toward greater stability and prosperity for the region. Aid organizations have been able to access many parts of the region to provide much-needed assistance.

An inclusive interim regional administration that comprises various actors in Tigray politics has been established and has been active for several months since last March. Civilian administration has returned to many parts of Tigray, allowing local communities to take control of their own affairs. Law and order are holding sway. Civilians are no longer subject to arbitrary detention or extrajudicial killings.

Since the signing of the peace deal, there have been significant improvements in the region. Social services that were disrupted during the conflict have been restored. These include health clinics, schools, and water supply systems. This has been made possible by the coordinated efforts of the federal and transitional government, aid organizations, and local communities.

Free, safe, and secure movement of civilians has been restored in many parts of the region. Roads and airports have reopened, allowing people to travel freely and goods to be transported more easily. This has had a positive impact on the region's economy, with farmers, traders, and factory workers back to work. Goods are moving in and outside of Tigray as it has been before the conflict. The reopening of roads and airports



has also improved access to humanitarian aid and other essential goods.

The economic recovery in the Tigray region has been a key priority since the signing of the Pretoria peace deal. As elsewhere in the country, Agriculture is the mainstay of the region's economy, and the conflict had a significant impact on farmers in the region. Many were forced to abandon their farms due to the forced call to join the war, lack of inputs, or unable to access their field due to insecurity.

However, since the signing of the peace deal, farmers have been able to return to their land and resume their livelihoods. Aid organizations have also provided seeds, fertilizers, and other inputs to support agricultural production.

To further expedite positive developments in the economic recovery of Tigray, the interim administration should prioritize and be laser-focused on such key tasks as rapid rehabilitation of the damaged infrastructure, ensuring access to markets, and mitigation measures against the inflation of the price of basic commodities.

Likely, the federal and regional authorities would soon reach a common ground to cooperatively implement the remaining unfinished tasks mentioned in the peace accord which include among others disarmament, demobilization and reintegration [DDR], the implementation of a credible transitional justice and accountability process for the victims of atrocities, and the return of internally displaced persons.

The federal government on its part has been working last year on a plan for the implementation of a comprehensive national transitional justice policy by ensuring the participation of all stakeholders through public consultations held across the nations. Now, the transitional justice policy document which is expected to contribute to sustainable peace, reconciliation, and justice in Ethiopia has been developed.

According to the Ministry of Justice, the formulated policy of transitional justice will be implemented this year across the nation including the Tigray region.

Moreover, The restoration of the Tigray region's representation in the federal parliament and House of Federation, as well as the start of political dialogue between signatories to find lasting solutions to their underlying political differences would also be a task that would require the attention of the federal and regional officials of Tigray.

Complimenting the implementation of the Pretoria Peace Agreement, the independent Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission is reportedly preparing to carry out the dialogue process in Tigray, and has already held talks with the officials of regional administration.

The Pretoria peace deal has received international support from governments and organizations around the world. The US and European governments have hailed the agreement as an important step towards peace and stability in the region. The African Union played a key role in brokering the deal, and other regional organizations such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) have also expressed support.

The US, a cluster of some EU countries, and AU have a few days ago issued separate statements in connection with the first anniversary of the signing of the Pretoria peace deal. In their statement, they expressed their appreciation for the progress made so far in the implementation of the peace accord and pledged their outright support for the successful completion of the peace process.

However, it should be underlined that donor governments and intergovernmental agencies should provide enough practical support more than paying lip service to the peace deal. They need to provide adequate funds and technical support in time to support the reconstruction of the war-affected

regions. They should not be distracted by other political events happening elsewhere in another part of the world.

The continued success of the peace deal in Tigray would be a great model for peacefully resolving other conflicts happening in other parts of the world. Donor governments and intergovernmental agencies must recognize the significance of this and provide the necessary support to ensure its success.

There are still millions of people in the war-affected regions who still depend on humanitarian assistance just to survive. Aid organizations reportedly are not adequately resourced to carry out the required humanitarian assistance to the needy in the war-affected areas.

According to a recent report of the Humanitarian Response Plan 2023, let alone the required support concerning health, education, and agriculture, the available funds for the provision of food assistance to the needy in Ethiopia can only cover 26 percent of the required amount. Thus, donor agencies should step up their support for the speedy rehabilitation of the communities' war-affected regions of the country. The continued success of the peace deal will require sustained engagement and support from the international community.

Diplomatic relations between the Ethiopian government and Western governments and donor agencies have been improving since the signing of the Pretoria peace deal. The Ethiopian government has been engaging with international partners to secure funding for humanitarian assistance and reconstruction efforts in the region.

In general, while there have been significant improvements since the signing of the Pretoria peace deal, there is still much work to be done to ensure lasting peace and stability in Tigray. The continued success of the peace deal will require sustained engagement and support from all stakeholders involved.

International

African Union calls for investment in education and skills development through a new social contract

Considered the future of Africa, youth can contribute to economic transformation of the continent but need skills to be employable, a challenge that should be addressed through investment in education and skills development.

Addressing the 5th Session of the Committee on Social Policy, Poverty and Gender, the African Union Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI), Mohammed Belhocine, highlighted that a new social contract anchored in education and skills development was the key to unlocking Africa's potential and fulfilling the aspirations of its people.

"The success of a new social contract requires that Africa harness its population demographic dividend, especially the women and youth, whose energy, creativity, and courage must drive its development agenda," said Mr. Belhocine, in an address, delivered on his behalf by Ms. Sophia Ashipala, AU Head of the Education Division.

He said a paradigm shift in the approach to education and skills development is required to move beyond traditional models and embrace innovative methods that harness technology, creativity, and experiential learning.

In addition, there is a need to close the gender gap in education and skills development.

"Empowering women and girls through education is not just a moral imperative but an economic one," he noted, adding that, "When women have equal access to education and opportunities, they contribute significantly to economic growth and social development."

Mr. Belhocine noted that Africa is in a paradox. The continent was the cradle of



humanity and the site of unparalleled diversity with a youthful population, had abundant natural resources, with a vast potential for growth and prosperity, yet the same continent was grappling with numerous challenges, including poverty, inequality, and social disparities.

According to the African Development Bank, Africa's youth population is expected to double to 830 million by 2050, making education and skill development even more critical. The World Bank estimated that sub-Saharan Africa had the highest youth unemployment rate globally, reaching over 20% in some countries.

According to UNESCO, out of the 500 million children in the 5-19 age group, close to 100 million are out of school in sub-Saharan Africa.

"This is a tragedy we must urgently address. We must ensure that every child in Africa has access to quality education, regardless of their background or location," said Mr. Belhocine, adding that, "We must invest in programs that equip African youth with the skills necessary to thrive in the modern job market. This includes digital literacy, vocational training,

and entrepreneurship education. By doing so, we not only unlock economic potential but also foster innovation and self-reliance."

Mr. Belhocine urged governments, civil society, and the private sector to collaborate to invest in education and skills development and that inclusivity should be our guiding principle in ensuring that education and skills development reach the most marginalized and vulnerable communities.

He called for the recognition of the potential of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) as multi-functional tools and an enabler for achieving continental development goals. For STI to play its pivotal and critical role in Africa's socio-economic transformation, there must be renewed investments in education.

"Building a new social contract for Africa through education and skills development is not just an aspiration; it is a commitment we must all make," Mr. Belhocine said, adding that, "It is a promise to the youth of Africa that their dreams are within reach, and it is a pledge to create a continent where no one is left behind."

Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

Source: ECA

Kenya's charm offensive to attract tourists starts in UK

Kenya's charm offensive to lure tourists from Europe, Asia, and Africa began yesterday with a first stopover in London, United Kingdom.

Stakeholders from the Kenya Tourism Federation took part in the World Travel Market (MTW) event.

John Chirchir, acting CEO of the Kenya Tourism Board (KTB), stated that the country is hosting various marketing forums and roadshows across Europe, Asia, and Africa with the aim of promoting Kenya as a preferred destination.

Additionally, KTB has announced a series of six-day roadshows set to take place in three major Chinese cities: Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, from November 8-13, in a bid to attract Chinese visitors.

Kenya received 34,638 Chinese tourists from January to August, up from 13,601 recorded in the same period in 2022, representing a growth rate of 154 percent.

"We are excited to be part of WTM London 2023, which is a significant tourism platform with great potential to drive growth for our industry. Our presence in London gives us a platform to showcase our magical experiences and convey to travellers our

preparedness to receive and host them," Chirchir said.

"The United Kingdom market has been key in our growth strategy, and we are determined to increase arrivals from this market further as we work towards achieving our target of 5.5 million arrivals by 2028. We are particularly upbeat about King Charles III's recent visit to the country because it is a huge endorsement of the destination as a safe and diverse tourism spot."

In the period between January and August this year, Kenya received 101,167 visitors from the UK, up from 83,126 arrivals in the same period last year, representing an increase of 21.7 percent.

Now in its 43rd year, the WorldTravel Market is the most influential tourism and travel event globally.

The event brings together major players in the travel industry to discuss global trends and developments within the sector.

In 2022, the event welcomed 35,000 professionals from over 184 countries, making it one of the most resourceful trade fairs for the travel trade.

Source: Capital FM

Kenya To Host African Continental Free Trade Area Pan African Payment System Headquarters

President William Ruto has highlighted the need for the easing of trade especially on payment of goods and services among African countries.

Speaking on Tuesday during the launch of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and policy development centre at Strathmore University, Ruto has said easing the trade that happens in different currencies will greatly boost intra-African trade and investments.

"Africa has continued to rank at the bottom when it comes to participating, contributing and competing in the global economy relative to other regional blocs. It accounts for only 3 percent of global trade," Ruto stated.

"Why is a continent that is larger than all the other continents and land masses combined, which is home to over a billion people and sits on all these resources, contributing only 3 percent of global trade, and only 2.84 percent of global GDP?" he added.

The head of state said that African countries should address and attend to challenges facing facilitation of cross border trade, Infrastructure and Human capital development stating that economic exploitation and political instability have hindered African countries ability to participate fully in global trade and benefit from its own resources.

"According to the African Development Bank, Africa needs to invest between 130 -170 Billion

acting Director of the Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division (GPSPD), Sweta Saxena, noted that education can be a lever on which Africa can build a new social contract because it is linked to all the SDGs.

With the impending deadline towards the SDGs, Africa is set to miss most of its SDGs targets, Ms. Saxena said, citing that some progress has been made in achieving 15 of the 17 SDGs, especially on health and education, but there has been regression on climate change, people institutions and justice institutions.

She said the only silver lining Africa has been progress on making data available but this too fell short of the mark to make informed decisions. The multiple crises of the COVID 19 pandemic, the Ukraine war and the impact of climate change have stalled progress on SDGs and this has increased poverty and unemployment on the continent.

Citing that one of three children were not at school in Africa, Ms. Saxena said this calls for a rethink on creating a new social contract that can help reap the benefits of a young population. Half of Africa's population will be below the age of 25 by 2050.

"We need to build a new social contract that can reorder and reprioritise what we want, give equal access to opportunities for all so that everyone can live to their full potential and contribute to society in a meaningful manner," said Ms. Saxena, adding that this was possible with the prudent use of limited resources and also a symbiotic relationship between government and the people.

Dollars annually in infrastructure for the next decade," Said Ruto adding that the AfCFTA will serve as a catalyst for the investments due to improved transport ,energy and digital connectivity which will significantly reduce trade costs.

Ruto noted that the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) , projected to create 2 million additional jobs and lift 30 million people out of extreme poverty by 2035, marks a significant milestone in Kenya's economic transformation journey across the African continent.

"By eliminating trade barriers, boosting intra-African trade, and promoting investment, the AfCFTA has established a conducive environment for commerce and industry to thrive. It will enable African countries to attain sustainable economic development," he stated.

The president also revealed that Kenya has accepted a request to host the headquarters of pan African payment system to support Integration of the African Continent.

"Because we are leaders in the technology space and also promoters of African continental free trade area and any institution that supports integration of the African continent we have gladly accepted to host the headquarters of the Pan African payment system in Kenya," he added.

Source: Capital FM

Planet Earth

Endeavor to enhance access to water, sanitation

BY GIRMICHEW GASHAW

Water is everything for human beings. The food we eat, the substance we drink, the cloth we dress and our day to day activities are directly or indirectly associated with water. Although water is the most abundant substance on earth, it is rarely found naturally in its pure form. Most of the time, pure water has to be created.

Access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services is a fundamental human right that is critical to improving health, human growth, and development. Access to WASH services is directly linked to the health of individuals and communities. Universal access to safe drinking water, adequate sanitation, and good hygiene practices has the potential to reduce the global disease burden.

These days, access to clean water is one of the daunting challenges for developing countries such as Ethiopia. Some parts of Ethiopia face water shortages, poor sanitation, and a lack of access to clean water sources. Ethiopia is located in Africa's Horn where drought is the leading causes of water shortage.

In Ethiopia, the 2019 Mini-EDHS report indicated that only 61% of the households in rural areas obtain drinking water from improved sources, and more than half (56%) of rural households use unimproved toilet facilities. While substantial progress has been made in increasing access to WASH services, billions of people, mostly in rural areas, still lack access to these basic services

Over the past years, droughts have affected several areas of the country, leading to ponds, wells, streams and lakes drying up or becoming extremely shallow. Many people living outside of the cities collect water from these shallow water sources, which are often contaminated with human and animal waste, worms, or disease.

During months and sometimes years of drought, disease runs rampant through small villages and towns. Frequently there is not enough water for people to bathe, leading to infections and sickness in children. Water borne illnesses, such as cholera or diarrhea, are the leading cause of death in children under five years old in Ethiopia.

In addition to illness, many Ethiopian children, especially girls, face problems with school. The others are put to work collecting water each morning and helping their families earn money.

Ethiopia is a nation full of beauty and culture. However it is being severely affected by water shortages. Fields are drying up and farmers are fighting over irrigation resources. Also, children in villages are losing out on education and instead are spending their days collecting water for their families. In the coming years, outside organizations will be of great need to help alleviate the country's water shortages.

Historically, a number of factors have affected the development and management



of water sector in Ethiopia. These issues are discussed in detail in a recent review of the water sector carried out by the Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR).

In order to address these issues, the MoWR is pursuing a three-prong sector reform agenda in the water sector with an aim to secure basis for sustainable development and management of country's water resources.

One important element of this agenda is the formulation of national water strategy. The main objective of the water strategy is to translate the national water resources management policy into action.

In other words, the national water strategy aims at providing a road map in terms of ways and means to attain the water policy objectives-with due recognition to the principles around which these objectives have been developed.

The overall goal of the national water resources management policy is: to enhance and promote all national efforts towards the efficient, equitable, and optimum utilization of the available water resources of Ethiopia for significant socio-economic development on sustainable basis. To realize this goal, the Government has spelled out a wide range of policies to achieve policy objectives.

As per the policy and objectives, the Ethiopian government devised various projects with the aim to resolve water and sanitation related problems. One is the Second Ethiopia Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Project.

The objective of the Project is to increase access to enhanced water supply and sanitation services in an operationally efficient manner in Addis Ababa and selected Secondary Cities. The first component, Sanitation and water supply services improvements in Addis Ababa will finance the construction of sanitation facilities in various settlements and socio economic situations and will seek to implement appropriate cost-effective sanitation options.

Last Monday, the ministry of water and energy said that it has been implementing a 523 million USD project to improve access to water and sanitation services in 10 cities across the country. MoWE sanitation

infrastructure lead executive officer Nuredin Mohammed told that the Ministry has been employing the second urban water supply and sanitation project to increase access to basic water supply and sanitation services.

The project also helps to improve operational efficiency of water and sanitation utilities in 10 cities. For this project, the World Bank group allotted over 460 million USD while the balance is secured from other donors.

The ministry has conducted the research that is necessary to translate the project into reality and purchased and distributed different materials to regional states. Now most of the preparation activities have been finalized and the remaining task is the construction of the treatment plant especially for sanitation centers. Now we are launching the construction.

The project would enable the ministry to expand infrastructure, strengthen capacity building and support post construction. Various projects are underway with the support of the government and development partners. They are in different levels of execution.

As part of improving the sanitation services, 1000 public toilets are under construction across the country.

He further highlighted the ministry's focus to resume water and sanitation services and infrastructure projects in Tigray State, which were severely damaged by the conflict. While the ministry purchased electro mechanical devices worth one million USD to resume the service in Mekelle. It has made a similar attempt to Adigrat.

The accomplishment of these activities would give a huge relief for residents and these two cities are part of the second urban water supply and sanitation project, beneficiary of post construction activities.

Emergency approaches such as resource mobilization, infrastructure repair and service resumption have addressed timely problems in different areas. Moreover it has been focusing on sustainable solutions in areas affected by the recurrent drought and other national challenges.

Dejene Kumela, USAID pure water supply and sanitation coordinator said that the project has given priority for 21 countries and Ethiopia is one. The project will be implemented in 10 Ethiopian cities such as Adama, Dire Dawa, Dessie, and Mekelle. These cities are chose as they are industry hubs that require huge amount of water.

Recently, the USAID has launched five year water and sanitation programme in Ethiopia. Up on completion, the project would make 500 people beneficiary. One of the strategic goals of the project is strengthening the capacity of 120 water and sanitation institutions.

In the nutshell, the resource mobilization stride should be appreciated. When they are translated in to action, with no doubt these projects will increase the number of population who can access pure water and sanitation. Keep going!

The main objective of the water strategy is to translate the national water resources management policy into action