



The Ethiopian Herald

Vol. LXXX No 051 9 NOVEMBER 2023 - TIKIMT 29, 2016

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Zooming in on media's role towards Nat'l Dialogue success

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Ministry urges citizens to combat climate change in unison

BY FIKADU BELAY

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopians ought to move in unison in the fight against the pressing problems of climate change, so urged the

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Photo - Eyob Teferi

AFLEX desirous of expanding partnership in leadership training

- Signs MoU with Chinese counterpart

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – The African Leadership Excellence Academy (AFLEX) said it is desirous of expanding partnership in local and international counterparts in leadership training, exchanging experts and conducting

See AFLEX desirous ... Page 3

Ayesha II wind power project reaches 82 % completion

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDISABABA – Ethiopian Electric Power (EEP) announced that the total construction of Ayesha II Wind farm project has reached 82% completion and installed 32 turbines.

EEP Corporate Communication Director Moges Mekonnen told The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the Ayesha II Wind power plant (Ayesha II Wind power farm project) starts generating power though the ongoing construction project.

Out of the 32 turbines installed, some 16 ones have already started generating some 40 MW of power, he said, adding the rest of the turbines will generate power upon full completion.

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Path to a thriving capital market in Ethiopia: The significance of investor perceptions, financial literacy

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How Ethiopia can benefit from win-win global diplomatic cooperation

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Ethiopia cuts importing malting barley

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia has achieved self-sufficiency in malting barley that it had been importing for years to meet the demands of the brewing industry, Industrial Parks Development Corporation (IPDC) disclosed.

Reports show that the country had been spending millions of USD to import 70 percent of the cereals required by its breweries.

Ethiopia has stopped importing barley thanks to the government's efforts that enabled the nation to become self-sufficient with adequate local products, said Fitsum Ketema, Chief of Staff and

Transformation Head of IPDC.

According to him, a malting barley producing company which operates at Bole Lemmi Industry Park has contributed to the barley production growth by supporting over 60,000 smallholder farmers to have direct access to the market.

Such market linkage is being facilitated in Debre Berhan and Jimma agro processing industries, as to Fitsum.

He added that the country is also working on market integration for the trade-off between farmers and buyers in more agricultural products.

Many industrial parks have been working

on increasing the volume and variety of their products to alleviate the effects of the termination of Ethiopia from AGOA benefits, he noted.

This increment includes agro-processing, textiles, pharmaceuticals, car assembly and other productions, Fitsum stated.

The country is also working on constructing additional industry parks and attracting foreign direct investment to create more jobs and increase foreign currency earnings, he indicated.

Ethiopia's 13 industry parks are generating millions of dollars while creating over 100,000 jobs, according to the corporation.



Ministry underlines data center's role in finance, tech. start-up

BY ASHENAFIANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – The proper deployment of the data center service ecosystem catalyzes Ethiopia's digital transformation and technology start-up, the Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MinT) said, mentioning its opportunity to the financial sector.

ICT Park in collaboration with Wingu Africa Group held a discussion yesterday under the theme "Optimizing the Opportunities of Data Center Service Ecosystem in IT Park to the Financial Sectors and Technology Start-Ups."

Speaking at the occasion, MinT Minister Belete Molla (PhD) stated that this engagement is timely and important as the country is implementing a digital transformation with infrastructure and building and accelerating its digital economy ecosystem. As part of supporting this initiative, the government has included data centers and other related digital sectors in the investment incentive regulation.

In the last three years, more than five data centers have issued investment applications to invest in the country. Belete said, "The Government has also enacted various regulations such as e-transaction, Personal Data Protection to facilitate Digital Businesses."

"The government is more committed to make the ICT Park which contributes a lot to the digital transformation of the country and to make it more convenient to the private sector working in the digital sector," he added.

The minister reaffirmed the commitment to hold improvements to optimize the ICT Park,

which has the potential to play a crucial role in Ethiopia's Digital transformation journey. "The park is well-positioned to attract and support data center service providers and other digital businesses providing access to reliable and affordable power, secure and stable operating environment among others."

Stating the data centers, which are in the pipeline to provide services at the ICT Park, he called on partners and other stakeholders to utilize them well.

Wingu Africa Group Country Director Teshome Worku for his part mentioned his company's desire to take the opportunity to use it as a playfield to communicate with the partners and customers to display its state-of-the-art facility located in 'IT Park.' The firm has been operational for the last 18 months in the special technology zone.

According to him, data centers are highly important for private financial sectors including banks to minimize high cost of infrastructural development, capital expenditure, operational cost and hard currency glitches as well.

It was also indicated that the facility is the first-of-its-kind in Ethiopia and currently operating in four East African countries.

Teshome called on relevant partners who have a stake in the digitization arena to explore the opportunities of business relations, service maximization, robust infrastructure and other networking platforms.

Financial sector actors, data center service providers, developmental partners and start-up innovators were in attendance in the event.

Ministry working to expand e-market service

• launches Digital Product system

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – Ministry of Labor and Skills (MoLS) stated that digital product system is of significantly useful in addressing various market challenges and other related matters.

Speaking at the launching ceremony held yesterday, MoLS Moferiat Kamil said that the enterprise e-market service (Lucy E-Commerce), COC automated information, and Ethiopian labor market information systems were developed and launched to realize the national ambition towards moderation.

Of the 21 systems of MoLS has been exerting to develop, three of them have been commenced after concerted effort was exerted, it was learnt.

She said: "The systems drive to realize the national digital economy. To succeed this, MoLS worked in close collaboration with stakeholders such as Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration, Artificial Intelligence, and the likes."

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Director General, Worku Gachena on his part said that the institute has created COC Automated Information estimated to be 60 million Birr.

As to him, the COC information system would bring significant impact in providing integrated



Photo: Gebabo Gebre

Moferiat Kamil

and credible information, ensuring effective supervision and inspection, combating corruption, and improving education quality.

As to him, it also helps creating responsible and productive citizens, ensuring international competitiveness, reducing limitation of shades, among others.

It was also stated that the systems will bring a paramount importance in providing adequate tangible information, supporting macro economy policy, addressing market challenge especially in small and medium scale enterprises, ensuring competitiveness, and the likes.

Zooming in on media's role towards Nat'l Dialogue success

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- Some managers of the privately owned and state-run media said their respective outlets have given considerable coverage to the National Dialogue and discharging responsibility in creating national consensus on Ethiopia's major issues.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Ahadu Television and Radio Chief Executive Officer Tibebu Belete said the outlet has been raising strong topics and addressing the public's areas of challenges that could serve as the input for National Dialogue.

Attaching extensive coverage to the National Dialogue Commission activities, *Ahadu* helps to communicate the issue at grass root level and informs its diverse audience about the need for deliberation and consultation. "The role of the media (in line with the dialogue) should be shaping public opinion that could lead to national consensus."

"Since the 1974 Revolution, Ethiopia has

been passing through rampant political and ideological antagonism that claims the lives of many intellectual citizens that would have greatly contributed to its progress. Sadly, political crises and violent disputes are still ravaging the country."

"The number of victims of political and social unrest is also surprisingly large and many people sustained physical and psychological trauma. Many others were also displaced from their homes. So, I think the National Dialogue will be a solution to the problem that triggered all these unfortunate events from its roots."

"How long will we lose lives due to the absence of peaceful mechanisms of disagreements? Hence, the national dialogue would never be an alternative; but rather a crucial step to determine Ethiopia's stability."

Fana Broadcasting Corporation (FBC) Chief Executive Officer Admasu Damtew also explained the news media's engagement in providing timely information about the National Dialogue and playing a due role

in agenda setting. "The mass media is the podium of dialogue and it is expected to facilitate the public discussions and debates on the issue.

Cognizant of the National Dialogue's importance for better Ethiopia, FBC would maintain its extensive coverage of the commission's activities in both news and program and would serve as the forum for public discussion, Admasu added.

For his part, Oromia Media Corporation General Director Gizachew Gebisa said the media should actively engage in publicizing the preliminary processes of the National Dialogue. The media's role starts with informing the public about the National Dialogue Proclamation. So, the mission of the dialogue commission would be achieved if the media discharges its responsibility.

"To produce stories and make interviews about the dialogue, media professionals are expected to have basic information on the subject. We have been broadcasting the National Dialogue with 18 domestic languages."

Ministry urges ...

Ministry of Planning and Development.

Plan International Ethiopia and Max Foundation held Climate Change Resilience Workshop on Tuesday.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Climate Change Planning and Implementation Coordination Director at the Ministry of Planning and Development, Mohammed Andoshe stated that Ethiopia is supporting such a remarkable move to promote solidarity.

He said, "The workshop has brought a diverse array of experts, researchers, and practitioners from various sectors who shared a sense of urgency and commitment to safeguarding the future and wellbeing of Ethiopia's communities together."

He further elucidated that the shared objective is to address the urgent need for resilience in the face of the ever-swelling climate crisis.

As to him, the association of experts, researchers, and practitioners from various sectors would help confidently confront the urgent challenge of climate change resilience.

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 the susceptible segments of the society such as children and women.

According to Sisay, climate change would also expose citizens to waterborne illnesses like diarrhea and malaria due to poor sanitation and contaminated water supplies, which can also result in water scarcity and limited access to clean water sources.

The developing climate change resilience and implementing effective solutions are of significantly useful in protecting the future and wellbeing of citizens, he added.

Max Foundation Head, Kokeb Birhanu on her part said that the organization would give priority to WASH and Food Nutrition Security (FNS), as well as fostering collaboration and developing workable, accessible remedies to address the rising climate issues.

She said, "We are collaborating with the regional Health Bureau, Water Bureau, and other partners to guarantee food security and sanitation in the districts which are under the frame work of Seqota declaration, particularly in the Amhara region and some Tigrayan districts."

As learnt from her, the Healthy Village Programme (HVP), an innovative five-year integrated WASH and FNS program from Plan International Ethiopia and Max Foundation Ethiopia, is dedicated to lowering stunting and fighting water- and fecal-borne diseases 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 for preserving and taking care of natural resources," she opined.

The aforesaid interviewees promised to assist in the formation of new partnerships between the public, privatized, and civil society sectors as a further indication of the pressing need for coordinated action in light of the far-reaching effects of climate change.

Ayesha II wind power project ...

A total of 48 turbines will be installed after the full completion of the project, he mentioned.

As to Moges, the project has been undertaking at a cost of 257 million USD of which 85 % is funded by Exim Bank of China while the Ethiopian government covers the rest 15%.

The project will play a significant role in maximizing power supply to the nation and helping boost investment for the Somali State, in which the constructing of the project is being undertaken, he stated.

"Although the nation planned to accomplish the Ayesha II Wind Power plant project within 18 months, the construction is delayed due to financial cause as a result of Exim Bank's failure to release money on time, but the project construction continues using EEP's fund," he noted.

The Director further stated that the completion of the project will greatly benefit the rail transport and dry port service from Djibouti to Addis Ababa.

The project will also help the nation to provide more electric power to Djibouti,

Somaliland and Somalia thereby facilitating regional integration, he added.

The Ayesha II Wind power plant is equipped with modern technology so as to stabilize power fluctuations, Moges mentioned.

He also expressed government's plan to construct more Wind power projects namely Ayesha III, Adigala, Tulu Guled, Kebri Beyah, and the likes in Somali State. It is to be recalled that Ethiopia is capable of generating 1.3 Giga Watt (GW) electric power from wind.

AFLEX desirous of expanding ...

academic research.

AFLEX signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) yesterday with its counterpart China National Academy of Governance (CNAG) to cooperate in creating efficient and effective leaders.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, AFLEX Academy Chief Zadig Abreha said that the institute has an ambition to collaborate with relevant actors in a bid to achieve its plan of making Ethiopia the land of efficient and effective leaders. "Our mission perpetuates for the entire Africa and we want to help the continent to nurture capable leaders. Through effective leaders, the vision of making a prosperous continent would be achieved within a short period of time."

According to him, the cooperation with the CNAG is instrumental to

the realization of AFLEX's ambition; mentioning the long discussion and bilateral meetings that were made to reach the final agreement. "As the CNAG is a great institution in creating efficient and effective leaders, we want to share such a successful experience."

"The agreement would take the two academies' cooperation into the next level and put us in a better position to attain the missions stipulated in our establishing regulation."

Furthermore, AFLEX needs to expand the horizon of partnership with other academies across the globe to catch the dynamics in the leadership training and other related fields, Zadig remarked.

CNAG Vice President Prof. Gong Weibin for his part said that the MoU would take the bilateral ties between the institutions

into a higher level. It is also a new chapter for exchanging experts and academic research, to cooperate in the sector and co-projects as well as conducting other activities.

"The cooperation would enable us to work together in terms of leadership development, leadership capability establishment and improvement of student training as well as policy research and consultation." "The agreement is also a key to learn more about Ethiopia and the whole Africa."

The vice president further noted that the agreement is part of the implementation of the decision made by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) and Chinese President Xi Jinping in their recent meeting in Beijing. "I hope this partnership will take our existing cooperation to a new height."

Opinion

Resolving the paradox of food security in Africa

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Africa has all the potential required to feed not only the population in the continent but also the entire world. Regrettably, the continent has remained food unsecured. What are the underlying causes for this?

The problem of food security in Africa is a complex and persistent issue that has significant social, economic, and political implications. Several factors contribute to this problem:

Africa's population is rapidly growing, and it is projected to be the world's most populous continent by 2100. This population growth places increasing pressure on food resources and makes it challenging to provide an adequate supply of food to meet the growing demand.

Food shortage is a widespread issue in several regions across Africa, with some areas experiencing higher levels of food insecurity than others. Some of the major hunger-prone areas in Africa include: parts of Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Eritrea, and Djibouti that have been prone to recurrent droughts and conflicts. These factors have led to food shortages and acute malnutrition.

Countries in the Sahel, such as Chad, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, and Senegal, often face food insecurity due to a combination of factors like erratic rainfall, desertification, and conflicts.

Ongoing conflicts and civil unrest have disrupted agriculture and led to severe food shortages and famine in South Sudan. The situation is exacerbated by displacement and limited humanitarian access.

The eastern part of the DRC, in particular, faces chronic food insecurity. Conflict and displacement in CAR have disrupted food production and access to food, making many regions of the country vulnerable to hunger. The Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria's northeastern regions has led to widespread displacement and food shortages.

Conflict, displacement, and limited humanitarian access in Kordofan, Sudan have contributed to food insecurity in these regions while economic challenges and drought have led to food shortages and hunger in Zimbabwe. Somalia and parts of Somaliland, an autonomous region in Somalia, face recurrent droughts.

In terms of agricultural production, much of Africa's agriculture is characterized by smallholder farmers who often lack access to modern farming techniques, improved seeds, and adequate infrastructure. Low agricultural productivity is a significant constraint on food security.

Plus, soil erosion, deforestation, and land degradation are common problems in many African countries. These factors reduce the available arable land and make it difficult to sustain agricultural practices.

Despite the availability of large number of river basins and other water bodies, water scarcity, access to clean and reliable water sources is among the bottlenecks for

agriculture, and many African countries face water scarcity, which hampers agricultural production and productivity

High levels of poverty and income inequality in many African countries limit people's access to food. Even when food is available, it may be too expensive for many to afford.

Political conflicts and civil wars in several African countries disrupt food production and distribution systems, leading to food insecurity for affected populations. Inadequate transportation and storage facilities hinder the efficient movement of food from farms to markets. This lack of infrastructure contributes to food waste and higher prices.

Lack of access to markets is another inhibitor to the promotion of food security in Africa. Many smallholder farmers have limited access to markets, which can result in the loss of potential income and discourage agricultural investment.

Food loss and waste is another problem that challenges the promotion of food security in Africa. A significant portion of food is lost or wasted in the supply chain, from production to consumption, exacerbating food security challenges.

Despite the above mentioned challenges, efforts to address the problem of food security in Africa include strategies indicated below but not limited to them.

Among other things, introduction of Improved Agricultural Practices by promoting sustainable and modern farming techniques, providing access to high-yield seeds, and implementing efficient irrigation systems can enhance agricultural productivity in Africa.

Undertaking Investment in Infrastructure, developing transportation and storage infrastructure can reduce food losses and ensure that surplus food can be stored and transported to areas in need.

Developing climate-resilient agricultural practices and technologies to mitigate the impacts of climate change could serve as a strategy that could help to promote food security. Furthermore, providing smallholder farmers with access to credit and financial services can enable them to invest in their farms and increase their productivity.

Implementing social safety nets, such as food assistance programs, can help vulnerable populations during times of food scarcity. Promoting education and training for farmers can improve their skills and knowledge, leading to increased agricultural productivity. In line with this, addressing political conflicts and instability is crucial to ensuring a stable environment for food production and distribution.

Efforts to improve food security in Africa require collaboration between governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. Addressing the multifaceted challenges of food security in Africa is essential to ensure a better future for the continent's growing population.

In terms of promoting food security, what can

the rest of Africa learn from the experiences so far acquired from Ethiopia? Ethiopia has made significant efforts to address food security challenges in the country by formulating food security policy and strategy has implemented several best practices to improve the availability, accessibility, and utilization of food. Some of these practical lessons could be replicated to the rest of Africa.

The key practices include that Ethiopia has implemented initiatives to modernize and transform its agriculture sector. This includes the promotion of high-yield crop varieties, improved farming practices, and the use of modern technology like tractors and irrigation systems to boost agricultural productivity.

Given Ethiopia's vulnerability to climate change and recurring droughts, the country has focused on building resilience in its agricultural systems. This includes drought-resistant crop varieties, water management practices, and early warning systems to help farmers prepare for adverse weather conditions.

Ethiopia has implemented safety net programs like the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) to provide food and cash transfers to vulnerable populations during times of food insecurity. This helps cushion the impact of food shortages on the most disadvantaged communities.

Efforts have also been made to improve market access for smallholder farmers, ensuring they have reliable routes to sell their produce. Infrastructure development, such as roads and storage facilities, is part of this strategy.

Ethiopia has taken steps to address land degradation and deforestation, which can contribute to food insecurity. Reforestation and sustainable land management practices are promoted to protect arable land.

Investments in agricultural research and extension services have led to the development and dissemination of improved farming practices, crop varieties, and pest control methods. This empowers farmers with knowledge and tools to enhance productivity.

Collaborations between the government, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector have played a crucial role in promoting food security. These partnerships can help with resource mobilization, knowledge sharing and infrastructure development.

Encouraging farmers to diversify their crops helps reduce the risk associated with overreliance on a single crop. This approach enhances dietary diversity and resilience.

Ethiopia has integrated nutrition-sensitive interventions into its food security efforts, recognizing that access to food is not enough; it must also be nutritious. These programs target malnutrition and stunting among children.

Ethiopia has established early warning systems to monitor weather conditions, crop production, and market trends. This helps predict and mitigate food shortages and

ensures timely responses.

Training and capacity-building programs for farmers and local communities are essential for long-term food security. These programs improve skills and knowledge related to sustainable farming practices and food processing.

World renowned Ethiopia's National Green Legacy Initiative (NGLI) launched by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed four years back was a major success story in which the country has so far been able to plant more than 30 billion trees across the country. It has already received global recognition as a home grown initiative with far reaching positive global implications on debunking climate change with global effects. In this national program, billions of fruit trees were planted in the form of food forests potentially contributing to food security. The NGLI is based on national mobilization conducted with locally generated fund.

Besides, Ethiopia's Yelemat Tirufat program launched by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed a year ago combines food production, diversification with a view of promoting not only food security but also producing more food that could be exported abroad.

Among other things, the Sekota Declaration is a significant policy initiative related to agriculture and food security in Ethiopia. It was made during the National Conference on Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services held in Sekota, Ethiopia, in 2009. The Sekota Declaration focused on the need to transform and improve agricultural extension and advisory services in the country.

The declaration emphasized the critical role of agriculture in Ethiopia's economy and the need to prioritize the sector for sustainable development. It called for the strengthening and improvement of agricultural extension and advisory services. These services are essential for providing farmers with knowledge, technology, and best practices to increase agricultural productivity.

The Sekota Declaration stressed the importance of adopting a farmer-centered approach, recognizing that farmers' needs and local conditions should guide the design and implementation of agricultural extension services.

Ethiopia possesses strong and well-structured institutions that in some way or another deal with food security and other overarching institutions. They include the Ministry of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Institute, and Agriculture Transformation Agency, Ethiopian Agricultural Business Corporation, Ethiopian Metrology Agency.

Import substitution on agriculture has now become a major landmark in the history of the country's agriculture. Ethiopia has now managed to produce wheat not only for local consumption but also for exporting to other countries. Import substitution on agriculture is already gaining momentum with growing exports of avocado.

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

Editorial

Outrivaling together in tourism sector

Recently, Deputy Head of the Chinese Embassy in Ethiopia said that China is committed to working with Ethiopia in the field of tourism. Indeed, Ethiopia and China have the opportunity to work together in the tourism sector. According to the Deputy Head, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of China has also identified Ethiopia as a new destination among 30 countries. This is also the clearest indication that the Chinese government has strong interest to work with the government of Ethiopia. Certainly, the Ministry has taken praiseworthy measure which plays significant roles in strengthening the relations of the nations.

Positively, as the two countries continue working in the tourism sector, global tourists particularly, many Chinese tourists will continue coming to Ethiopia. Following the introduction of the national reform, the leadership of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has given considerable attention for expanding the eco-tourism sites that can play crucial roles for the growth of the sector in different parts of the country.

Since the Chinese government established an investment-friendly environment with Ethiopia, their cooperation has been fruitful. Interestingly, the partnership is increasing to benefit the peoples from both sides.

Moreover, Ethiopia and China share more than three thousand years of ancient civilization which helps them to achieve better results as they jointly cultivate their potential resources in the tourism sector. Documents indicate that the two nations have ancient heritages that attract the attentions of researchers in the sector. And the comprehensive strategic partnership that China and Ethiopia have developed will allow them to exploit their ancient and historical heritage potential.

Chinese determination to work with Ethiopia unquestionably encourages Ethiopia to continue its endeavor to explore wider possibilities that bring about change in the tourism industry since it is endowed with high tourism potentials. The cooperation will surely maximize the mutual benefits

Furthermore, for several decades, the two countries have been enjoying positive diplomatic relations that have grown to all weather strategic partnership to maximize the benefits of the peoples of both nations. Profitably, the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership which has recently elevated into "All Weather Strategic Cooperation Partnership" will indisputably excel the growing bilateral relations. This also helps them to continue enjoying mutual understanding and support on issues of respective core interests and major concerns.

As the global tourism trade continues increasing and global economic integration and the continuous advancement of trade liberalization have flourished, the determination of the Chinese government to work with Ethiopia is a timely and proper measure. Since Ethiopia has interwoven the tourism development with the green economy, its strategy goes beyond adding vitality to local economic development; it produces significant results in reducing global warming.

In sum, Ethiopia and China have longstanding economic and diplomatic relations. The Chinese companies have been carrying huge investments that have reinforced the economic and trade cooperation besides accomplishing their corporate social responsibilities through providing humanitarian assistance. And the recent initiation the Chinese government took to work together with Ethiopia in the tourism sector is a showcase how the two countries share a common goal to achieve economic prosperity. This assuredly maximizes the achievement of both countries as they continue exploring their historical and ancient heritages.



The Ethiopian Herald

Established in 1943

Published daily except Mondays
By The Ethiopian Press Agency

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Fax. 251-011-156-98-62
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The Ethiopian Herald

Opinion

Ethiopia reclaiming AGOA membership

BY LAKACHEW ATINAFU

Ethiopia, a country nestled in the Horn of Africa, holds significant geopolitical importance due to its strategic location and rich cultural heritage. In recent times, there has been a growing interest in revitalizing diplomatic ties between Ethiopia and the United States. One crucial step towards fostering this relationship is Ethiopia's pursuit of reclaiming its membership in the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

Ethiopia's geographical location in the Horn of Africa has long been recognized as a key intersection point between Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. It serves as a gateway to the Red Sea, making it a significant maritime access point for global trade routes. Ethiopia's proximity to other strategic countries in the region, such as Djibouti and Eritrea, further enhances its geopolitical significance.

AGOA, enacted by the United States Congress in 2000, is a trade preference program that provides eligible African countries duty-free access to the American market for various goods. By reclaiming its AGOA membership, Ethiopia can gain access to the vast US consumer market, promoting its export-oriented industries and stimulating economic growth. AGOA membership also opens doors for increased foreign direct investment and technological exchanges, bolstering Ethiopia's industrial and agricultural sectors.

Reclaimed AGOA membership serves as a stepping stone for Ethiopia to strengthen its diplomatic relations with the United States. The two nations can engage in high-level dialogues, fostering cooperation on various fronts, including security, counter-terrorism, human rights, and regional stability. Collaborative efforts in these areas not only benefit Ethiopia and the US but also contribute to the overall peace and development of the Horn of Africa.

The United States has shown increasing interest in the Horn of Africa due to its geopolitical significance. The region's proximity to the Red Sea, vital international shipping lanes, and its potential as an energy hub make it a focal point for global powers. By actively engaging with Ethiopia and supporting its efforts to reclaim AGOA membership, the US can strengthen its presence in the region and advance its own geopolitical interests.

A recent study surveyed 169 firms in the textile sector to assess the impact of AGOA suspension, focusing on exports, job losses, investment, and supply chain disruptions. The study also considers how these effects vary between firms inside and outside industrial parks and examines the differences between AGOA utilizers and non-utilizers.

Ethiopia heavily relied on AGOA for its textile and apparel exports, with 50% of its 2020 exports to the US benefiting from AGOA. Following the suspension, the country risked losing its competitive edge in the US market due to reinstated tariffs. Notably, 30% of firms experienced decreased exports to the US, particularly those reliant on AGOA, who were more severely affected. AGOA-utilizing firms faced a more substantial impact, with 63% reporting a decrease in exports compared to only 13% of AGOA non-utilizers.

The impact of AGOA suspension varies between

firms situated inside and outside industrial parks (IPs). Firms within IPs tend to face higher challenges, with 63% experiencing reduced exports to the US market in 2022, compared to 61% of firms outside IPs. This distinction may be due to the complexities of supply chains and export processes within industrial parks.

Job losses have also occurred as a result of the AGOA suspension, with 16% of firms laying off workers. Female workers have been disproportionately affected, constituting a higher percentage of those laid off. AGOA-utilizing firms were more severely affected, with 39% laying off workers, while only 13% of AGOA non-utilizers reduced employment.

The impact of job losses also varies by firm location. Among firms located outside industrial parks (non-IPs), 48% indicated diversion to the domestic markets, while only 33% inside IPs chose to increase their domestic sales. This reflects the resilience of firms within industrial parks and their ability to adapt to changing circumstances, potentially due to the infrastructure and support available within these industrial zones.

In terms of investment, the study found that 24% of firms postponed or canceled investment plans due to the AGOA suspension. AGOA-utilizing firms were more likely to delay or cancel investments compared to non-utilizers. This indicates a negative impact on future growth and expansion opportunities for these firms.

Supply chain disruptions were another significant consequence of the AGOA suspension. About 38% of firms reported disruptions in their supply chains, affecting their production and export capabilities. Delays in receiving raw materials and inputs were the most common challenge faced by these firms.

To mitigate the negative effects of AGOA suspension, the study recommends a range of policy measures. These include diversifying export markets, strengthening domestic sales, improving infrastructure and logistics, enhancing competitiveness, and providing support to affected firms. It also suggests the need for policy coherence and coordination among various government agencies to ensure a comprehensive and effective response.

Reclaiming AGOA membership is crucial for Ethiopia's economic recovery and growth in the textile and apparel sector. It not only provides access to the US market but also signals a commitment to international trade and economic cooperation. By reinstating Ethiopia's AGOA eligibility, the United States can support the country's efforts to revive its export-oriented industries, create jobs, and improve livelihoods.

Furthermore, reclaiming AGOA membership would contribute to strengthening the diplomatic ties between Ethiopia and the United States. It would pave the way for increased engagement and cooperation on various regional and global issues of mutual interest, reinforcing stability and development in the Horn of Africa.

In conclusion, Ethiopia's pursuit of reclaiming AGOA membership holds significant potential for fostering economic cooperation and strengthening diplomatic ties between Ethiopia and the United States. Reinstating Ethiopia's AGOA eligibility would not only support the country's economic recovery but also contribute to regional stability and development.

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

Business & Economy

Path to a thriving capital market in Ethiopia: The significance of investor perceptions, financial literacy



Capital markets in Ethiopia: Heralding a new era

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Capital market development is crucial for developing countries like Ethiopia because it provides access to long-term financing for businesses and governments, fosters economic growth and stability, allows for diversification of risk, encourages entrepreneurship and innovation, protects investors, and promotes financial inclusion.

Through developing a well-functioning capital market, Ethiopia can benefit much by attracting domestic and foreign investments, supporting the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises, creating job opportunities, and mobilizing savings for productive investments. The capital market development also helps in reducing reliance on banking systems and promotes a more efficient allocation of resources in the economy. Moreover, a well-developed capital market can enhance transparency, accountability, and investor confidence, leading to increased investment flows and economic development.

Ethiopia has attempted to establish a capital market since 1964, but despite efforts by various stakeholders, the country has not been able to do so until recently. In 2021, the Ethiopian government enacted Proclamation No. 1248/2021, highlighting the importance of a capital market to the Ethiopian economy. Since then, the government has made significant progress towards establishing a full-fledged capital market. It has established the Capital Market Authority (CMA) and is developing the regulatory framework for the capital market.

It has also prepared a long-term capital market development roadmap and creating an enabling environment by reviewing institutional investor regulation, macro-financial policies, and tax policies. Besides, the government has held consultation

workshops with stakeholders to discuss and get feedback on the proposed directives and roadmap for establishing a full-fledged capital market. The government is also working on several protocols and other instruments critical for the operationalization of the capital markets. We know that dozens of directives are in the pipeline.

In a situation like Ethiopia where there is no history of formal and well developed stock exchange markets and where investors are new to such markets, the importance of enhancing the level of financial literacy of investors and their perceptions is a very important precondition among lots of precondition for capital market establishment. In this short essay, I would like to stress on these two issues. Investor perception and financial literacy are crucial in the initial stage of development of capital market for a number of reasons as discussed below.

First, educating investors on financial literacy related to stock exchange markets plays a crucial role in helping them understand the concept of stock markets, the associated risks, and potential benefits of such markets. It empowers investors with knowledge about investment products, market dynamics, and investment strategies. This knowledge enables them to make informed decisions and reduces the likelihood of falling prey to scams or making uninformed investment choices.

Second, building trust among investors is generally important in business and particularly a requirement for the development of new market systems such as capital market. This is because investors' perceptions are closely tied to their level of trust in the market. Without a history of capital markets, trust-building should be essential component of the process of capital market establishment. Financial literacy campaigns and investor education initiatives can help build trust by providing transparent information, explaining the benefits of investing in capital markets, and highlighting the regulatory safeguards in

place.

Third, businesses investments in general, capital markets in particular, inherently involve risks, and to be successful investors need to understand and manage these risks effectively. Financial literacy helps investors assess the risks associated with different investment options, evaluate the suitability of investments based on their risk appetite, and develop and implement risk management strategies. This knowledge help reduce the chances of making hasty investment decisions or falling victim to fraudulent schemes.

Fourth, investors' perceptions and financial literacy also play a crucial role in the development of capital markets. When investors are knowledgeable and have confidence or trust in the market, they are more likely to participate, thereby increasing market liquidity and attracting further investments. This, in turn, contributes to the growth and development of the capital market ecosystem.

Fifth, financial literacy helps investors understand their rights, responsibilities, and the available investor protection mechanisms. When investors are aware of their rights, they can actively demand transparency, accountability, and fair treatment from market participants and regulators. This encourages competition, a more investor-friendly environment and improves the overall integrity of the capital market.

Generally, to establish effective capital market in Ethiopia, it is important to prioritize investor education and enhance financial literacy initiatives. Hence, it is critical to assess the level of investors' financial literacy and trust and then design appropriate training campaigns to build investor trust and enhance their level of financial literacy. These efforts can help investors navigate the new market landscape, make informed investment decisions, and contribute to the long-term development of a robust and sustainable capital market ecosystem.

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Art & Culture

The Winner of International Emmy Award

MEKLIT WONDEWOSSEN

Art is one of the ways in which a country promotes itself internationally; a movie is one. For a country like Ethiopia that has many languages, cultures, and histories, if the sector gains attention, it will contribute to the country's economy.

Habtamu Mekonen was born and grown up in the small town of Ebanat, located in the city of Gondar, 120 kilometers from Bahir Dar and 700 kilometers from Addis Ababa. Apart from his mother, he spent his childhood traveling to different places because his elder sister was a teacher.

He lost his father when he was 10 years old. Dealing with this at a young age left him with severe psychological scars. He also says that not getting a father's love as a child is not something to be taken lightly. His father was the family's source of income, so his father's death affected not only him but also the family's economy. "Because I lost my father when I was young, it took me time to look for another role model in my life." He reminds us that apart from the value of fatherhood, a father also shows the way of life to his children. But in this, he says that he was raised by a strong and brave mother.

Habtamu and art met when he was a primary school student when a group of amateur theater clubs came to his school to perform plays. He was participating in various plays at school. However, he did not have the information that both theater and film careers are scientifically designed and taught at the university. When he was a high school student, he joined the Mini Media Club, which is said to be the birthplace of many artists and journalists, and started presenting news for various entertainment programs.

Through his school friend, he got the information that theater classes are offered at Addis Ababa University. This information opened his eyes. When he finished his 12th grade, he chose to study at Addis Ababa University. His family did not oppose the election. He remembers that it was during his stay at the university that he got to know many of Ethiopia's filmmakers. He was able to get his first knowledge about film in this department of Addis Ababa University. Professor Haile Gerima is one of the first filmmakers he met, and since the professor is originally from Gondar, he was able to instill in him the mentality that someone from a small town outside of Addis Ababa can contribute to the profession in this way. Previous filmmakers such as Dawit Tsewew and Abebe Kesila are professionals whom Habtamu takes as examples, and Professor Teshome Hailegabriel is the starting point for him to continue in film education.

When Habtamu was at university, most of his attention was on his studies. Together with other students, he actively participates



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in the projects given by the teachers. However, Habtamu wants to learn and know more about movies. The class he was studying was focused on theater, so he does various studies to help him learn about film and teaches himself about the film industry.

Habtamu says that during his time at university, he had good communication and cooperation with his friends, so using these methods to increase his knowledge has greatly benefited him to attain the level he has reached now. He doesn't believe that the information and educational opportunities he got are enough because of his passion to enter the profession. He does experiments on the knowledge he has acquired and tries to improve himself by taking lessons available on the Internet. In 2010, he graduated with the highest honors when he completed his studies in theater and literature. This has a different meaning for him.

Habtamu first tried his hand at the film

industry when he was a student in the movie "Tefetari," in which he participated as a production manager. Another time, when a production company from America was making a documentary in Addis Ababa, Habtamu got the opportunity to work as an assistant director. Through his experience in the film, he realized that he has to work hard to create as much influence as he imagines and to become a competitive professional at the international level.

When he graduated from the university with the highest rank, the first thing he asked himself was whether he is qualified to film and share history in the way he wanted. Although he wanted to stay in the film industry for the rest of his life and make an impact, he did not choose to enter the industry with insufficient knowledge and skills, so the option he presented to himself was to empower himself with better knowledge.

After graduation, Habtamu seems to have followed the example of his elder sister. He started his career as an assistant teacher at Debre Markos University. He found that place to be a source of joy, as teaching is about sharing what we know with others. When he taught at Debre Markos University as an assistant teacher for two years and eight months, he explained that it was a time when he not only taught students but also developing a niche for himself.

Habtamu joined the teaching profession shortly after graduating from the university, he says that being a young teacher is not easy, especially in higher education institutions. "Not only to my students, but also to the community working at the university, I don't seem like a teacher. But being young has given me the opportunity to improve the relationship between me and my students and to consult my students' ideas outside of school," he says.

He says that in the age of technology, knowledge is always renewed, so a teacher should constantly improve himself and do various studies to give students the knowledge they deserve.

Explaining about his experiences as a teacher, "When I entered the classroom I was assigned to teach on the first day, students were standing at the door of the classroom waiting for the teacher. They didn't notice me because they thought I'm studying with them, and I had to say that I am your teacher." He remembers.

Habtamu has reached his current position by trying different opportunities. The message he conveys to his peers is, "When we are young, our biggest potential is that we have the time and ability to educate ourselves, unlike others. Time is the most precious gift in the world, and young people can be exemplary in their careers by educating themselves on what they love. There is no shortcut. If it is necessary to study and work

hard, then life will be easier, I think." He shares his thoughts.

What sets Habtamu apart is his belief in knowledge. He always tries to qualify himself by saying that there is no knowledge that is said to be enough. After teaching at Debre Markos University for more than two years, he came to Addis Ababa University to study for his second degree in film. Habtamu says that during his stay at the university, he did not get the amount of technical knowledge he wanted. While trying other options, he was able to participate in two big international forums. One is a multi-choice talent factory that selects 60 students from Africa and provides free education opportunities in East Africa, South Africa, and West Africa.

He temporarily postponed his master's degree and made the trip to Kenya. The training opportunity provided by the company is for one year and is fully on-the-job training. He is currently taking his training in Kenya.

He also says that the film industry in Kenya and the country's film relations with other countries are better, which helped him find other opportunities. Through this opportunity, he started working on his first film, in which he participated as a writer and director.

Habtamu said that film schools in Ethiopia are not worthy of a country with a rich history and culture like Ethiopia. He says that private training institutes operate better than government-level educational institutes.

Habtamu knows that it is important to know not only about the technical knowledge of film but also about the business in the film industry. As a film reflects the culture and tradition of a country's history, he has the idea that this story should be known and sold at the world level and leave its mark on the country's economy. He recalled that the African Union's 2063 agenda to increase the economy of creative and cultural heritage and make it contribute to the country's GDP was mentioned in the plan. Ethiopia should take the experience of these countries so that the coffee and flower sector can support the economy as we are known in the world.

The second event that Habtamu attended was the Durban Film Mart, the largest annual African film market and film festival held in Durban, which allowed him to have a better knowledge of the business of the film industry. (Durban Film Mart) aims to increase the development and production of African cinema, how to run a film effectively in the business world, and the general aspects of the film business for participants to gain experience. This year, more than 200 people competed, and 30 participants were selected to participate at the exhibition. Habtamu was the only Ethiopian participating in the festival this year. *(To be continued)*

Indepth



Why Ethiopia can no longer ignore interests on the Red Sea

BY EYUEL KIFLU

The issue of the Red Sea in Ethiopia has long been placed on the back burner though the biggest nation lies a few kilometers away from the strategic location. With the Ethiopian naval force disbanded, Ethiopia has been a bystander for decades ultimately affecting its socioeconomic and political hegemony.

As nations near and abroad continue vying to have an upper hand in the area Ethiopia has been turning a blind eye to the elephant in the room. The issue remained largely unaddressed. Hosting military bases of powerful nations, the Red Sea poses both opportunities and threats to nations like Ethiopia. For many, the country can no longer ignore its interests in the sea given its internal, regional, and global dynamism.

And, recently the issue has been drawing attention in the country particularly after Prime Minister Abiy brought the issue to the fore and broke the years of state-led silence. In fact, there have been signals previously from Abiy Ahmed's administration. It is to be recalled that the country begun reorganizing a naval force and the Premier in many ways and occasions have been addressing the issue. But, it is only since recently, the call for considering the Red Sea for socioeconomic development is increasing in intensity. This is true after the Premier met lawmakers for briefings in the mammoth issue.

And, currently, with the issue gaining more traction, there appear to be solid arguments behind the matter, among which are internal economic rationales and regional situations.

Ethiopia is the fastest-growing economic

powerhouse in Africa. In this regard, the country's quest for access to the sea is both reasonable and justifiable. The country's landlocked status raises concerns about its sovereignty and maritime security in the area. The region is plagued by numerous terrorist groups and pirates. By gaining access to the Red Sea, the nation can effectively address these security threats and contribute to the overall stability of the region.

The recent speech by the Prime Minister on this issue highlights Ethiopia's desire to collaborate with neighboring countries to utilize ports and mutually benefit from this arrangement. As the Prime Minister emphasized, this collaboration would be based on the principles of give and take, focusing on shared interests. Many scholars have endorsed Ethiopia's quest, citing its potential to foster the development of a culture of mutual cooperation and strengthen economic relations among East African countries.

According to American political-economic analyst Lawrence Freeman, leaders of the Horn of Africa nations should consider discussing Ethiopia's quest for sea access, as it would contribute to the physical and economic growth of the East African region. Freeman emphasizes that access to the sea not only strengthens Ethiopia's growing import-export trade but also fosters regional development. He believes that if people understand the concept of physical economic growth, they will recognize the reasonableness and correctness of Ethiopia's aspirations. Ethiopia's possession of a Red Sea port would facilitate increased trade, benefiting the approximately 200 million people living in the Horn of Africa.

Prime Minister Abiy has suggested potential areas of cooperation, such as Ethiopian Airlines, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), and other offers for concession. Freeman acknowledges that this approach is perfectly reasonable for Ethiopia's booming economy. By putting these issues on the table, Prime Minister Abiy demonstrates statesmanship, and Freeman commends this approach.

Access to a port is crucial to accelerate Ethiopia's growth trajectory and contribute to the overall physical and economic development of the region. Freeman believes that Ethiopia will be the dominant economic growth center in the Horn of Africa, and this growth will benefit all neighboring countries. Therefore, it is natural to engage in discussions and find solutions to facilitate Ethiopia's access to the sea. Freeman is confident that this important discussion, raised by Prime Minister Abiy, will be resolved in the years to come. He also emphasizes the need for a regional economic approach, considering the presence of several ports in the Horn of Africa.

Freeman dismisses distorted media reports suggesting that Ethiopia is claiming access to the sea through the use of force. He argues that such a policy is divisive and has been detrimental to Africa for centuries.

Prime Minister Abiy recently reiterated Ethiopia's commitment to peace and development during the commemoration of the 116th National Army Day. He emphasized that the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) works tirelessly to safeguard peace and ensure the country's prosperity. The ENDF's actions align with its name, defending the nation's sovereignty rather than launching attacks

on others. Prime Minister Abiy affirms that Ethiopia is prepared for dialogue, not force, and demonstrates the country's dedication to peace and development in all its deployments across Africa.

Research indicates that the Red Sea region accounts for 12 % of global seaborne trade, 40 % of Europe's trade with Asia and the Middle East, and 8 % of seaborne hydrocarbon transportation. Moreover, it is one of the busiest waterways in the world, with an average of 47 ships crossing it each day. However, the region also faces security challenges such as state weakness, piracy, terrorism, and other issues that necessitate cooperation and joint efforts to find solutions.

Ethiopia expresses its desire to collaborate with different countries and stakeholders to address the security issues in the sea. The reestablishment of its navy aims to strengthen maritime security and protect the country's ships from terrorists and other threats. Currently, 95 % of Ethiopia's import-export activities rely on the Djibouti port, which requires protection from various threats.

In conclusion, Ethiopia's quest for access to the sea through collaboration with neighboring countries is a reasonable and justifiable aspiration. It aligns with international law and historical precedents, and it addresses the country's security concerns in the region. Ethiopia's growing economy and its potential to contribute to the physical and economic growth of the entire East African region make this quest even more significant. By engaging in dialogue and cooperation, Ethiopia aims to establish mutually beneficial relationships and strengthen regional stability and development.

Law & Politics

How Ethiopia can benefit from win-win global diplomatic cooperation

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

The practice of engaging in win-win diplomatic cooperation with both the Western and Eastern world contributes to Ethiopia's regional and global standing. By establishing strong relationships with nations across different regions, Ethiopia positions itself as a respected player in international affairs. This reputation not only allows the country to contribute to conflict resolution efforts and peacekeeping missions but also strengthens its ability to forge partnerships and alliances that further its national interests.

By engaging in diplomacy with both the Western and Eastern world, Ethiopia can harness the power of mutual benefit in political matters. By building strong alliances, the country can enhance its influence on the global stage and effectively advocate for its national interests. In addition to economic and political advantages, pursuing diplomatic cooperation with both regions also facilitates social and cultural development for Ethiopia.

While it is important to forge close ties with both the Western and Eastern world, it is equally crucial to avoid overreliance on any one region. Diversifying alliances and partnerships ensures that Ethiopia remains resilient and adaptable, reducing the risk of vulnerability to external pressures.

By forging strong ties with countries from diverse backgrounds, Ethiopia is able to foster cultural exchanges, promote intercultural dialogue, and broaden its own horizons. This exchange of ideas and perspectives enriches the cultural fabric of the nation, promotes tolerance and understanding, and contributes to the overall harmony and unity of Ethiopian society.

One of the key benefits of fostering strong relationships with the Western and Eastern world lies in the realm of economic growth. By establishing trade partnerships and alliances with countries from both regions, Ethiopia gains access to diverse markets, investment opportunities, and technological advancements. This enables the nation to diversify its economic base, reduce its dependence on specific industries or markets, and promote overall domestic prosperity and stability.

By collaborating with nations from both the Western and Eastern world, Ethiopia can pool resources, expertise, and technology to tackle pressing global challenges. Whether it is combating climate change, alleviating poverty, or promoting sustainable development, Ethiopia's engagement in these efforts showcases its commitment to being a responsible global citizen. Through active participation in diplomatic collaborations, Ethiopia opens itself up to a wide array of opportunities that can significantly contribute to its economic, political, and social progress.

A win-win approach to diplomatic cooperation with the Western world entails understanding and respecting each country's interests and concerns. Building trust and open



communication channels enable Ethiopia to effectively articulate its priorities while also considering the needs and expectations of its Western partners. Through genuine dialogue and mutual respect, Ethiopia can forge partnerships based on shared objectives paving the way for collaboration in areas such as trade, development, and security.

Pursuing win-win diplomatic cooperation with the Western and Eastern world helps shape a positive image of Ethiopia globally. By actively engaging with countries from both regions, Ethiopia exemplifies its commitment to collaboration, cooperation, and mutual respect. This portrayal enhances Ethiopia's soft power and attractiveness to potential investors, tourists, and international partners, creating opportunities for further economic growth, cultural exchange, and development.

By maintaining relationships with a diverse set of countries, Ethiopia can strategically align itself with different actors in international politics, thereby increasing its leverage in bilateral and multilateral negotiations. This positions the country to effectively advocate for its own interests and advance issues that align with its values and priorities.

Engaging cordially with both the Western and Eastern world allows Ethiopia to maintain a balanced global position. This equilibrium is crucial for safeguarding its national sovereignty and maintaining its autonomy in international affairs. By avoiding polarization and aligning with multiple regions, Ethiopia can effectively protect its interests and diversify its support base.

Diplomatic cooperation with the Western world can facilitate knowledge exchange, capacity building, and institutional strengthening. Collaborating with renowned universities and research institutions can support Ethiopia's development agenda by providing expertise and technical assistance in areas like agriculture, healthcare, education, and governance. Diplomatic collaborations can facilitate partnerships in addressing common challenges such as climate change, regional security, and humanitarian issues.

Ethiopia's pursuit of win-win diplomatic cooperation with both the Western and Eastern world holds immense potential for the country's development and safeguarding its national interests. By harnessing the

economic, political, and social benefits that come with engaging with diverse partners, Ethiopia can advance its economic growth, technological capabilities, knowledge base, and international standing.

Fostering strong relationships with both the Western and Eastern world contributes to Ethiopia's economic growth and development. Through collaborations with countries from diverse regions, Ethiopia gains access to a wide range of trade opportunities, investments, and technological advancements. By building bridges with nations from both the Western and Eastern world, Ethiopia embraces the opportunity to learn from different cultures, traditions, and perspectives.

This exchange of ideas enhances Ethiopia's cultural richness, broadens its horizons, and promotes global harmony through intercultural dialogue and cooperation. Besides, by establishing close ties with both the Western and Eastern world, Ethiopia becomes a respected player in international affairs. This reputation significantly impacts the state's ability to contribute to conflict resolution, peacekeeping efforts, and regional cooperation.

Ethiopia's active involvement in these areas strengthens its position as a responsible global citizen and enhances its overall standing in the international community.

By collaborating with both Western and Eastern nations, Ethiopia can leverage resources, expertise, and technology to address these pressing challenges collectively. This comprehensive approach ensures that Ethiopia's efforts are aligned with international objectives, optimizes resource utilization, and maximizes the impact of its interventions on a global scale. By maintaining relationships with countries from different regions, Ethiopia can strategically position itself as a valuable partner to various actors in international politics.

Managing diplomatic relationships with both the Western and Eastern world is crucial for Ethiopia to safeguard its autonomy, protect its national interests, and promote balanced cooperation. Employing a win-win approach, diversifying alliances, and investing in diplomatic training are essential elements of effective diplomatic management. By prioritizing trust, transparency, and cultural

understanding, Ethiopia can navigate the complexities of international relations and foster lasting partnerships with countries across the globe.

To achieve a fair and smooth relationship with both the Western and Eastern world, Ethiopia should prioritize open and transparent communication. Effective communication channels allow for the constructive exchange of ideas and facilitate the establishment of common ground between Ethiopia and its Western and Eastern partners.

Continuous engagement and active participation in international forums and organizations are vital for Ethiopia to promote its interests and voice its concerns on the global stage. By contributing to discussions and decision-making processes, Ethiopia can shape the international agenda and advocate for its national priorities.

Ethiopia needs to pursue a strong win-win diplomatic cooperation with both the Western and Eastern world to ensure its national interest, so stressed Scholar.

Speaking with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Political Science and International Relations Lecturer within Haramaya University, Emeru Gemechu (PhD) mentioned that the nation needs to seize opportunities that would allow it to ensure its national interest.

Building smooth relationship with the Western and Eastern world would allow the country to be free from any external influence. Hence, it is important to manage diplomatic relationship with a country in a way that it doesn't affect cooperation with the rest, he added.

"It is important to acknowledge both Western and Eastern world's contribution for nation's holistic development. As China supports developing countries in technology related aspects, the Western have their own role in provision of humanitarian assistances," Emeru said.

Owing to this fact, countries like Ethiopia need to make sure that their relationship is fair and smooth, he underlined. During the cold war, he reminded that Ethiopia had a strong and impartial approach in its relationship with the Western and Eastern World and it had safeguarded its national interest from both sides.

However, failing to apply the same approach during the Derg regime, has costed the country to counter fraying diplomatic ties with the western world, he noted. To this end, the country must draw a lesson and need to ensure that its diplomatic approach allow it to work with any country that won't affect its national interest, the expert stressed.

Each country's relation relies on keeping national interests that's why diplomats need to perform their duties by giving due emphasis on issues that do not affect rather than enhancing the Ethiopia's interest, according to Emeru. He also believed that Africa can build a relation with the rest of the world without affecting its interests.

Women in Focus

ENDC, CSO's effort to ensure inclusive national dialogue

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

Several researches have indicated that broader inclusivity in the formal peace process of civil society as well as women increases the credibility of the process and contributes to the sustainability of agreements reached.

One and a half year has already elapsed since Ethiopia has established the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) with an objective of bringing sustainable solutions to the nation's old-aged problems and mending historical discords that are testing the country for the past few years.

This commission commits itself to involve all segments of the society through representing people who take part in agenda setting as well as in the national dialogue. Women, farmers, youth, pastoralists, community leaders, marginalized segments of the society; Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are amongst the structurizations that are identified by the commission to take part in the dialogue.

Thus, the commission is expected to create conducive conditions for the national consensus through identifying the root cause of deep division and discord among the people by undertaking a national dialogue to achieve lasting peace.

ENDC has given due emphasis on making the dialogue more inclusive, participatory, credible and transparent. During an interview with The Ethiopian Herald, Commissioner Yonas Adaye (PhD) underlined that the commission not only ensures women's meaningful participation but it also prioritizes allowing them to contribute to the process in general.

Since holding inclusive and participatory national dialogue is a critical step, several activities have been carried out to embrace various members of the society where the commission holds different discussions with these structurization in more than five states and two city administrations.

It has also been providing training for civil society organizations, women organizations, political parties, religious leaders, among others so as to help the commission in expediting participant selection as well as agenda setting activities.

As to him, besides their representation



Fetelwork Mitiku



Helen Tilahun



Tsedale Kinefu

ENDC
not only ensures women's meaningful participation but it also prioritizes allowing them to contribute to the process in general

as one segment of the society, special effort has been exerted to involve more women in the identification process in which 50 people are selected from each structurization.

As one of the partners of the commission, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) mentioned that they are playing an important role for an inclusive and transparent national dialogue.

Helen Tilahun, a Lawyer and Manager of New Life Charitable Organization told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the organization has been dedicating to make the dialogue more inclusive through mobilizing persons with disabilities and others that have not been addressed.

She stated that the organization is working by giving due emphasis on discussing with community representatives as scheduled by the National Dialogue Commission.

"Ethiopia is capable of realizing the national consensus as the country has drawn valuable lessons from different countries such as Rwanda and is ready for forgiveness and close talks which help the process to be inclusive," she underscored.

By the same token, Egna Legna Youth Health Development Charitable Organization Founder and Manager, Fetlework Mitiku mentioned that her organization is working vigorously in sensitizing the society about the significance of National Dialogue in Shashemene Town.

She added that they have been able to

involve more than 200 young volunteers though much more effort is expected. Therefore, it needs to work from the high level to the lower level of the community, she added.

"There is an attitude among the majority of the society that individual's participation would not make any difference for the national dialogue," Tsedale Kinefu, Manager of New Bright Community Development Center, stressed.

She underlined that the assumption needed to be corrected adding that the organization has taken an important training from the National Dialogue Commission that helps to create awareness among the community.

Her organization along with similar charitable organizations identified youth members to assist the national dialogue commission realize its goal, as to her.

The Manager further emphasized on the need to evaluate ENDC's activities since the inception phase and drawing experience from other countries as it would allow the commission to achieve its plans.

"We will also continue working on the matter to take vital experiences about national consensus, reconciliation, and similar issues," she underlined.

Despite the fact that the role of women mostly remains invisible and undervalued in peace building processes as well as conflict prevention activities, it is vital to note that involving more women would contribute to resilient and sustainable peace for any country.

Society

Effective interventions to reaching out-of-school children

BY ELIZABETH MENGISTU

Even though the weather was cloudy and the rain continued raining with a potential to disrupt one's mood and create a feeling of distress, the graduating students were singing songs energetically and with a sense of excitement. Simply, by looking at their eyes, and watching their facial expressions, it was easy to tell how happy they were.

Let's learn, let's learn, let's learn,

If we learn, we we'll be teachers,

If we learn, we we'll be doctors,

If we learn, we'll be engineers...

The students, aged between 9-14 years old, were among the 500 students who stayed out of school for various reasons and selected from the three woredas of the Gedeo Zone, namely *Wonago*, *Yirgachiefe* and *Kochere*, in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples (SNNP) State, to attend their education.

And, the day was one of the momentous occasions for them as they have completed their non-formal education and promoted to grade four though the "Accelerated Education Program (AFP)" – a flexible, age-appropriate program devised by the government and run in an accelerated time frame, with the aim to provide access to education for disadvantaged, over-age, out-of-school children and youth.

This education program was implemented by the CARE Ethiopia and "Reach The Needy- Ethiopia, (RTN)", under the project dubbed as "She Thrives." by the former and was given for 500 students in 24 schools; of which 463 students successfully promoted to the next grade.

"In earlier years, I was off school for the reason my parents couldn't afford to send me to school. When my peers go to school, I was compelled to simply stay at home," said Martha Gezahegne, 14 years old and one of the 463 graduates.

"When school children got to school, I was watching them standing in our doorway with great interest; and I used to say to myself 'when will that day come and I will go to school. Luckily, following the opportunity I have got, I can follow my education and be promoted to the next grade, she said.

"We are provided with school materials and sanitary pads on a regular basis. My mother is also incorporated in a women's saving program arranged by the organization and is getting training. I am happy to get the opportunity to learn like my peers," she said excitedly

Tensae Mezegebu, 15, is the other student who got the chance to attend her education under the Accelerated Education Program and was promoted to the next grade.

In similar cases with Martha, she was also out of school, and spending her time by helping her mum and performing domestic chores. However, thanks to the organization, she can learn now."

Speaking on the graduation ceremony arranged for the students and held



at *Sokecha* Primary and Secondary Cycle School in *Sokecha* Kebele of *Wonago* Woreda, School's Principal Tariku Mamo said that several children from low income families though have greater interest to go to school and learn; they could not get the opportunity for various constraints.

However, with the efforts exerted by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with CARE Ethiopia and RTN to address the challenges and access education for children who are keen to learn but missed out the opportunity trapping in a cycle of poverty, it is made possible to meet the needs of students and graduate them at the Accelerated Education Program.

According to him CARE Ethiopia and RTN have contributed the lion's share in alleviating the problems that low income families' face in sending their children to school, letting students catch up with their peers and making the program a success.

These organizations by bringing children from economically deprived households from various areas in the woredas and covering the required costs, including fulfilling school materials, implementing school feeding programs, as well as giving the desired training for teachers to help children learn effectively, enabled the students to successfully finish their education and be promoted to formal education.

"The experience has given us an important lesson as it is possible to benefit and empower out of school children from low-income families by engaging them in informal education," the Principal remarked.

He also extended his heartfelt gratitude for all the actors who beamed hope of ray in the heart of the children.

"She Thrives" Project Director with CARE Ethiopia Tseday Amare on her part said: "When we grew up, we heard the saying 'children are today's flowers and tomorrow's fruits.' However, to make this notion a reality and create a productive society who contributes significantly to the community they live in and the nation, cultivating them with the needed values, knowledge and

skills and preparing them for their future is crucial."

According to her, the result that the students have gained now is the outcome of the coordinated and collaborative hands of several individuals and organizations. Thus, she extended her gratitude for all who pooled their strengths to the success of the project being at the forefront or behind the scene

Mentioning that this is the starting point for the children and there are still long ways to go, the Director urged all, parents, educators, education bureaus at all levels and pertinent bodies, to support children to extend their learning to reach their full potential.

Appreciating the efforts made in bringing out of school children to school and graduating them in AED, South Ethiopia State Civil Society Organization's Affairs Coordination Directorate Director Mamo Moliso on his part said that the endeavor should be further strengthened in a sustained manner to achieve the desired goals.

As to him, graduating these children is encouraging, but not enough. More work should be done to decrease the number of out of school students, students who are at risk of dropping out as well as those who have already quit.

"In this regard, I would like to extend my message to parents, woreda and kebele leaderships to curb the practice of keeping children out of school. The leadership should strive to cut drop outs and to send children who have never been enrolled in schools."

The government is ready to support organizations that are working to improve the lives of local people, he added.

Gedeo Zone Education Department Head Zemecha Kifle also said that following the program devised by the Ministry of Education in 2021 to reach out-of-school children in AEP and catch up with their peers, CARE Ethiopia has been implementing the program in three woredas of the Gedeo Zone, in *Wonago*, *Yirgachiefe* and *Kochere*. The organization, by enrolling

500 students, has graduated 463 students.

Education is the foundation for development and change. An educated person has the potential to change his surroundings. An educated citizen is an asset and can have a greater contribution for his community, his country and even beyond. These days several children are out of school due to various social economic problems. Especially in areas where enormous economic activities are carried out, the number of out of school students is high.

CARE Ethiopia and RTN with the aim of addressing the unsatisfied demand of children for education graduated 463 students by providing all the necessary support. This number may seem insignificant when compared to the total number of students. But it is not because bringing one student to school, shaping his future and making him lead a rewarding life is not an easy task. Generating 463 citizens who can transform the country into a better future is a demanding responsibility, the Head underlined

"In essence, the challenge encountered in realizing the program is multifaceted. Individuals at the zone and in the organizations have exerted utmost effort. I would like to thank them all," he added.

He also called on all stakeholders to work in collaboration and to generate well educated citizens that can contribute to the Zone and the nation meaningfully.

At the ceremony, students who completed their education and graduated in AEP received certificates. Likewise recognitions and awards were given to individuals and organizations that are said to have contributed to the success of the program.

The goal of the Accelerated Education Program, according to documents, is to provide learners with equivalent, certified competencies for basic education using effective teaching and learning approaches that match their level of cognitive maturity. Accelerated learning format allows students to complete courses in a shorter period of time compared to a traditional semester.