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Photo Eyob Teferi

## Premier pins hope on youth AI potential

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) has said the present generation needs to unlock their capacities

and skills in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other technologies to lay the foundation for better Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian Artificial Intelligence Institute graduated high school students

who attended the Second AI Summer Camp programs including python programming, machine learning, robotics, AI basics and Internet of Things (IoT) yesterday.

See Premier pins ... page 4

## Ethiopia reaffirms commitment to exporting more energy to neighbors

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- Ministry of Water and Energy (MoE) expressed that Ethiopia is committed to increasing energy export as the national power generation capacity is growing through time.

Ethiopia’s power export capacity is growing by 15% since the past five years so that the nation is keen to address the neighboring countries’ demand for more energy supply, so said MoE Minister, Eng. Habtamu Itefa.

Out of the 5.42 gigawatt power generation  
See Ethiopia ... page 4



Photo : Samuel Tesfaye



Yonas Ayalew (Eng.)

## Corporation eyeing Middle East construction market

• Inaugurates new training center

BY MISGANAW ASANKE

ADDIS ABABA- The Ethiopian Construction Works Corporation (ECWC) revealed to explore the Middle East construction market apart from filling the domestic

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Irrigation: A conduit to escape poverty in agrarian nations

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Ethiopia’s journey to achieve the Great Green Wall initiative

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Realizing “Digital Ethiopia” by 2025

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# News

## EOTC eyeing concerted efforts to reduce climate change challenges

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA-** Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC) called on local and international organizations to alleviate climate change challenges through environmental protection.

Governmental and non-governmental organizations should follow the suit of EOTC in the fight against climate change through expanding forestry and other environment protection activities, so said Abune Samuel, Archbishop of EOTC-Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (DICAC).

He made the above remark while attending a National Conference held on the role of EOTC's experience of forest conservation and management.

"The world is now suffering from climatic change. It needs an internationally coordinated intervention to restore the nature we endowed," he said.

Citing the holy Bible, he said that "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds."

Abune Samuel expressed that EOTC has been working on afforestation and it is now becoming the dominant center of country's indigenous plants, he expressed.

"The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church preserves forests as heritage as important part of the Church's physical appearance within and surrounding the Church. Various studies have shown that these tree species are indigenous that are not found elsewhere. Indigenous forests that have long been important to the environment in Ethiopia are found in the Church compound and surrounding," he noted.

EOTC-DICAC Peace Advocacy and Ethics Department Head, Tewaney Seifeselassie on his part said that the contribution of the Church on forestry is beyond religion.

Since climate change poses threat on earthly life, the Church's contribution can be defined as rescuing, he said.

On the occasion, development and relief agencies have appreciated EOTC's engagement in environmental protection activities.

The Church's forestation program partner Brotfür die Welt Regional Representative, Christoph Schneider commended the progress made by the Church and suggested other institutions to take same interventions.

## Association lauds *Dine for Ethiopia* projects' tourism outcome

BY MENGESHA AMARE

**ADDIS ABABA-** Projects incorporated under the 'Dine for Ethiopia' initiative namely Gorgora, Wenchi and Koysa are instrumental to build the country's image and promote its tourism potential to global visitors, Ethiopian Tour Operators Association said.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Association President Fitsum Gezahegn stated that the iconic projects, whose construction is in the final stages, would contribute greatly to enhance tourist inflow and forex earnings.

Mentioning the immense contribution of the projects to the overall economic progress of the nation, Fitsum indicated the projects are helpful in lengthening the tourists' stay and generating additional revenue. The projects also have a significant role in job creation for local youth.

Earlier, those who went to Gorgora were expected to spend the nights in Gondar, but



now they could stay in Gorgora as long as they wish since the place is well equipped with the necessary facilities and amenities.

He further noted that the destinations would avail greater opportunity to members of the local community who are engaged in the hotel, transport and tour guide activities and flourish business in nearby areas.

"We aim to capitalize on the operation of these projects as a good opportunity to introduce the association and its members for local and foreign tourists."

Despite such successes, there is a lot

to be done to enhance infrastructural setbacks including roads, electricity, and communication networks and fill the skill gap witnessed in the hospitality industry. Effective and consolidated promotion of attraction sites would also help Ethiopia to tap the sector's untapped economic potential.

Ethiopia has abundant potential for commercial and conference tourism and provides various incentives including tax holidays, access to land at competitive lease price and custom free imports of capital goods for investors in the sector.

## Service stepping up efforts to strengthen Diaspora's holistic involvement

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

**ADDIS ABABA -** The Ethiopian Diaspora Service (EDS) said that it is exerting its utmost efforts to enhance the Diasporas inclusive engagements in social, economic, political aspects through various packages.

On the consultative forum held yesterday, EDS Director-General Mohammed Idris (PhD) said that they have prepared a strategic document 'Empowered, Integrated and Protected' (EIP) to put in place in various embassies by recruiting over 250 novel Diaspora representatives to formulate global consultant board to help enhance the Diasporas participation.

He further also stated that the service discussions are undertaken to provide packages and products with a view to contributing the Diaspora communities' participation in an organized manner.

"We are undertaking various engagements to create favorable environment that meet the Diasporas interests interims of access to credit, job creation along with investors in small and medium manufacturing, house development, health sector amid agriculture through joint venture schemes among others," the director-general noted.

Having said the Diasporas involvement is showing commendable progress, the director-general remarked that the service is



Mohammed Idris (PhD)

working on promoting innovated packages and products to enhance their participation, he added.

Moreover, the forum helps us identify the challenges as an opportunity and taking the home grown reform strategies as a bridge to beef up the social, economic, political,

and diplomatic and knowledge capital to benefit themselves and the country at large, he stressed.

Lack of access to information, land provision, bureaucratic chains, skilled manpower and misinformation are the witnessed glitches impacting the sector, he emphasized.

At the forum, various regional bureau representatives have raised rounded issues on the ways how to improve the Diasporas participation in various sectors. And hence, he said that they have gained remarkable inputs for our forthcoming cores and consolidating their coordination from federal to regional levels to offer chained services.

"The service has planned to create outreach programs and awareness creation platforms for exceeding one million Diaspora and enhance women Diaspora engagements this fiscal year," he added.

Moreover, he said EDS has also planned to encourage the Diasporas participation in investment, tourism and trade sectors via their missions. Besides, about 1,600 Diasporas to engage in investment, tourism and trade and planned to offer 170 investment licenses.

It was also indicated that the service has planned to generate over 4.5 billion USD remittance and to create about 3,000 jobs in the current fiscal year.

# Editorial

## Seeing is believing

It could not be gainsaid that electricity plays quite a role in extirpating poverty as well as hitchhiking industrialization, which is a warrant for much-sought affluence that is far from a windfall.

When the boon of a hard-won affluence gained from harnessing one's potential by own effort ripples across the neighborhood, it magnifies the satisfaction that attends the return, for it serves a linchpin for common growth.

Common growth is one key ingredient for sustainable peace since development and peace cross-pollinate each other.

It is mindful of the aforementioned facts Ethiopia set out to tame its wild and prodigal river Abbay (Blue Nile) that roars past its perimeter denying Ethiopia its due benefit and leaving many Ethiopians to wallow in the quagmire of poverty.

Considerate as can be proven by its track record, it is the win-win approach Ethiopia espoused in dealing with riparian countries.

As the envisaged dam—the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD)—is actualizing, Ethiopia is selling electricity to neighboring countries even when the vagaries of inclement weather pose setbacks and necessitates minor reduction in supply. Ethiopia is always true to its words.

As the saying goes “seeing is believing” lately military attaches of different countries residing here in Addis Ababa and representatives of various countries have just paid homage to the dam to probe into the benefits that accrue from the dam to percolate down to countries in the region. The remarks they gave after the visit organized for them are in consonance with Ethiopia's adherence to its principle—taping common-resource for multipronged common growth. They underscored that GERD is symbol of Regional Integration. They stressed its instrumentality in catalyzing the region's push towards joining the ranks of well-developed nations. They read it as an emblem of national pride that proffers benefits to Ethiopia and the whole region in more ways than one. Offering badly-needed light beyond the borders of Ethiopia, as they saw it, it solidifies neighborliness among countries in the region.

After appreciating the power service being accorded to them, riparian countries' representatives that are beneficiaries of the electric supply expressed a sense of trust welling up in their hearts witnessing the smooth flow of the water downstream adducing no harm on lower riparian countries. It rather fosters economic development of Ethiopia as well as that of its environs, they noted.

Mankind has embarked on an era when climate change has turned a global threat. Hence, zeroing in on renewable energy is called for. In cognizance of this fact, Ethiopia is pursuing a Green Resilient Economy turning out standard-bearer. This is very much helpful to preserve the environment, to warrant the continuous flow of the water and to forestall silt accumulation in the dam. This handling of its water resource, also feeding other countries, has won Ethiopia appreciation by those who visited the gigantic dam.

Bootstrapping, Ethiopia is running a huge dam project that has far reaching benefits. The nation is paving the ground so that coming generations could catapult to the pinnacle of growth enjoying a strong developmental foothold. Such commendable act deserves a high five for apart from hitting the last nail on the coffin of paucity, it spurs regional clicking.

Aside from knowledge and skill transaction the dam could serve a living billboard of the foreign construction company involved in handling the lofty task.

The dam augurs the rosy future of Ethiopia in terms of prosperity.

Last but not least the dam's being a tourist attraction should be mentioned. It could serve for boat cruising and angling. It as well could serve a fish farm thereby assisting the country in food self-sufficiency.

The bottom line is Ethiopia should press ahead to efficiently use its God-bestowed wealth taking into account common growth and considerateness.

# Opinion

## Endeavoring to make Ethiopia Africa's AI giant

BY MENGESHA AMARE

In the era of science and technology when the transaction of the whole world highly relies on innovation and employing state-of-the-art know-how, fostering the accessibility of Artificial intelligence (AI), which is a wide-ranging tool enabling people to rethink how they integrate information, analyze data, and use the resulting insights to improve decision making, is an incomparable stride.

True, AI is transforming every walk of life across the globe. Ethiopia is not exceptional in this regard as it has been capitalizing on AI's application across a variety of sectors with a view to addressing issues in its development, and offering recommendations for getting the most out of the scheme protecting, of course, important human values.

As part of the national endeavor to make Ethiopia Africa's AI gargantuan, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) of late inaugurated an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Center aiming at making Ethiopia Africa's AI jumbo.

The center is strongly believed to provide the agriculture, education, health and public security sectors with AI service. The Artificial Intelligence devices have currently started delivering services in identifying breast cancer and brain tumor in the health sector, for instance.

If the country has arduously working on the area, the Artificial Intelligence Center will be a site for development of functional and problem solving technological innovations.

Unequivocally, as Artificial Intelligence can be an engine of productivity and economic growth, the government is taking great strides to balance the macro-economic environment through the introduction of technology.

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

It has been well attested that Artificial intelligence makes things possible for machines to learn from experience, adjust to new inputs and perform human-like tasks.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is the basis for mimicking human intelligence processes through the creation and application of algorithms built into a dynamic computing environment. In simple terms, AI is trying to make computers think and act like humans.

Artificial intelligence forms the basis for all computer learning and is the future of all complex decision making. Computers

are extremely efficient at calculating these combinations and permutations to arrive at the best decision.

AI reduces errors, increasing the chances of accuracy and level of precision. Intelligent machines make precise decisions based on the past information they accumulate over time, implementing specific algorithms.

Intelligent machines can make decisions faster compared to humans. You might question the machine's decisions! But as discussed earlier, it makes decisions without any emotions and biased views. This ensures result-oriented decision-making.

AI has enormous potential for creating the world a better place. Human needs will always be as important as they were in the past; it will be up to them to ensure that AI does not go out of control. The user demands have significantly risen, and not having AI tech in place will only lead to outdated technologies and business failure. This calls for the need to implement advanced technologies and AI literacy to prosper in the competition.

Ethiopia is now well capitalizing on having the first-ever Ethiopian Artificial Intelligence center shouldering the ambition stating Artificial Intelligence for All. As learned from the Artificial Intelligence Center, AI would play pivotal role in identifying the major bottlenecks in various sectors of the country and suggesting technological solutions.

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

Unequivocally, it is important for Ethiopia to draw best experiences and knowhow from highly reputable innovation like Huawei as it is a leading technology in artificial intelligence that would give the necessary support to Ethiopia in its artificial intelligence development and remarkable change aspects in the AI arena.

If the country ids to bring about real change and meaningful technological intervention, it must think of its all rounded artificial intelligence engineers who are eager to learn from renowned innovations such as Huawei Cloud Business platform via utilizing the resources at hand in a bid to foster fast development of artificial intelligence thereby making real difference in all aspects. Such eagerness to draw indispensable know how help the nation have what are the viable means to integrate the market models in the area and cooperate with various globally renewed companies and innovation centers.

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



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# News

## Ethiopia needs to pursue diplomatic efforts in accessing sea ports

ADDIS ABABA /ENA/- Scholars stressed the need for the government of Ethiopia to pursue its diplomatic efforts and dialogues to enable the country have access to ports in a mutually beneficial manner.

In his recent presentation to members of the parliament regarding Ethiopia's quest for access to sea port, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed underscored on the need to discuss on the issue of access to sea ports.

Given geographical, historical, economic backgrounds, Ethiopia has the right to have access to sea through peaceful means.

A senior instructor on international history at Hawassa University Ababu Aligaz said sea ports that had originally been used by pervious rulers of the country has regrettably and sadly been taken away by a major historical error causing the disclosure of the issue that was toned down for decades.

In spite of the fact that there were various



challenges across the red sea, such situations did not prevent the country from using the ports. He noted that Ethiopia was effectively utilizing the ports of Berbera, Zeila, Assab and Massawa and other alternatives to link up with the rest of the world through trade

and other spheres of relations.

The scholar noted that there are historical and legal justifications that provide for ownership and access to ports. He mentioned that there is a need to rectify the historical error in a peaceful manner and current efforts to raise the issue need to continue in a more vigorous manner.

He also underscored that the entire public, scholars and politicians need to raise the awareness of the youth on the matter and help them to come to a common national consensus on the topic.

A former instructor of international law at Mizan Tepi University and currently engaged on other duties, Tadesse Aybera said for his part that Ethiopia needs to further enhance ongoing efforts on her historical and legal rights to have access to the sea ports.

He added that the government should continue

to pursue its diplomatic efforts and dialogues to enable the country to have access to ports in a mutually beneficial manner.

Tadesse further noted that the government is obliged to ensure justice based benefits for citizens by utilizing the provisions of international law and creation of a spirit of fraternity and cooperation to ensure peaceful development in the region.

He also underscored on the need to conduct deeper and wider level of consciousness to ensure common understanding on the issue of access to ports.

Instructor of political science and international relations at Wachemo University, Mululem Hailemariam underlined that Ethiopia needs to work in cooperation with all international partners to resolve the issue of access to ports on the basis on international law and the principles of give and take.

### Ethiopia generates...

that the country has reached the total production of 404 MW electric power from Wind power.

He noted that many citizens are getting electricity from the wind power plants that have been built so far.

Accordingly, the combined generating capacity of Ashegoda, Adama I and II, and Aysha II wind power plants has reached 404 megawatts, he added.

A feasibility study has been completed for the construction of 18 wind power projects with a capacity to generate 2,700 megawatts, the Director expressed.

Moges added that, Gode, Kabribeyah, Tulu Guled and Adigala are among the places where the planned projects will be carried out.

He stated that Ethiopia is paying special attention to the development of renewable energy, so that

the natural resources are being utilized with new technologies using wind energy.

Encouraged by the already attained results in renewable energy exploitation, the government is exerting extra efforts to generate more power this fiscal year, Moges mentioned.

Wind power is more reliable and cost-effective than hydro-power generation since the water level of dams decreases during dry seasons, he noted.

Moges said that generating adequate power enables the country to witness sustainable economic growth while getting its citizens out of poverty and darkness.

According to him, Ethiopia has the capacity to produce energy up to 1.3 gigawatts from wind, 45,000 MW from hydropower and 10,000 MW from geothermal.

### Ethiopia reaffirms...

capacity that the nation has achieved last fiscal year, about 1.7 Gigawatt hours has been exported to neighboring countries, the Minister stated.

Mentioning the effect of the recent drought that happened in Ethiopia and across the region, Eng. Habtamu said "We have been working hard to maintain the water level in our reservoirs so that the power generation could not be reduced."

He also remarked, "If we see the 2018-2019 export capacity, it was almost one million kWh. Nothing had happened to our export capacity. Kenya, Djibouti, and Sudan are getting the maximum interest of what they have been asking for."

He further said that Ethiopia is one of countries having higher potential of electric generation especially in hydroelectric, geothermal and wind power.

In addition to the current demand for more power supply, neighboring countries namely Sudan, Kenya, and Djibouti have been benefiting from Ethiopia's power export, he indicated.

"The availability of adequate water potential for generation makes us much better than other parts of our region. The topography that we are located is also suitable to generate

hydropower and to connect with our neighboring countries. Moreover, we have invested on electrical wiring connecting Ethiopia with Kenya, Djibouti and Sudan to create accessibility," the Minister noted.

According to him, the Abbay Dam is also generating more power and it is another opportunity for neighboring countries.

The minister also called up on developmental partners and neighboring countries to consider Ethiopia's plan and to support ongoing progresses carried out on power generation development works.

Responding to the claim circulated by some media about Kenya's request for more energy supply, the Minister said Ethiopia is committed to providing more power.

"We are also working upon that. We agreed that they need more and we also have already huge investment that will allow exporting power to Kenya. Initially, it was their demand to cut import [from Ethiopia] by 50%. Now, they are demanding for more. Our capacity is also efficient and enough to export more," he said.

The country is utilizing its abundant energy resources so that it continues supplying power to its neighbors, Eng. Habtamu added.

### Premier Pins...

Speaking at the occasion, Premier Abiy stated that the hope of future Ethiopia relies on the current generation and urged the youth to shun distorted rhetoric and transform their country to prosperity and holistic development. "Since AI is suitable for every sector, the youth should develop their ideas to excel in skill and knowledge to realize Ethiopia's growth."

"In order to build Ethiopia's future in a solid base, the youth should utilize AI for good purposes," he said, advising them to focus on education and other career building activities. The focus should be shaping and building the present generation in good discipline and nurturing them to productive citizens helping the progress of their country. "The youth have the capacity to change Ethiopia for

good."

"You started the AI training at the right time and your accomplishment is promising. In the future, the discipline has the capacity to lead everything in the world. Expanding the technology's penetration would foster the overall development of Ethiopia."

According to the PM, the young are responsible for the future of Ethiopia in acquiring key problem solving knowledge. "I surprised by the capabilities of the children who attended the second annual AI summer camp. I have full confidence that the youth have the capability to transform Ethiopia."

The Ethiopian Artificial Intelligence Institute has developed different supportive applications and has made promising tasks so far, Abiy remarked.

### Corporation eyeing...

construction gaps.

The corporation inaugurated a construction professional's development institute and displayed a photo exhibition in partnership with the Ethiopian Press Agency in its premises.

Speaking at the occasion, ECWC CEO Yonas Ayalew (Eng.) stated that the corporation has the plan to explore the Middle East huge market for the real estate

development and to become competitive globally.

The CEO further noted that the new center is instrumental to nurture skilled and competent construction professional providing up-to-date training. "We are also working to substitute imported construction materials including pipes, HD construction and plastics locally."

The corporation has been involved in

the design and construction of essential infrastructure including bridges, houses and roads across the country. The institute has been employing digitization information technologies to modernize activities and equip the capacity of its professionals, Yonas remarked.

Board Chairperson of the Corporation Aisha Mohammed (Eng), on her part said that the company is discharging a commendable role in creating the modern

construction industry. It has also made significant progress in executing projects with different size and complexity with allotted time and budget.

Aisha, Minister of Irrigation and Lowland Areas Development expressed optimism that ECWC would be a center of excellence in the construction industry by formulating international experiences and implementing modern technologies.

# Opinion

## The cost of being Land-Locked: Terrestrial access to Red Sea is inevitable

BY MEKONNEN SOLOMON

(Horticulture - export coordinator, MoA)

It is not infrequent where people used to speak laud as “construction of road infrastructure, building of integrated rail terminal, placement of cool wagon, construction of large warehouse and container depot would reduce the cost of being landlocked and logistics bottleneck”. The Cool Port Addis is the case in point, it is a green logistics Hub funded by Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2021) in Mojo Dry Port, identified as a key solution to a number perishable logistics and trade glitches.

Despite the importance of constructing cool chain facility in dry port is vital, recent study (Gael Rogaland, 2007); reveals that condition of roads and related structure are not the main reason for low participation in global world trade. Infrastructure improvements that have been built far away from seacoast, like Cool Port Addis, alone won't solve the foreign trade and logistics problem. According to this study most important problem lies on terrestrial access to sea and how to get goods out of it.

In Ethiopia, export of perishable horticultural product has been considered as the most important driver of economic growth. According to recent estimate, annually, the small holder farmers produce and provide nearly an average of 830,000 tones, 753,000 tones of marketable surplus of vegetables and fruits crops respectively (CSA, 2014). However, less than 12% of it is supplied to global market due to limited access to sea.

Out of the total volume horticultural products exported in 2022/2023 only 96% (17,000 tones) are exported to neighboring countries (to Djibouti and Somalia) through inland transport system. The current dependency of perishable horticultural export to Djibouti and Somalia market is not due to the fact that the making trade with these neighboring countries is much more profitable than other countries but it is due to lack of access to other potential market through any other or cheap alternative transport means.

Despite its importance, the total trade turnover with these neighboring counties (Djibouti and Somalia) in fruits and vegetables sector did not exceed 100 million USD per annum. The demand for fruits and vegetables of other neighboring counties like Kenya, Sudan and south Sudan are very limited. Thus the only options to gain access to other regional market require either air transport or sea transport

Indeed, the Ethiopia Air Lines has good Cargo Freighters to transport agricultural



products to potential market across the globe (4 Boing 737 Freighter with air Craft capacity of 20 tone, 2 Boing 767 Freighter with air Craft capacity of 45-50 tone, 10 Boing 777 Freighter with air Craft capacity of 95 tone). But due to its limited capacity of Air Craft to load bulk volume of perishable products, like sailing ship, and high tariff rate (the \$1,69–1,76/kg) limit the opportunity to use Air Transport as cost effect and sustainable means transport for the time to come, except for limited and high value crops like flowers.

To date Port of Djibouti is becoming Ethiopia's main gateway to access global trade after the 1998. About 96 percent of the country's main bulk export and import has been shipped through this port, which has well-functioning transport facilities. The port was connected by 869 km road to Addis Ababa. Port of Djibouti have been constructed and reconstructed for many decades.

Despite this, the cost of using Djibouti port is becoming more expensive overtime. According to recent survey (Eminat Assefa.2016) Ethiopia consume around 16% of its foreign trade value for port transit cost in Djibouti. The country also spends nearly 2 million USD per day for transit cost and pays more than 1.5 to 2 billion Dollars to Djibouti as port fees. Hence, Ethiopian trade flow is subjected to huge emolument for using Djibouti's sea port. This high costs continue to be greatest impediment to the countries' trade

competitiveness, equitable access, global markets and overall welfare of people

Being land Locked has becoming a penalty for many countries like Ethiopia. In costal countries like Kenya the number of shipping lines offering sea freight has increased since 2020 and journey times are now below 30 days. The Port of Mombasa has become a crucial landing point for goods, and links to the Northern Corridor that runs west across the country to the neighboring countries markets of Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Good results for sea freight shipment are seen for avocados, pineapples and flowers (specifically- carnations, roses, chrysanthemums and summer flowers). The primary fresh product shipped by sea from Kenya has significantly grown avocados (representing around (9,000 containers per year). This represents an import value in the Netherlands of € 66.2 million and based on the plan and will increase 25% over the 10 years. The shipment of flowers by sea is steadily increasing but was still only around 200 containers in 2020.

As stated on government official document, it is time for Ethiopia to work out its right to build and exploit the potential ports, ensure access to the Red Sea, as well as the Eden and Gulf Peninsula regions, and exercise its right to port development and utilization.

The Horn of Africa and the Red Sea

region has become a magnet to super powers competing for their geopolitical, geo-economic, and geostrategic interests, according to the document. Therefore, Ethiopia should engage with other nations in the area to ensure its access to the ports and be able to overcome geostrategic impediments in this respect, the draft document noted, before such actions start to impede the development of the region.

Preservation of the country's territorial integrity, enhancing regional influence, promoting peace and security, effectively advancing Ethiopia's interests in the Red Sea and Gulf Peninsula area, and fostering pan-African development alleged to be the government priority.

Establishing principled bilateral and multilateral relationships, ensuring access to ports, and maximizing the utilization of untapped natural resources, are also listed as priorities.

Considering its proximity to the Red Sea, coupled with its growing population and economy, Ethiopia should promote its security, geopolitical, and economic interests in the Red Sea.

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

# Business & Economy

## Irrigation: A conduit to escape poverty in agrarian nations

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Ethiopia, a country heavily reliant on agriculture for its social and economic development, has recognized the importance of irrigation in improving productivity and addressing vulnerability to drought. While the majority of the population is engaged in agriculture, the sector, especially in dry land areas, has remained underdeveloped. To mitigate the impact of recurrent droughts, the Ethiopian government has prioritized irrigation development as a key strategy in its overall development agenda.

Despite being considered the “water tower of Africa,” only a small percentage—around five percent of Ethiopia’s land is currently irrigated. The decision of smallholder farmers to participate in irrigation farming is influenced by factors such as demographic, socioeconomic, and institutional characteristics. To promote the adoption of irrigation practices, concerted efforts are required from household heads, the government of Ethiopia, and national and international organizations.

Historically, irrigation practices have been in use in Ethiopia, with modern irrigation introduced in the Rift Valley basin in the 1950s for commercial crop production. The government, along with donors and NGOs, has been investing in the development of irrigation systems, particularly small-scale irrigation. However, the contribution of irrigation to the national economy is still not significant compared to rain-fed agriculture.

There is a need for detailed studies on water potentials and developmental perspectives in the Ethiopian context, with agreed-upon reports and consensus. Efficient water use is crucial for irrigation to play a significant role in enhancing food security and economic development. The Ministry of Irrigation and Lowlands Areas Development in Ethiopia has recognized the positive impact of small-scale irrigation schemes on the livelihoods and incomes of pastoralists and semi-pastoralists. These schemes, led primarily by smallholder farmers themselves, have proven instrumental in ensuring food security in regions prone to severe and recurrent droughts.

Compared to large-scale irrigation projects, small-scale irrigation has the potential to more swiftly contribute to national development objectives. Ethiopia has substantial potential for expanding small-scale irrigation and has made significant investments in this sector in recent years. In collaboration with federal and regional governments, the Ministry of Irrigation and Lowland Areas Development has distributed a significant number of water pumps to farmers, facilitating small and medium-sized irrigation farms.

Regional governments, in partnership with the federal government, are undertaking various projects to expand small and medium-sized irrigation farms, including cultivating streams and exploiting underground water sources. Given the reliance of the agriculture sector on rainfall and its vulnerability to climate variations,



*Irrigated fodder crops help Ethiopian women improve dairy value chain*

the focus on developing irrigation farms should continue.

The Oromia Regional State, for instance, is currently constructing medium and small-scale irrigation dams with an investment of over 13 billion Birr. President Shimelis Abdissa of the region highlighted the increasing number of farmers irrigating wheat using water pumps distributed to them. The region has plans to irrigate one million hectares of wheat during the next dry season, aiming to free the region from uncertainties caused by climate change. Additionally, the region aims to cultivate four million hectares of land through irrigation over the next four years.

Ethiopia’s dry season irrigated wheat farming has attracted the attention of various international organizations, such as the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center. The country aims to increase its wheat production to become self-sufficient, reducing its reliance on imports. Mechanization plays a crucial role in improving productivity, precision, and reducing labor force requirements. Collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and other partners is ongoing to enhance wheat production through good agronomic practices.

Expanding irrigation schemes, particularly small-scale irrigation, is essential for improving agricultural production, assets, income, and livelihoods in Ethiopia. It is considered a basis for stimulating economic growth, reducing poverty and transforming subsistence agriculture. By maximizing production and productivity and creating employment opportunities, small-scale irrigation contributes to food security, poverty reduction, and rural development in the country. Continued investment and collaboration between the government, stakeholders, and international organizations will be key to unlocking the full potential of irrigation in Ethiopia and other agrarian nations.

As Ethiopia strives to enhance its irrigation schemes and harness the potential of its agricultural sector, there are valuable lessons to be learned from successful irrigation practices around the world. Drawing inspiration from other countries’

experiences can help Ethiopia optimize its irrigation strategies, overcome challenges, and ensure sustainable and efficient water use. Here are some key takeaways that Ethiopia can consider in its journey towards developing effective irrigation schemes.

Countries like Israel and the Netherlands have demonstrated the importance of integrated water management in maximizing irrigation efficiency. Ethiopia can learn from their comprehensive approaches, which include water recycling, precision irrigation techniques, and the use of advanced technologies. By adopting integrated water management practices, Ethiopia can optimize water usage, minimize wastage, and improve overall irrigation effectiveness.

India’s experience in promoting farmer participation and ownership in irrigation schemes can serve as an inspiration to Ethiopia. Implementing participatory approaches, such as farmer-led irrigation management committees, can enhance accountability, ensure proper maintenance of irrigation infrastructure, and foster a sense of ownership among farmers. This involvement can lead to increased productivity, sustainability, and long-term success of irrigation schemes.

Countries facing similar arid or semi-arid conditions, such as Australia and parts of the United States, have employed advanced irrigation techniques like drip irrigation and micro-sprinklers. These methods deliver water directly to plant roots, minimizing water loss through evaporation and improving water use efficiency. Ethiopia can explore the adoption of these techniques, tailored to its specific agricultural landscape and crop requirements, to optimize water usage and increase agricultural productivity.

Ethiopia can learn from countries like India and China, which have successfully implemented watershed management and rainwater harvesting practices. By conserving and storing rainwater, Ethiopia can supplement irrigation water resources, particularly during dry seasons. Watershed management measures, such as forestation, soil conservation, and contour farming, can help retain water and prevent soil erosion, thereby improving water availability for irrigation purposes.

Brazil’s experience in fostering public-private partnerships (PPPs) for irrigation development can provide valuable insights for Ethiopia. Collaborations between the government, private sector, and farmers’ cooperatives can bring in expertise, investment, and technological advancements, leading to the successful implementation of large-scale irrigation projects. PPPs can also contribute to sustainable financing models, long-term maintenance, and the equitable distribution of benefits from irrigation schemes.

Given the challenges posed by climate change, Ethiopia can draw lessons from countries like Australia and Spain, which have developed climate-resilient irrigation systems. Adoption of climate-smart irrigation practices, such as weather forecasting, soil moisture monitoring, and adaptive management strategies, can help Ethiopia mitigate the impacts of climate variability and ensure the long-term sustainability of its irrigation schemes.

Ethiopia can benefit from engaging in knowledge-sharing platforms and capacity-building initiatives with international organizations and countries that have excelled in irrigation development. Collaborating with institutions such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) can provide access to technical expertise, best practices, research findings, and training programs that are tailored to Ethiopia’s specific needs.

By learning from successful irrigation practices worldwide, Ethiopia can refine its approach to irrigation scheme development and overcome challenges more effectively. Integrated water management, farmer participation, efficient irrigation techniques, watershed management, public-private partnerships, climate resilience, and knowledge sharing are crucial aspects that Ethiopia can prioritize in its journey towards sustainable and impactful irrigation systems. By leveraging these insights, Ethiopia can unlock the full potential of its agricultural sector, enhance food security, and drive economic development for the benefit of its people and the nation as a whole.

# Planet Earth

## Ethiopia's journey to achieve the Great Green Wall initiative

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Africa, one of the continents most impacted by land degradation processes and effects as well as the decline in living standards of communities, is especially vulnerable to the threat posed by desertification. This is especially true in the CEN-SAD (Community of Sahel-Saharan States) region, where the climate ranges from hyper-arid to dry sub-humid.

The economies of the nations in this sub-region rely largely on the resources of soil, water, and vegetation, all of which are becoming more and more vulnerable as a result of the rising strain placed on them. In addition, the CEN-SAD countries have had chronic rainfall deficits for several decades. This has resulted in an isohyets migration southward in the Sahelian countries and a northward migration in the northern Sahara.

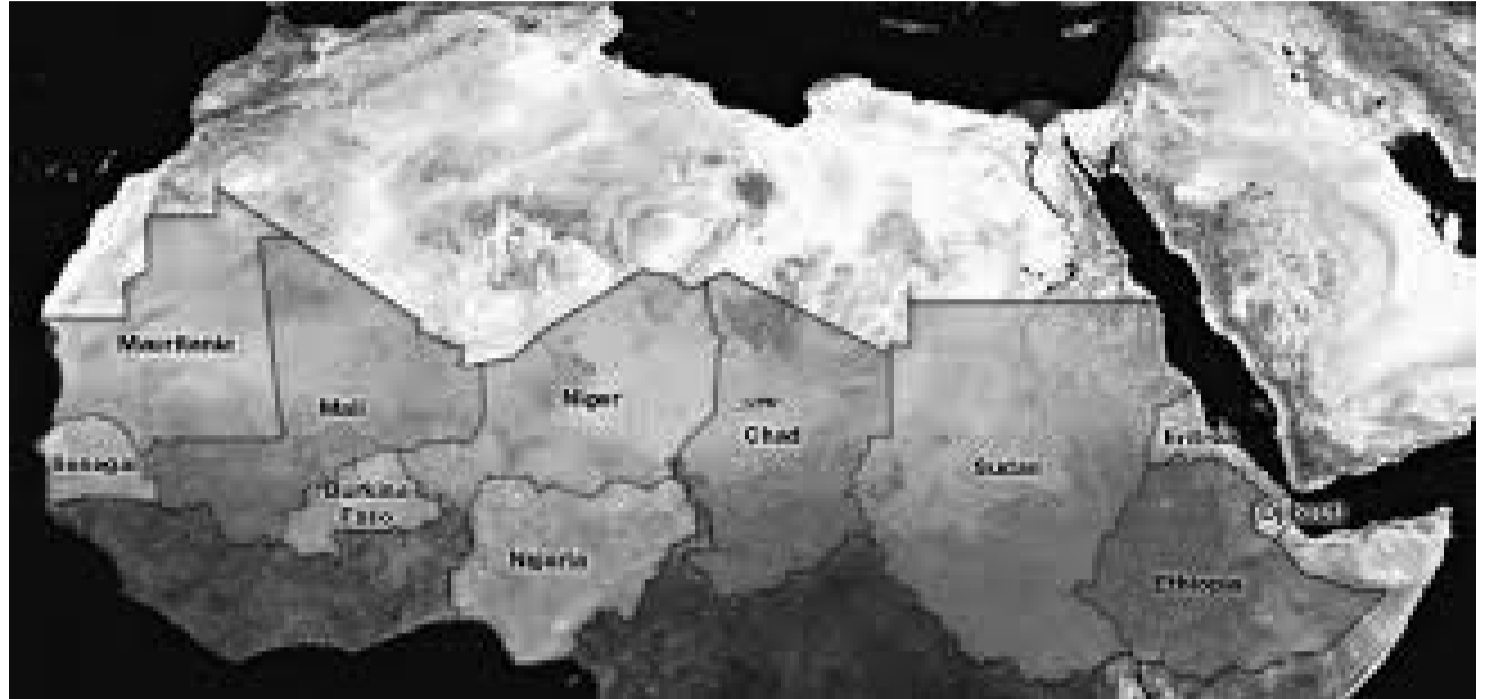
The main ecological balances have been impacted by drought in conjunction with human-induced factors (such as monocropping, bushfires, a lack or shortage of manure, and overgrazing). This has resulted in the degradation of natural resources and soils, as well as a decline in agricultural production, all of which are signs that a process of desertification is underway.

Sociologically speaking, population growth and the decline in agricultural productivity have put communities' ability to improve their standard of living in jeopardy. This, along with the absence of viable alternatives and fundamental social and economic infrastructure, accounts for the continuation and worsening of poverty in rural areas. When it comes to addressing the extreme poverty that exists in some areas, the majority of so-called local development projects and programs prioritize economic solutions like infrastructure or other income-generating activities, often ignoring the ecological factors that are essential to the conservation of natural resources in a sustainable manner.

Taking these issues into consideration, the African Union (AU) launched the Great Green Wall, or Great Green Wall of the Sahara and the Sahel initiative, to combat desertification in the Sahel region and halt the expansion of the Sahara Desert by planting a wall of trees stretching from Djibouti, Djibouti, to Dakar, Senegal.

The initiative is planned to be completed by 2030. By the end of this decade, the initiative hopes to create 10 million jobs, rehabilitate 100 million hectares (247 million acres) of degraded land, and sequester 250 million metric tons of carbon to fight climate change. Along with providing jobs and environmental benefits to over 200 million people living in the affected region, more than 20 African countries have teamed up with several international organizations, research institutes, civil society, and grassroots groups to build the wall and stop the Sahel from becoming more arid.

The "Great Green Wall" is also an initiative aimed at increasing the area of arable land



**As part of the initiative, the country is promoting sustainable land management techniques and implementing several afforestation and reforestation schemes**

in the Sahel, the region that borders the Sahara Desert in Africa. Eleven countries are funding initiatives ranging from sustainable development to agroforestry. To stop soil degradation and bring back indigenous plant life to the region, eleven Sahel-Saharan nations—Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, Chad, Niger, Nigeria, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, and Senegal—joined together.

Land degradation is often caused by both human and environmental forces. The most prevalent causes include overfarming, overgrazing, climate change, and harsh weather. Land degradation, in addition to negatively impacting land and the natural environment, poses major concerns for agricultural productivity, food security, and quality of life. Nowhere is this problem more pressing than in Sub-Saharan Africa,

where an estimated 500 million people live on desertified soil, the most severe type of land degradation.

Ethiopia is a country in Africa that has been severely hit by the consequences of climate change. As a result, the country has not only taken measures to mitigate the effects of climate change, but it has also demonstrated its commitment by establishing a National Coalition for accelerating the Implementation of the Great Green Wall Initiative.

Ethiopia, as one of the initiative's main countries, plays an important part in the Great Green Wall Initiative. It has been actively involved in tree-planting operations and land restoration activities in the Sahel region to battle desertification and land degradation.

As part of the initiative, the country is promoting sustainable land management techniques and implementing several afforestation and reforestation schemes. Additionally, to include local communities in the preservation and repair of degraded land, the nation has been working on creating community-based natural resource management techniques.

Ethiopia has also been working with donors, international organizations, and other African nations to exchange best practices, information, and resources to successfully execute the Great Green Wall Initiative. Its investment in the project is indicative of its commitment to tackling environmental issues, encouraging sustainable growth, and supporting the initiative's overarching objectives.

More importantly, the country announced this week the formation of a national coalition to hasten the implementation of the Great Green Wall Initiative, which aims to repair degraded areas across the continent. Ethiopia complements this African-led initiative since it aims to restore the continent's 100 million hectares of currently damaged land, sequester 250 million tons of carbon, and generate 10 million green employments by 2030 by planting 8,000 kilometers of forests across the Sahel region.

Ethiopian Forest Development Deputy Director-General Motuma Tolera said that Ethiopia, as one of the 11 founding countries of the initiative, is implementing the initiative in 58 districts located in the Amhara, Tigray, and Afar regions. Additionally, the country formed a national coalition to hasten the initiative's implementation. The coalition of key stakeholders is charged with generating resources for the initiative's implementation in Ethiopia by establishing a coordinated work framework.

The coalition includes federal and regional leaders and institutions, as well as foreign organizations and development partners. According to him, Ethiopia has been carrying out an initiative to restore 13 million hectares of damaged land for a variety of reasons.

The country has been adopting numerous initiatives to mitigate the effects of climate change, including the Green Legacy Initiative, and the Great Green Wall initiative is consistent with Ethiopia's ongoing national efforts in this area. He urged international partners to provide Ethiopia with the required assistance in carrying out the plan.

African Union Great Green Wall Initiative coordinator, Elvis Pol said the initiative is instrumental in sustainably mitigating the challenges of climate changes in the continent. He also added that Ethiopia's ongoing efforts to restore degraded lands via green legacy and other initiatives are exemplary to other countries in Africa. Hence, he pledged AU's continued support to Ethiopia in its endeavors to successfully implement the Great Green Wall Initiative.

Indeed, Ethiopia has demonstrated its passion and commitment to the Great Green Wall Initiative by launching the Green Legacy Initiative in 2019. The country handles environmental issues, supports sustainable development, and contributes to the initiative's overall goals. As a result, the AU and other development partners should assist Ethiopia in strengthening its commitment to the successful execution of the Great Green Wall Initiative.

# Art & Culture

## Why is African arts market so lucrative?

### Reclaiming Africa's past

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

According to recent reports, the online market in African art is increasingly attracting the growing attention of genuine art lovers as well as shady art dealers and consumers worldwide and this has created lucrative opportunities for the art market to resort to legal and illegal channels to acquire Africa's rare artistic objects while museums and art collectors are losing to the art predators who are out to destroy the continent's historic art relics while lining their pockets with ill-gotten bounties.

To begin with, what is African art? Answering this question will certainly establish the factor or factors that determine the high market value of African art in the contemporary global online market in particular. According to one explanation, "What is considered African art is the visual arts of native Africa, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, including such media as sculpture, painting, pottery, rock art, textiles, masks, personal decoration and jewelry."

According to another opinion, or definition, black African art refers to, "the visual art created by people of African descent, primarily those who are from or have ancestral ties to the African continent. This type of art encompasses a wide range of styles, materials, and techniques reflecting the diversity of the African continent and its Diaspora."

Why is African art has now become so expensive or valuable? In other words, what is the most important factor that determines African arts value in the global market? According to one view, "The rarity and desirability of African artifacts have significant impact on their market value. According to art advisors, the rarity of an object is generally the most important crucial factor in determining its value. A rare piece of African art is more likely to retain its market value or even be appreciated over time."

The uniqueness of African art is also another dimension that contributes to its high value. "What makes African art unique? The art is a special representation of nature and its various forms. It also focused on being abstract rather than realistic. A lot of various complex methods interpreted animals, plants and even the divine." No traditional life as other art celebrates the spiritual dimensions of African traditional life as do its celebrated masks. No culture has dealt with the spiritual realm of African spiritual being as much as African art that represents the inner dimension of African people as traditional abstract art has done.

The above is a general definition of how the market values of arts are shaped. However, in the Western world, what determines the value of art is not necessarily its rarity but its departure from established norms of excellence or its capacity to break new territories in the quality of art production. Picasso has become the most important artist in the world not because his canvasses were rarities but because he invented a style of painting known as Cubism which is defined as, "a revolutionary new approach in representing reality and invented in around



1907-08 by artists Picasso and Braque."

It may be useful to point here at Africa's artistic influence in Europe in the period known as modernism with cubism at the center. According to the blog page called, "The Collector", African art has inspired European cubism and not vice versa. In a recent article entitled "African Art: the First Form of Cubism", the blog page carries the following tribute to African art with the following words. "Picasso and Braque may have pioneered one of the most radical avant-garde movements in Europe during the early 20th century. But African carvers were first to abstract reality."

At the time of its invention, Cubism was not a rarity but a radical departure from the realism and expressionism or naturalism that prevailed in the art world before it. Picasso's paintings subsequently became expensive simply because he had broken new grounds in modernism in painting.

On the other hand, the value of African art emanates, as we said above, from its unavailability elsewhere in the world, its uniqueness that is born of the continent's collective material, religious, spiritual life and the symbolism it conveys to both the producers and the viewers. "For example in the art of the Yoruba people of Nigeria, the color blue often symbolizes wisdom, while red represents danger or evil spirits."

Moreover, African art has a unique quality because of the central themes it deals with. "The themes of African paintings often revolve nature, animals and human life. These themes reflect the cultural and traditional beliefs of the African people and their close relationship with nature."

In the case of African art, the value or price of artistic objects is determined by their rarity, i.e. the fact that they are not found elsewhere in the world. Their worth is subsequently greater than their use values or artistic qualities. An old piece of earthenware as artistic product may not be superior to a modern painting or object of art but its scarcity adds value to it.

In Europe there is a movement known as "Art for art's sake" but in Africa, there has never been such a philosophy of art because there is no separation between art and society or between art and nature. Art has always been utilitarian in Africa either as a tool of self-

understanding or a reflection of how Africans perceive their world. African art should rather be credited for putting art at the service of man since the earliest phases of human civilization.

According available data, contemporary African art market has become lucrative and booming thanks to advances in modern technology such as the internet and online marketing. Yet, what is now available in that market is only a small part of what Africans have produced as art objects in their long and tortuous history. An unknown amount of African art has been lost to looters and invaders during the centuries of European colonialism and the modern black market and art theft that has continued the European tradition of looting African artifacts.

According to available information, "A lot of African art was acquired for curious means by travelers, traders and missionaries in the century before and left the continent. Colonialists most often do not give indigenous art the attention it deserves and thereby African art history was not preserved or documented." Although illegal acquisitions and theft in African art were rampant throughout the last few centuries, it is on the basis of available art legacy that modern African artists could preserve their legacies while bringing their own contributions to the growth and influence of African art in the contemporary world and the global demand in the marketplace that artistic objects are enjoying now. "A steadily rising demand for works from African artists is drawing global audiences at major expos, auctions and fairs. According to the 2023 Africa Wealth Report, the continent's fine art market was valued at just over 1.8 billion."

This is a sure sign of the growth in demand for African arts and artifacts. Although it will never be possible to replace what was lost in the past, it is encouraging realize that new and upcoming young African writers are rising to the occasion by creating new works. The challenge ahead is certainly daunting because the African art market is only a tiny fraction of the global art transaction and the game of catch up is going to be tougher than any time so far.

The other challenge is the protection of African art from theft and contraband trade. This is particularly relevant to traditional African artistic products that are kept in

museums in Europe. Many of them are stolen at one time or another by shady arts dealers who sell them to other museums or to individual collectors elsewhere in the world. They often steal them from Europe in order to sell them in America and vice versa. These ancient artifacts were stolen from Africa during the colonial era by the invading forces and taken to Europe.

Nowadays they are the valued prizes of predators in African relics. These precious artifacts will continue to make the tour of the world stolen at one time to be resold at higher prices. This is what makes the business in African traditional art so lucrative and the beneficiaries holding to these objects with greed and possessiveness as if they belonged to their ancestral families. The same fate is met by modern African art that is itself the heritage of old traditions and carry with them the artistic qualities of previous generations of African artists.

These precious objects of African art are kept in many places in Europe and prominent among them are those kept in France and Britain whose governments often promise to return them to their original owners but take many decades to live up to their pledges or simply forget to honor their pledges and the stolen artifacts never return to Africa or to their lawful owners. These matters are seldom vigorously followed up by the various advocacy groups and committee both within and outside the continent who are working for the return of the historic artifacts. In the meantime, some of them are stolen by online or traditional art dealers who are doing everything possible to maximize their profits without consideration to the origins of these works of art. "Additionally as the art pieces were not seen as an accomplishment by the people who created them, there was not much effort put into their conservation."

Africans is not definitely benefiting from their own artistic heritages both as sources of their identity or as objects in the global art market. In between criminal groups deal with African artifacts and make a lot of money while Africans lose both the sources and symbols of their identity and their wealth as marketable properties. According to a recent study, "Research in North Africa found that online groups now play a vital role in antiquities trafficking."

According to the same study, "Social media platforms, particularly Facebook, play host to these groups. Looters on the ground at remote sites and in conflict zones connect online with potential buyers around the world. The monitoring of this criminal activity is poor and antiquities crime isn't a priority for those enforcing social media guidelines." It may take a long and sustained struggle to prevent illegal dealers in African art products from dispossessing or abusing Africa's irreplaceable artistic wealth. It is obviously up to African governments and cultural institutions within and outside the continent to reclaim Africa's lost antiquities and return them to the legitimate owners as part and parcel of the struggle to restore Africa's dignity and pride in its past achievements.



# Society

## Realizing “Digital Ethiopia” by 2025

BY TEWODROS KASSA

Currently, utilizing the latest technologies in every sector becomes important to be more productive. The use of digital technology has gained more attention following its flexibility to accomplish tasks quickly with better performance. Therefore, countries gave priority to digitalization; and promoting the efforts of digitizing all sectors.

Different countries have gained momentum through the effective use of digital technology. South Korea, United States, Taiwan, and Denmark, respectively listed as world’s most technologically advanced countries based on global finance 2023 ranking. These countries become known for effectively utilizing the latest technologies and swift digitalization. South Africa and Botswana are also the top African countries that have shown promising progress through technological advancement.

There is also a tangible progress of technological advancements in Ethiopia where the government has set to realize “Digital Ethiopia” by 2025.

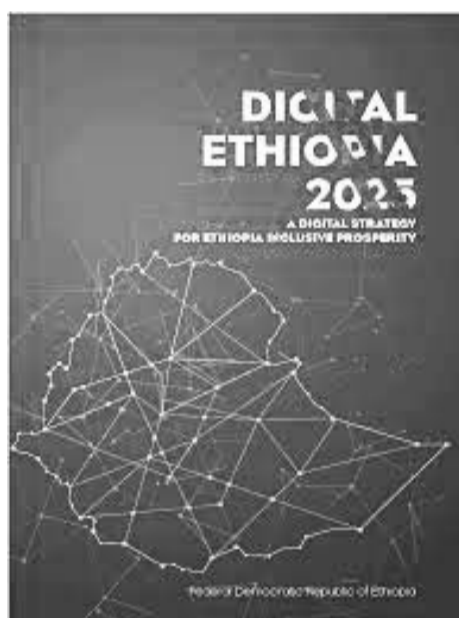
The Ethiopian government has been taking various measures accrediting the importance of attaining “Digital Ethiopia” by 2025. In this regard, the Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MoIT) is the leading institution that leads the country’s endeavors towards digitalization. Thus, the journey of transforming to digitalization sought to motivate new employment opportunities to the growing number of youths and women and at the same time improves quality of life through easing doing business, accessing services, among others.

Recently, the Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MoIT) underlies the need for realizing “Digital Ethiopia 2025” and its significance to the overall socio-economic advancement. The Ministry and institutions accountable to it announced that they are striving for making “Digital Ethiopia 2025” a reality through expanding modern technological service throughout the country.

The Ministry presented the 2023/24 fiscal year plan and its 1st quarter plan performance report to the House of People Representatives (HPRs) Standing Committee.

Speaking at the occasion, MoIT Minister Belete Molla (PhD) said that this fiscal year plan has incorporated four programs namely national science technology and innovation development, constructing infrastructure for the science technology and innovation sector, increasing digital economy, and establishing structure as well as rules and regulations to efficiently lead the national science and technology scheme.

As to him, the Ministry is striving to expand all inclusive participation thereby bringing about meaningful accessibility in realizing “Digital Ethiopia 2025”. To



**NEST is a great opportunity for a country like Ethiopia and its huge youth population to overcome poverty and be competitive at the global level**

this end, the Ministry has been working in collaboration with various stakeholders so as foster technological advancement. The Ministry has also appreciated and supported homegrown research with a view to coming up with fundamental changes in science, technology and innovation fields.

The Ministry has also secured 250,000 USD for ACTS–Africa for conducting research in health, agriculture, environment, energy, and the like in a bid to help the country record significant change across the nation. So far, some 90 proposals were provided and some six winner proposals are being selected, and they will be provided with 35,000 USD each to help them realize their respective ambitions.

“Creating enabling environment for reducing corruption, increasing e-commerce and e-governance, developing geospatial information, giving licenses for electronic markets and the like are among the various measures that are taken in the first quarter plan performance. For instance, the number of electronic marketing has increased from 50 to 117. Besides, 95% of the fiscal work is accomplished and hits 25% of the capital performance.

In that order, the Ministry planned to utilize 159 million Birr and 89.9 million Birr for the regular budget and capital budget in the 1st quarter of this fiscal year. However, it utilized 130 million Birr and merely 25 million Birr respectively, in the stated period. It means that 82% of the regular budget and 26% of the capital budget have so far been utilized.

Standing Committee Chairperson Negeri Lencho (PhD), on his part, commented that the Ministry should attach serious attention to job creation, awareness-raising, e-service expansion, conducting meaningful researches, bridging the skilled human power gap thereby successfully and confidently realizing the “Digital Ethiopia 2025” goal.

Moreover, other officials also lauded the importance of realizing “Digital Ethiopia” by 2025. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen said that technology capability is the main secret to build a strong and competent country and a prosperous society in the current era.

Launching Next Ethiopian Startup (NEST) initiative Demeke said that technology is crucial for realizing development ambitions and building a strong nation.

As to him, technology capability is the foundation and main secret in the current era to build a strong and competent country and prosperous society. The initiative like NEST is instrumental to enable transferring a competent nation for the next generation by overcoming poverty and backwardness, he noted.

NEST is a great opportunity for a country like Ethiopia and its huge youth population to overcome poverty and be competitive at the global level, it was indicated.

Accordingly, NEST is a groundbreaking national startup ecosystem development initiative which will be a central element for the startup innovation.

On her part, Labor and Skills Minister Muferiat Kamil stressed that NEST is the new face of Ethiopia as the country is rich in diversity which is conducive for innovation.

The need for policy and financial support to startups was also stressed during the occasion as they are essential to expediting economic development by creating sustainable jobs. Ethiopia’s youthful population is an incredible asset and an untapped resource for positive growth. The NEST was launched in collaboration with the Ministry of Innovation and Technology and the Ministry of Labor and Skills as the objectives of the initiative include building the culture of entrepreneurship, innovation and creating competent startup.

# Law & Politics

## Media's mammoth role in fostering harmony and understanding

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

The planned national dialogue is an essential event that aims to bring together diverse groups of people and create a platform for meaningful conversation and mutual understanding. As such, the media outlets in Ethiopia have an important responsibility to ensure the success of this event.

Media outlets have a crucial role in the National Dialogue and should provide extensive coverage of this process. Their responsibility lies in fostering a sense of unity and understanding among Ethiopians by creating a national consensus on the country's major issues. By dedicating significant airtime and column space to the National Dialogue, media outlets can actively contribute to the development of a peaceful and inclusive society.

By the same token, the media has a very important role in the success of national dialogue in Ethiopia. It helps to inform people about the dialogue and get them interested in participating. The media also helps to bring different groups of people together. It gives politicians, community leaders, and everyday citizens a chance to share their thoughts and concerns.

Increased media coverage of the National Dialogue allows for a wider dissemination of information and ensures that citizens are well-informed about the discussions taking place. It helps to bridge the gap between the government, civil society, and the general public by providing a platform for various perspectives to be shared and understood.

The media acts as an important platform for raising awareness about the national dialogue process itself. Through newspapers, television, radio, and online platforms, the media informs the public about the purpose, objectives, and expected outcomes of the dialogue. This helps to generate interest and encourages citizens to actively participate in the discussions.

By actively involving citizens, media outlets can help create a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for the outcomes of the National Dialogue. In addition, by dedicating significant coverage to the National Dialogue, media outlets have the power to shape public opinion and influence the national discourse on key issues. Through unbiased reporting, the media can highlight the importance of finding common ground and working towards consensus.

Media outlets play a crucial role in facilitating the forthcoming national dialogue in Ethiopia, as they have the power to shape the narrative, educate the public, and foster an environment of inclusivity and accountability. By employing informative practices, media outlets provide the necessary context and background information for the dialogue to take place on a solid foundation.

By providing extensive coverage, media outlets can promote transparency, amplify marginalized voices, encourage citizen participation, and shape public opinion. These efforts are crucial in uniting Ethiopians

and ensuring that all sectors of society are heard in the decision-making processes. By highlighting shared goals and common interests, media outlets can encourage different factions to find common ground and work together towards positive change.

Through constructive and solution-oriented reporting, media outlets can foster a sense of unity and inspire collaborative efforts within the general public. By emphasizing the importance of cooperation, media outlets can play a crucial role in bridging divides and promoting a spirit of harmony during the national dialogue.

In a similar vein, the media serves as a bridge between different stakeholders involved in the dialogue process. It provides a platform for politicians, civil society organizations, community leaders, and ordinary citizens to voice their opinions and concerns. By allowing for diverse perspectives to be heard, the media creates an inclusive environment that fosters dialogue and understanding.

The media plays a vital role in the success of national dialogue in Ethiopia. Its ability to inform, engage, and connect citizens from various backgrounds is essential for fostering understanding, promoting inclusivity, and achieving meaningful and sustainable solutions for the nation's challenges. The media's involvement ensures that the national dialogue is accessible, transparent, and accountable.

It is essential that the public is fully informed about the details of the event, its purpose, and the participants involved. Moreover, it is crucial to communicate the importance and benefits of participating in the dialogue to encourage widespread engagement from all citizens. In addition to providing information and promoting inclusivity, media outlets should create a conducive platform for the exchange of ideas and opinions.

This can be achieved through hosting debates, and other interactive events that allow individuals to share their thoughts and perspectives on important issues.

One of the most significant responsibilities of media outlets during the national dialogue is to verify the information provided by participants. It is essential to fact-check statements made by policymakers, community leaders, and regular individuals to ensure transparency and accuracy.

Furthermore, media outlets should highlight success stories and reconciliation efforts resulting from the national dialogue. By showcasing positive outcomes, they can inspire hope and optimism among the public and contribute to the overall success of the dialogue. They should also reach out to remote areas to ensure that everyone has equal access to information about the dialogue and the opportunity to participate.

Additionally, media outlets play a crucial role in fostering unity by bringing together diverse groups of people. Through interviews, discussions, and features, media outlets allow politicians, community leaders, and regular individuals to express their thoughts and concerns.

They should also focus on highlighting



success stories and reconciliation efforts inspiring hope and optimism among the public. They should actively reach out to remote areas ensuring that everyone has access to information about the dialogue and the opportunity to participate. They should as well play a crucial role in the success of national dialogue in Ethiopia. It helps to inform, engage, and connect people creating a space for understanding and collaboration.

It is common knowledge that by highlighting success stories, sharing stories of reconciliation and unity and focusing on the benefits of a successful national dialogue, the media can encourage citizens to engage in the process with a positive mindset. This optimism is crucial for sustaining momentum and ensuring long-term commitment to the dialogue process.

The media also serves as a means of documenting the progress and outcomes of the national dialogue. It captures key moments, speeches, and agreements reached during the discussions ensuring transparency and accountability. This documentation not only informs the public but also serves as a historical record of the dialogue process serving as a reference for future endeavors.

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."



Ephrem Endale  
Contributor

# Between you & me

## Open 'Oceans' vs. Shallow 'Streams!'

Recently, I found myself in the midst of a certain group which unfortunately wasn't the type of group I was accustomed to. Or to put in other words not the type of group which gives me any comfort. Though all those in the group were adults well into their prime my presence was involuntary since I happened to be with a friend who had to see the group 'for a few minutes,' a few minutes which were extended into more than an hour, at least until I was there. Well, whenever someone says "It's just for a few minutes," maybe we should say "Aha! There we come again the same old way saying what you aren't saying and everyone knows it." Anyways I was the odd guy out and I was not in any pressure to make any comment. Maybe, just maybe I wasn't the kind of guy they'd have liked to have in their midst! Hmm...

These days we seem to measure people in ways that aren't ways that are unnerving to say the least. Maybe he is heavy drinker, or a khat addict whom his friends say is actually turning into green himself! That's one way of expressing the severity of the problem. Or the fellow might be a heavy eater about whom people talk in the nicest (nicest!) of terms. That's what caught my attention comes. This group were talking about others none of which I, luckily, knew. When one name cropped up all of them laughed so boisterously I couldn't feign in attention. Their story was that the fellow was such a heavy eater you wouldn't believe the examples they came up with to make their point. I'm not exaggerating if I say it was practical impossible to visualize 'the person' as a human being. Even a sci-fi character wouldn't come to you.

I can tell you about a couple of heavy eaters of yesteryears. There was this filthy rich businessman who every day ate five bowls of kitfo for lunch. No I am not kidding. That means he eats what five 'normal beings' would have for lunch. Now we might have such talk just for the sake of a few minutes' laughter since these world needs a little laughter to keep all the screws upstairs intact. But when we discuss such things as serious issues the question should have been, "So what?" because such agendas other than being purely individual issues they couldn't have any social value. Is this the best we can do talking about the culinary excesses of some person while there are so many urgent agendas talk about? I'm not dismissing such talks. I'm saying that maybe we're in times when we should be talking about pre pressing issues.

Then there is legend of the heavy drinker. Believe me many could tell you tons of stories about heavy drinkers who, many times than not, never try to hide it. "You wouldn't believe how much he drinks a single night. The guy drinks thirty bottles of beer in a single night!"

"You think that is great? Well I tell you a person who could drink double that. And he never gets drunk!" Now drinking heavily and not ending up drunk is reason enough for admiration. Isn't that tough!

"Someone should advise him to cut down on his heavy drinking."

"Why should anyone do that? The guy could drink the entire bar and never gets drunk."

That means however heavily the guy drinks it's alright as long as he doesn't get drunk! Shouldn't the society be aware of such influences on the youth.

Some years back there was this group of relatives who come together once a month and live it up; I mean really live it up. (We call it 'Yezemed Gubae,' or something like that.) Almost all being economically well grounded expenses never mattered. But one thing was that there were a lot of kids and they always witnessed their mommies and daddies and relatives getting drunk to the point of acting more childish than themselves. And the relatives used to compete as to who could kill more bottles and whoever comes on top is applauded! Yes, applauded. All this time the kids watch and imagine what their idea of heroism would be! What else, drink as much beer as you can and when you outdrink all you are the hero!

So this group I was telling you about were full of admirations for their heavy drinking and heavy-eating chums some of whom were at the place. That's it; The heavy eaters, heavy drinkers and the like sometimes assume the roles of legends! Yes, I said "legends!"

I've a couple of friends who chew khat on weekends. To their credit they've their limits which they never dare cross. Now that isn't something you hear about much. Because on the other end of the spectrum there are those whose only limits are the thickness of their wallet. But these friends I was telling you about have rooms set for khat sessions in their houses. But one thing is they never allow their children to come anywhere near.

Domestic helpers are given strict orders not to let the children anywhere close to the rooms. Failing to do so would mean virtual exit for the domestic helpers. I mean you've to acknowledge that they try to keep their children safe. The story here is that there quite a lot of parents who send their preteen children to go and buy khat! These children grow up seeing their parents usually their fathers chewing khat regularly and the admiration they get.

I never went through the whole cut-and-trample session of the group. Luckily, as I told you I didn't know the identity of the names being hurled around mutilated in the most unceremonious of ways. A lot of other things were raised and almost every time the ones in the wrong were hailed as courageous, "Yegna Anbessa!" and the like.

I've told you I watch local TV serials and just to kick start with a positive note I've to say there are a lot of improvements when it comes to the technical aspects of film making. It seems finally we're starting using technology. But I can't say I'm comfortable with some characters who despite being up to their necks in the sea of vice live so comfortably that it becomes difficult not to wish you were in their place when it comes to 'living in comfort.' I remember growing up in a society which admires the brave and courageous guys on the block meaning those who break jaws and knock out teeth even under the most trivial of situations and still get the rancorous standing ovations. Indulging in the wrong narratives and setting the wrong examples is not about being in the vast open oceans but in the shallow dry streams!

## Respect... Recognizing Value and Worth!

It was one of those ugly scenes you'd have preferred not to witness. The last few months have been tax collecting months and thousands and thousands of citizens have to visit the tax collecting spots. I can tell you creative writers could have gone away with bundles of story ideas had they visited a few of these places. Human behaviors are displayed in their nicest and their ugliest. Now like anything we couldn't provide data and whatever to support our statements; but the fact is that you see lots of thumbs-down rather thumbs up when it comes so customer which at times could appear as you'd end up with every ache your specialized doctor could think of.

There was this story of a sixtyish man being so disrespected by a staff member of some tax office that they said he turned into some sort of a virtual statue or something. A foul-mouthed young staff member called him some shockingly vulgar names which one would expect from most bad natured street bum or something. They said a couple of gents tried to cool him down and made him sit. They said it was one of those moments where to the utter shock of all well-meaning person's the level and scope of disrespect in our society is evident. I didn't hear how things ended up but you could imagine how bad the man should have felt. After all he might be a father of several children some of whom might already have made him a grandparent; he might have given all his life to pave the way for his children's future

lives sending them to the best schools and treating them to their satisfaction all through the years; he might be the kind who goes well out of his way to help even people he never laid eyes upon driven by nothing but the purest and grandest of humane behaviors.

"Treating others with respect speaks volumes about you."

Respect should never be about the three piece suit which mostly herald the wads of birr in the breast pockets rather than the tones of wonderful ideas in the brain. Yes, dressing up on three-piece suits or whatever good attire is wonderful as long as you can afford it. But when your character is measured by the five hundred birr you wear that is where the world goes crazy. And that's why the world is presently messy as respect isn't given where it's deserved and for the simple reason that the other person is as entitled for all the respect we think we deserve.

Respect isn't about your G+4 residence and your multi-million-birr car. Nice that you own such nice things and, who knows, the angels might be smiling on you more than they're smiling on us. But us living in the shacks of the many hamlets in the city and you living within gated communities is about come status (and heavy doses of luck) and not about any difference about our humanity. It is not about us being the dumb and dumber lot and you being the smarts creatures since the Einstein guy. (Einstein himself said. "I speak to everyone in the same way, whether

he is the garbage man or the president of the university.") So, why the hell should you be accorded the highest of respects due to your material possessions while we are ignored as if we are ghosts despite being of the same flesh and bones like you; or does the talk about 'blue blood' has any truth!

Just give a few minutes to the evening news in the global media. Listen to the narratives of politicians from the super-rich places. For them respect is about how much money they have; it is about what sort of sophisticated, lethal armaments they possess; it's about flexing their muscles at those who dare question their motives and oppose their actions. Though we have yet to dig into researches and analysis on this issue one reason for much of the trouble in this world is that there are those who want to thrive disrespecting others and putting themselves above the law and firing the first bullet on one hand and those who demand the respect they deserve and fight for it when push comes to shove.

Some person who might be one of those authors 'whose names we forget,' "Never judge someone by the way he looks or a book by the way it's covered; for inside those tattered pages, there's a lot to be discovered." Does it surprise you that the reveal respect accorded you many times is by the way how dress and not how you think? Maybe, just maybe, as they say clothes may make the man, and that being take to the extremes

people many times scrutinize how you're dressed; well there is nothing wrong with that. Yes, being smartly dressed opens doors which would have stayed locked had you been less smartly dressed. In fact, let alone the brass of any office even the doormen first scrutinize your dressing all the way up and that is where the one-man jury goes into action. "No, this guy can't go in; not while I'm alive!

Someone said, "Although respect seems to be declining in today's world, we must be sympathetic to those around us and regard their rights and feelings." isn't that what humanity is about? With sympathy there is respect. With respect there is that cordiality and brotherhood which we miss so much these days. With cordiality and brotherhood there is a better world, A world where disrespect will be a story of long gone ages and humanity finally would be what it was supposed to be, Humane!

Someone said, "When we treat others with respect, it shows that we recognize their value and worth." True needed!

"No one respects you because of your job title. They respect you for who you are and what you do." That's all there is to it. I wish as many of us as possible have that on our walls in big letters as a reminder to prevent us from jumping the rails.

We are human beings and we need and deserve respect. Case closed!

# International News

## Somalia floods: UN warns of 'once-in-a-century event'

The UN has released \$25m (£20.5m) in aid, describing the floods as a "once-in-a-century event."

Authorities say at least 29 people have been killed and more than 300,000 displaced, with more rain to come.

Somalia and neighbouring countries in East Africa have been hit by heavy rains since early October.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said the downpours had been worsened by the combined impact of two climate phenomena - El Niño and the more localised Indian Ocean Dipole, referring to differences in sea surface temperature in opposite parts of the ocean.

The agency warned that some 1.5 million hectares (3.7 million acres) of farmland could potentially be destroyed.

Martin Griffiths, the UN's Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief coordinator, said: "Extreme weather linked to the ongoing El Niño risks further driving up humanitarian needs in already-vulnerable communities in Somalia and many other places."

"We know what the risks are, and we need to get ahead of these looming crises."

The UN humanitarian agency said rescue efforts were being delayed because roads had been cut.



Aid groups have also warned that camps for people displaced by an Islamist insurgency and the recent drought had also been flooded, causing people to flee for a second time.

OCHA warned on Wednesday that more rain is expected in the coming days, and that the forecast shows very heavy to extremely heavy rainfall is expected in southern Somalia.

Somalia is considered one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change, and the country is experiencing heavier than normal rains after emerging from one of its worst droughts in four decades.

The flooding began last month after heavy rains raised water levels and caused the overflowing of the Juba and Shabelle rivers.

Flash floods have also killed dozens of people in neighbouring Kenya and Ethiopia.

Earlier this week, Somalia declared an emergency in the most-affected states - Jubbaland, Hirshabelle South West and Galmudug.

OCHA said in September that East Africa was likely to encounter heavier than normal rains over the October-December period because of the El Niño phenomenon.

El Niño is caused by the Pacific Ocean warming and is linked to flooding, cyclones, drought, and wildfires.

Many factors contribute to flooding, but a warming atmosphere caused by climate change makes extreme rainfall more likely.

Source: BBC

## Gabon welcomes African bank's lifting of sanctions

The Gabonese government says the African Development Bank (AfDB) has lifted financial sanctions imposed on the country following the removal of President Ali Bongo in a coup in August.

The economy ministry said the decision was taken at the beginning of the week after "successful negotiations between the new Gabonese authorities and senior AfDB officials".

Separate rounds of talks were held in October in Morocco and the Republic of Congo.

The AfDB's decision to lift the sanctions also followed Gabon's move to restore confidence by clearing its arrears to the continental financial institution at the end of October, the ministry revealed.

"I welcome the lifting of AfDB sanctions against Gabon and the resumption of disbursements in favour of various projects," Gabon's Economy Minister Mays Mouissi said on X, formerly called Twitter, adding that the decision "rewards weeks of work to calm relations between Gabon and its donors"

The AfDB becomes the first international institution to lift sanctions on Gabon since the coup just over two months ago.

The move paves the way for Gabon to continue benefiting from AfDB loans and grants for its projects.

The AfDB is yet to comment on this development.

Source: Nile Post

## Pope Francis fires Texan bishop after criticism of reforms

Pope Francis has fired the Texan bishop Joseph Strickland, a fierce critic who has questioned the Pope's leadership of the Catholic Church.

The Vatican said the bishop would be "relieved" of his duties as a result of investigations at his Diocese of Tyler.

Bishop Strickland is a leading voice in a branch of US Catholicism that is opposed to the Pope's reforms.

His removal comes after Francis spoke of the "backwardness" of some US Catholic church leaders.

Bishop Strickland has launched a series of attacks on the Pope's attempts to update the Church's position on social matters and inclusion, including on abortion, transgender rights and same-sex marriage.

In July, he warned that many "basic truths" of Catholic teaching were being challenged, including what he called attempts to "undermine" marriage "as instituted by God" being only between a man and a woman.



He criticised as "disordered" the attempts of those who "reject their undeniable biological God-given identity".

His letter suggested that attempts to change "that which cannot be changed" would lead to an irrevocable schism in the Church. Those seeking change, he warned, "are the true schismatics".

Bishop Strickland was under investigation by the Vatican and had previously declined the opportunity to resign, and in an open letter in September challenged the Pope to fire him.

"I cannot resign as Bishop of Tyler

because that would be me abandoning the flock," he said.

The right-wing "Coalition for Canceled Priests" held a conference earlier this year to support him during the investigation.

The Vatican said that the decision to fire him "came after an apostolic visitation ordered by the Pope last June in the Diocese of Tyler". According to Catholic media, the investigation also looked at the handling of financial affairs at the diocese.

Bishop Strickland, 65, was appointed bishop in 2012, while Benedict XVI was pope.

It all follows significant attempts made by the Pope to make the Church more progressive during his papacy.

On Thursday, the Vatican announced that transgender people can be baptised in the Catholic Church, as long as doing so does not cause scandal or "confusion".

In October, he suggested that the Church would be open to bless same-sex couples,

as he told a group of cardinals "we cannot be judges who only deny, reject and exclude".

Speaking at a meeting at the World Youth Day celebrations in Lisbon the Pope said the backwardness of some people was "useless".

"Doing this you lose the true tradition and you turn to ideologies to have support. In other words, ideologies replace faith," he added.

Climate change has also been a key pillar of his papacy - from a landmark paper on the environment in 2015 to recent warnings that the world may be "nearing breaking point" due to climate change.

He has also strongly condemned climate deniers and will be at the United Nations' Climate Summit (COP28) later this month - the first time a pope has attended the event since they began in 1995.

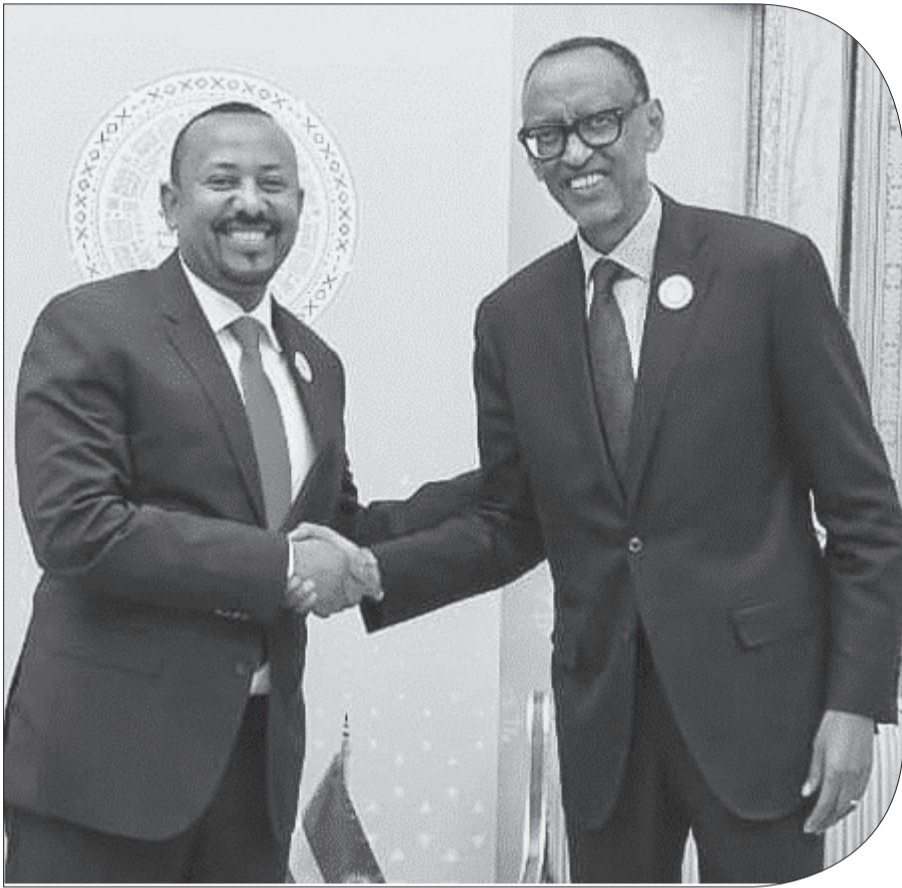
The Vatican said that the Diocese of Tyler would be temporarily administered by Bishop Joe Vasquez of Austin.

Source: BBC

# In Pictures

## PM Abiy meets President Kagame

*On the sidelines of the first Saudi-Africa Summit organized in Riyadh, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) met and discussed with President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame. The two leaders discussed on strengthening cooperation between their respective countries.*



## PM Abiy discusses with President of Somalia

*On the sidelines of the Saudi-Africa Summit, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) also conferred with President Hassan Sheikh Mohamed of Somalia. The two leaders discussed on bilateral and regional issues of mutual interest.*



## PM Abiy, President Gulleh discusses

*During his visit to Riyadh to attend the first Saudi-Africa Summit, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed also met President Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti to discuss on bilateral and regional mutual interests of Ethiopia and Djibouti.*

## Prime Minister Abiy attends the first Saudi-Africa Summit



Welcoming ceremony in Riyadh

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

*Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) with his delegation arrived at Riyadh, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Friday Morning. PM Abiy with his delegation arrived in Riyadh to attend the first Saudi-Africa Summit.*

*Up on the arrival of the Ethiopian Government delegation at King Khalid International Airport (KKIA), it received a warm welcoming ceremony by the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.*

*See Prime Minister... page 19*

### PM Abiy meets Saudi Prince

*Parallel to the Saudi-Africa Summit, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) held a bilateral meeting with His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The leaders discussed on bilateral and regional matters including Ethiopia's development and economic reforms as well as the role played by Ethiopia in the region.*

*Both leaders have reached an understanding to establish a high level joint ministerial committee; for Saudi support on Ethiopia's macroeconomic reforms through debt restructuring; energy cooperation and development finance and investments.*

