



The Ethiopian Herald

Vol LXXX No 092 27 DECEMBER 2023 - TAHISAS 17, 2016

Wednesday

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Experts mull over building constructive narrations for Nat'l consensus

BY MENGESHA AMARE

ADDIS ABABA - The media ought to work on building constructive narratives and acknowledging unity in diversity to ensure national stability and prosperity, urged media and communication experts.

Ethiopian Broadcasting Cooperation (EBC) Deputy Executive Muktar Hussein told FBC that the media can play a vital role in building common narratives that are potentially cementing citizens so that they would collaboratively work for shared visions—having a stable and prosperous nation.

The media are really instrumental in building trust among citizens, narrowing down discrepancies and redressing the abrasions, if any, he added.

As to him, the media are duty bound to create awareness among the

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House directs ENDC to begin agenda setting dialogues

• *To expand operation in conflict-impacted areas*

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA - The House of Peoples' Representatives (HPR) has directed the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) to immediately begin the agenda setting dialogues in areas where participants identification is carried out.

During the discussion between the Legal, Justice and Democracy Affairs Standing Committee of the HPR and ENDC Commissioners yesterday, House Speaker Tadesse Chafo stated that the Commission is expected to hasten the dialogue processes and involve the public.

"Everyone is eager to see how the National Dialogue process is going on. If the preparation gets delayed, the dialogue may cause hopelessness among the public and it might not be successful as intended. So, the agenda setting, which is planned to be held next to the identification of participants, should be held in some areas very shortly."

The Speaker also urged the Commission to resume operation in some district and zonal administrations of conflict-affected Amhara and Tigray states.

According to Tadesse, ENDC should reconsider

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Institute pushes for justice sector reform

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - The Justice sector needs to be reformed and revitalized to catch the current dynamics in the sector and to deter the more complicated and technology-enabled crimes, the Federal Justice and Law Institute said.

Institute's Director General Degife Bula (Amb.) told the Ethiopian Press Agency

See Institute Pushes...page 3

Ethiopia lists 5,700 goods to trade in AfCFTA

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA -The African Trade Ministerial Council accepted Ethiopia's offer to trade 5,700 goods (90% of products) within the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration (MoTRI) disclosed.

In line with the AfCFTA plan, Ethiopia would provide the 5,700 items in the non-tariff scheme after seven years, MoTRI Minister Gebremeskel Chala told media yesterday. The remaining 10% of goods excluded from the list for the time being and negotiation would be held in the future for their inclusion.

Gebremeskel added, "The remaining task is commencing a bilaterally guided trade initiative with AfCFTA member countries. "We will join the AfCFTA operation by finalizing preparations and our accession would contribute to make the local product competitive in the African market."

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Photo: Gebabo Gebrie

News

EIAR calls for consolidated efforts to boost urban agriculture

• *Unveils research findings regarding urban agriculture*

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA - The Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR) has called on stakeholders to provide the necessary support to expedite urban agriculture.

EIAR held a validation workshop yesterday on the potential, practices, challenges and intervention options aiming at setting directions and inputs for future prospects to policy makers and other stakeholders.

Speaking at the occasion, Institute Deputy Director-General Diriba Geleti (PhD) said that the government has been creating an enabling environment to facilitate the food system resilient program in line with the national growth and transformation plan.

He further noted that the initiative which is a part of 'Yilemat Tirufat' project, fuels the agricultural transformation plan, ensuring food security and source of income.

Upon finalizing the pilot projects undertaken in some woredas, he elucidated that efforts are underway to cascade these technology supported pilot projects to expand to the lower level.

Having said the institute has been focusing on pragmatic and applied researches, Diriba (PhD) emphasized that capacity building, budget and structural related requirements have a pivotal role to expand and reach the farming community.

In addition to the strategic plan to ensure food security and curb inflation, he said,

adding that such initiatives help alleviate poverty, unemployment rate and enhance the livelihood of the residents among others.

So far, the sector has been generating some remarkable achievements in areas of poultry, animal fattening, dairy, beekeeping and other areas, he noted.

"Among other government's interventions, structural and policy frameworks, resource allocation and other related issues need to be further strengthened to meet the desired goal," he pinpointed.

Coordinator and Researcher at EIAR Tolesa Alemu (PhD) for his part said that the institute has been conducting research regarding urban agriculture which has a huge significance on job creation, food

security and eases the cost of living in towns and other segments of the society.

As to the researcher, they have been assessing and providing technical and financial support, improved seeds and chains of training to facilitate vertical farming.

Every farming component requires infrastructure, land expansion, loan service, necessary inputs among others that are critical vehicles to accelerate production and productivity and import substitution schemes as well, he underscored.

"According to the research findings, improper structural framework, shortage of inputs and professionals in the area are ultimately impacting the sector," he remarked.

Stakeholders emphasize need for new tourism promotion approach

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- Apart from applying a new strategic marketing system, tourism promotion needs to be analyzed in a way that showcases Ethiopia's tourism potential in a unique and timely manner, the Tourism State Minister said.

The Tourism State Minister Lensa Mekonnen made the above remark in the training that the Addis Ababa Culture, Art and Tourism Bureau organized for stakeholders yesterday.

Lensa stated on the occasion that the promotion and marketing approaches need to be well thought out to enhance the benefits that the nation generates from the sector. "Identifying the what, why, and how questions is vital when executing tourism promotion and marketing as it makes most activities easier to underline on the priority areas."

She added, "A tourism professional must analyze those questions to get to the bottom line of the promotion. Identifying the objective of the promotion, and how the promotion would be carried out is essential despite the challenges that are witnessed in the sector."

According to the state minister, besides the promotion, it is crucial to address the drawbacks on service excellence and finance while equal attention should be given to enhance the role of the private sector and creating new brands in the sector.

Addis Ababa Culture, Arts and Tourism Deputy Bureau Head Hafitay Gebreegziabher on his part said inadequate promotion of Ethiopia's attraction sites and shortcomings in changing the tourism

sector to economic benefits are major challenges identified through survey.

Hafitay further highlighted that the above setbacks inhibited Ethiopia from getting proper benefit from the tourism industry despite the abundant resource. To overcome such challenges, it is crucial to apply the new strategic promotion and marketing system.

By the same token, Ethiopian Tour Operators Association Head of Members Affairs BezaTilahun noted that the training was insightful in identifying the role of tourism stakeholders in promoting Ethiopia's potential to local and international visitors.

With the approaching of the two religious festivities and the AU Summit, the training was timely which enable to focus on strategic promotion that also takes domestic tourists into consideration, she emphasized.

Fasil Debebe, Gulele Sub City Culture, Art and Tourism Office Heritage Conservator Expert mentioned that the training was instrumental as promotion would help the tourism professionals to exercise new approaches to better serve in the sector.

Keep in the above mind, more attention should be given to promote heritage sites across the metropolis. Apart from developing new parks in the city, equal attention should be given to introducing cultural heritages with the public and tourists, Fasil remarked.

Tourism professionals, tour operator association, representative from hotel, friendship park, and other relevant stakeholders were in attendance of the training.



Photo: Gebabo Gebrie

Chalitu Sani

Birhanu Zewudie

Wolaita Soddo to host 9th urban forum

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – The 9th Ethiopian urban forum is slated to be held from February 16 to 22, 2024 in Wolaita Soddo city of Southern Ethiopia state, Ministry of Urban and Infrastructure (MoUI) announced.

Briefing Journalists yesterday, MoUI Minister Chalitu Sani said that the 9th cities forum will be taken place under the theme: "Modern Cities for the Prosperity of Ethiopia."

As to her, the forum will pave ways in the efforts of sharing experience and knowledge, introducing various cities to one another, identifying the real potential, and the likes among the urban dwellers.

She further stated that construction sector has been playing a significant role in expanding urbanization, ensuring economic advantages, and creating jobs for many.

The minister pointed out that some 87 cities have been benefiting through food security, jobs, and greenery due to various developmental activities of the MoUI.

It was learnt that currently, the Ethiopian

urbanization is expanding by 5.4% annually. Therefore, it needs to modern planning system to change the situation in to universal benefit.

In this regard, MoUI established "Special development plan" aiming at leading the urban/ cities through effective and proper manner.

MoUI also works with Ethiopian Civil Service University and other stakeholders to bridge the skilled human power gaps in the construction industry.

Southern Ethiopia State Urban and Infrastructure Bureau Head Birhanu Zewudie on his part said that the state has formed one main and technical committee to host the forum.

"Such forum is a golden opportunity to Wolaita Soddo city in particular and the Southern Ethiopia state in general as it helps showcase the city's potentials apart from gaining a lot of experiences from other cities."

"As the state is newly formed one, the forum will also play a due role in promoting its tourism potentials and raising people awareness to engage in urban development," he noted.

News



MoLS, Ovid hand over RPL certificate to 45 individuals

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA - Providing certificate of qualification for citizens with informally acquired work experience, knowledge and competence would help to ensure equal access in the labor market, promote competition, said Ministry of Labor and Skills (MoLS).

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) program was held yesterday organized by the Ovid Group in collaboration with MoLS. On the occasion, some 45 individuals have been awarded certificates of RPL implementation.

In his message to the certificate awardees, MoLS' TVET Specialist Teshome Lema (PhD) said that providing qualification certificates for citizens with informally

acquired experience, skills and knowledge will help them to be more efficient and competitive in the future in order to get benefit in the labor market.

The technical and vocational education training system aims to provide equal labor market benefits to citizens through qualifications, knowledge, skills, and work attitude, with a practical implementation strategy, he stated.

"Therefore, the recognition of prior learning for construction experts is one indication of this," he said.

As to him, the three major three schemes in which the opportunity for education and training shared is through formal education training, non-formal education training and the informal system.

It allows them to benefit from job opportunities and further education and training, he indicated.

Ovid Group Business Controller Chief Addisalem Yared on his part said that giving qualification certificate for citizens who acquired experience informally would benefit them from the practical experience and knowledge they have accumulated and make them always strive to prove themselves more productive and competitive.

He noted that the recognition also helps to get more competitive professionals in the construction industry.

The individuals who received certificate on the event expressed that the recognition would help them to exert more efforts to be competent in the future.

Institute...

(EPA) that sectoral reform should be carried out to cope up with criminal's use of technology and equip the justice system with desired expertise. The reform should take technological use of crimes into account and prepare Ethiopia's justice for the ever-changing environment.

Degife further stated that the justice sector could be affected by international or local happenings both in positive and negative manner and emphasized the need to offer training and conduct research that enable Ethiopia to go along with those changes. "Currently, technology-enabled crimes are increasing and investigating such advanced crimes in the previous system is not possible."

"Crimes that are committed in the help of technology are difficult to investigate with a mere human knowledge and capacity and employing modern technologies in crime investigation has become the order of the day."

For many years, forensic professionals had been trained theoretically, but now the country is providing training by using forensic equipment. In addition, earlier, people had to appear to courts physically to follow their cases, but now, thanks to the technology, they could attend the session or give testimony with the help of audio-visual devices, the director general elaborated.

"This indicates how the technology changes the working environment of legal entities and enables them to provide seamless services while upholding all procedures and code of conduct."

As to him, the institute's training is mainly focused on making law professionals and experts aware of the new formulated laws, procedures and new working environment that enable them to discharge their duties in harmony with the changing situations. "Moreover, the existing training curriculum is being revised to nurture competent law professionals and experts."

Experts mull over...

society effectively using their capacity either in print or broadcast means, perhaps via organizing a range of public forums, discussion scenes and consultative fora.

He said, "Since bringing about change in building common vision is not an overnight process, successive close talks, honest dialogues and sessions that forge fraternity have to be hammered."

Oromia State Communication Bureau Head Hailu Adugna on his part said that

positive narratives that are potential enough to bring citizens together are of significantly useful in maintaining national integrity and creating a common agenda among nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia.

He said, "Deepening the positive narration that has glued the society together has to be well embarked on by the media of all sorts. In so doing, democracy, equality among citizens, participatory scenarios

can be created to push the generation steps forward for bringing about real change.

Somali State Communication Head Abdulkadir Reshid on his part said that the media have to work hard to further cement the unity and fraternity of the diverse population across the nation.

Therefore, he noted, it needs to focus on communalities of the society setting minor circumstances that seem to have sense of widening gaps aside.

Ethiopia lists 5,700...

Mentioning the competitiveness of Ethiopia's agricultural commodities in the African market, the minister expressed optimism that the manufacturing products would repeat similar success. Concerned bodies including government agencies, manufacturers, research institutions and others need to join forces to build the capacity of the private sector and help to make their products competitive in the continental market.

"Ethiopia's operation in the AfCFTA requires aggressive effort to meet the target as well as to get acceptance of exportable commodities in the short period of time."

The implementation of the AfCFTA

is an agreement to make zero tariffs on goods that come from the African continent through process. Accordingly, Ethiopia has conducted a study on goods that would be non-tariff in seven, ten or twelve years, and which items would be excluded from the list, he elaborated.

About bilateral level trade, Gebremeskel indicated that Ethiopia has taken some steps to forge the ties; mentioning the need to make strong preparation, items' identification, communicating with the private sector and other activities.

Future negotiation would be continuing on the remaining goods which are excluded from the current list, the minister remarked.

House directs ENDC...

mechanisms to recommence operation in Amhara and Tigray as the security challenge in the two states has been largely resolved. Some areas in Oromia which the Commission was unable to reach are also now returning to normalcy. "So, the ENDC needs to expand its activities in these conflict-impacted areas."

He further commended the ENDC for its engagement in rural areas. "The Commission is facilitating the dialogue processes including in areas where insecurity is happening."

The Legal, Justice and Democracy Affairs Standing Committee of the House presented an assessment report based on field supervision conducted in Sidama, Harari and Benishangul Gumuz states as

well as in Addis Ababa.

A member of the Standing Committee, Ejigu Melakie, who presented the supervision report, said two teams of the committee have visited four states. "The ENDC should make further efforts to ensure the inclusiveness of the dialogue process and women, PWDs, minority community members and civil society organizations are still in demand of representation. I hope the Commission will make more of a push for the inclusivity of dialogue participants."

ENDC Chief Commissioner Prof. Mesfin Araya on his part pledged to work for inclusive and participatory dialogue. He also urged the media to support the Commission through awareness creation activities.

Opinion

Urgency of international response for Sudan's severe predicament

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

International cooperation is crucial as Sudan grapples with an increasingly severe predicament. This nation has been besieged by protracted violence and instability necessitating a collective effort from the global community to extend assistance and support.

By doing so, a significant stride will be taken towards ensuring that justice is meted out for the victims and their families. Furthermore, as the crisis continues to intensify an escalating number of individuals are being uprooted from their homes rendering access to basic necessities such as sustenance, potable water, and healthcare increasingly arduous. The global community bears a weighty responsibility to join forces and labor towards engendering tranquility in Sudan.

The ongoing conflict in Sudan is a pressing issue that requires immediate attention from the wider international community. If the international community continues to turn a blind eye to the situation, the conflict in Sudan will likely escalate and worsen. Without intervention and support, the crisis is likely to keep moving from the frying pan into the fire. It is therefore crucial that the international community takes concrete steps to address the conflict and provide humanitarian aid to those affected.

By the same token, the prolonged and persistent conflict in Sudan has led to a deeply concerning and disheartening rise in the quantity of displaced people who are seeking refuge in the countries adjacent to Sudan. These individuals have been compelled to abandon their residences as a direct consequence of the perils and uncertainties that are inherently linked to conflict situations.

Given the gravity and urgency of this humanitarian crisis, it is vital for the global community to assume a substantial and pivotal role in extending comprehensive support and assistance to the Sudanese refugees who are in dire need of help.

On its part, being concerned on the matter, Ethiopia is keeping on calling the parties engaged in the conflict to come to their mind; value lives of their own people and think over about sitting on a round table for peaceful discussion. This stance of Ethiopia is identical with that of IGAD's that has strived to bring the warring parties together though not yielding fruit for the time being but anticipating good response from both of them.

It is essential to acknowledge the magnitude of the ongoing conflict in Sudan, which has precipitated a distressing surge in the number of people forcibly displaced from their homes. This conflict characterized by widespread violence and unrest has created an environment of fear and instability leaving individuals with no choice but to flee in order to ensure their own safety and survival.

It is high time for the international community to direct attention to this state of affairs and takes proactive measures to terminate the violence and reinstate normalcy in the region. In light of the dire situation, concerted action is vital to alleviate the plight of the Sudanese populace. Efforts should be made to address the root causes of the conflict in Sudan, as a means of preventing further displacement and fostering long-term stability. This may involve diplomatic initiatives to mediate between conflicting parties, promote dialogue, and facilitate peace negotiations.

The international community should also support initiatives aimed at promoting good governance, human rights, and socio-economic development in Sudan, which can contribute to lasting peace and reduce the likelihood of future conflicts.

The ongoing conflict in Sudan has resulted in a sharp increase in the number of refugees seeking refuge in neighboring countries due to the dangers and uncertainties associated with the conflict. The international community has a significant role to play in providing comprehensive support and assistance to the Sudanese refugees addressing their immediate needs, and working towards long-term solutions.

It is high time for the international community to center its attention on this dire situation and take proactive strides towards quelling the violence and reinstating normalcy in the region. Given the severity of the circumstances, collective action is vital in alleviating the plight of the Sudanese populace. The global community must congregate to furnish humanitarian aid and support to those impacted by the crisis.

One fundamental aspect that the international community must address is the provision of humanitarian aid to meet the immediate needs of the Sudanese refugees. This aid should include access to safe and secure temporary shelters, clean water, food supplies, healthcare services, and protection from violence and exploitation. Efforts should also be made to ensure the provision of education and psychosocial support to children and vulnerable populations, as they are particularly susceptible to the adverse effects of displacement and trauma.

The burden of hosting refugees can be more equitably shared, and the potential for conflicts and tensions arising from resource scarcity can be minimized. By demonstrating a steadfast commitment, the global community can provide the Sudanese refugees with hope for a better future and contribute to their successful reintegration into society.

The lingering violence and instability in the country necessitate a unified and concerted response from the global community to extend indispensable assistance and bolster support. It is vital for the international community to stand united in insisting on accountability for the heinous crimes committed and resolutely denouncing all forms of violence.

The global community composed of nations,

international organizations, and humanitarian agencies has a pivotal role to play in responding to the needs of these displaced individuals. This responsibility extends beyond simply providing immediate shelter and basic necessities, but also encompasses the provision of long-term solutions and support systems that can help rebuild the lives and livelihoods of the affected refugees.

The persistent violence and instability in the country necessitate a unified and determined response from the international community to provide essential aid and fortify support. It is essential for the international community to stand as one in demanding accountability for the abominable crimes committed and resolutely condemning all forms of violence.

Through such concerted efforts, substantial progress will be made in ensuring that justice is dispensed for the victims and their families. Furthermore, with the crisis continuing to exacerbate, an increasing number of individuals are being displaced, heightening the challenge of accessing basic necessities like sustenance, potable water, and healthcare.

To attain sustainable peace in Sudan, it is important for all relevant entities to unite as a global community and engage in effective collaboration aimed at bringing about long-lasting positive change. A key aspect of this collaborative effort is ensuring the provision of essential resources which plays a pivotal role in establishing a stable and thriving community in Sudan. The need for collaboration in Sudan arises from the understanding that no single entity can single-handedly address the complex issues facing the country.

Collaboration among pertinent bodies entails building strong partnerships based on shared values, mutual respect, and a common vision for the future of Sudan. It requires fostering open and honest dialogue, active listening, and a willingness to understand and appreciate diverse perspectives. By embracing this inclusive approach, the various stakeholders can harness their collective strengths and expertise to develop comprehensive strategies that address the root causes of conflict and work towards sustainable peace.

By valuing and respecting the perspectives and experiences of Sudanese people, collaborations can be more contextually grounded and sustainable, leading to meaningful and lasting change. An important aspect of collaboration also lies in the coordination and alignment of various initiatives and efforts. This can be achieved through regular communication platforms, joint planning, and transparent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

By optimizing resources and avoiding inefficient use of funds, collaboration can maximize its impact on the ground and effectively address the interconnected challenges faced by Sudan. Various factions and ethnic groups within the country must be encouraged to engage in dialogue,

reconciliation, and joint decision-making processes. By promoting internal unity and inclusiveness, Sudan can foster an environment conducive to lasting peace and development.

Achieving lasting change in Sudan requires a collective commitment to collaboration from all actors involved. It necessitates patience, perseverance, and a genuine desire to bring about positive transformation. While challenges may arise along the way, staying focused on the common goal of peace and prosperity can help overcome obstacles and build a better future for the people of Sudan.

Ensuring that the populace of Sudan has access to these fundamental necessities is essential for stabilizing their communities and providing them with a sturdy groundwork upon which they can thrive. Furthermore, the establishment of stability in Sudan is vital for crafting a more promising future for its inhabitants. It is equally necessary to work towards a lasting resolution to the conflict and establish a secure political milieu to help mitigate the ongoing crisis.

The establishment of stability in Sudan is vital for shaping a more promising trajectory for its inhabitants. Engaging in concerted efforts to engineer a sustainable resolution to the conflict and cultivate a stable political climate is equally pivotal in mitigating the ongoing crisis. The ongoing conflict in Sudan has resulted in an alarming increase in the number of refugees seeking shelter in neighboring countries.

These individuals have been forced to flee their homes due to the dangers and uncertainties associated with conflict including violence, displacement, and the destruction of infrastructure and essential services. In light of this crisis, the international community has a significant role to play in providing support and assistance to Sudanese refugees. This support can come in various forms, such as humanitarian aid to address critical needs such as food, water, and medical care.

It is clear that the ongoing conflict in Sudan has resulted in a significant refugee crisis that requires immediate attention and aid from the international community. Efforts must be made to provide humanitarian aid and support to those who have been forced to flee their homes particularly women and children who are often the most vulnerable in times of conflict.

With the right support and assistance, it is possible to alleviate the suffering caused by this crisis and create a more stable and peaceful future for all. The international community needs to work closely with Sudan to understand the root causes of conflict, as well as creating a more stable and prosperous future for the country.

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

Editorial

Visiting Ethiopia: A rewarding experience

Ethiopia is determinedly working to develop its untapped tourist destinations, unleash the potential of its endowments found across the nation and to bring about inclusive national growth.

By giving due emphasis to the tourism sector in the nation's ten years homegrown development plan, the government has been taking several measures and initiatives that are instrumental to shore up the tourism environment, develop the untapped tourist destinations, exploit the potential of the sector and attain the country's growth strategy.

As part of this effort, the government has been aggressively undertaking various projects and carrying out huge development works that can reinvigorate the country's tourism environment, advance the sector and make the country the most sought-after tourist destinations, thereby generating significant economic returns.

The initiatives launched by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed - the 'Dine for Sheger' 'Dine for Nation' 'Dine for Generation' projects- to transform the existing and the new tourist spots and make the sector the driver of growth, are well underway and are changing the features of the country.

Through the initiatives embarked at different times and phases, remarkable successes are being achieved. Just to mention but a few, a project that has been designed to uplift the image of Addis Ababa and make it an urban tourism site under 'Beautifying Sheger Project' has borne fruits and transformed the image of the capital. The successful renovation and construction activities of the Unity, Entoto and Friendship parks as well as the Science Museum can be showcases in this respect.

In the same manner, the inauguration of the Halala Kella Resort which was part of the 'Dine for Nation' project is another success story that shows the extensive efforts exerted to transform the tourism sector at the national level and make the country a desired tourist destination in the region and beyond.

Likewise, last Saturday, a world-class national park, 'The Elephant Paw Lodge', located in the Dawuro Zone of South West Ethiopia, was inaugurated.

The area though has a stunning natural beauty, a wonderful scenic and harbors diverse species of wild animals including buffalo, antelope, deer aside from the endangered African elephant species, was less recognized tourist destination because of underdeveloped infrastructure.

However, under this same initiative, 'Dine for Nation', the site that was once entirely inaccessible and even unseen has now been renewed, and growing to be a desirable tourist attraction has become an additional stimulus to the tourism sector that can present economic benefits for localities and the country.

Currently, the construction activities of some projects are ongoing well and nearing completion. The expansion of infrastructural facilities and similar all-inclusive tourism services have been also fully upgraded in order to improve tourism accessibility, increase tourist arrivals, meet visitors' expectations and so doing promoting the nation's tourism industry.

Unarguably, Ethiopia is a country blessed with several natural and manmade attractions. Its stunning landscape, diverse endemic wildlife and bird species, historic sites, cultural wealth, and religious practices are enticing.

When tourist destinations that are under construction across the country are fully completed, apart from transforming the tourism sector and taking it to new heights, they will keep Ethiopia as one of the top preferred tourist attractions in the world.

And Ethiopia, as a land where enormous diversity is entertained, has a lot to give for visitors. Thus, coming to Ethiopia and visiting the unique tourist destinations, witnessing its people breathtaking religious and cultural practices, would be a great chance that offers a lifetime experience for tourists.

Opinion

Enforcing regulations to combat the unchecked spread of hate speech

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

In today's expansive digital realm, a pressing concern has arisen due to the lack of accountability. This absence of consequences has paved the way for the unrestrained dissemination of hate speech and disinformation. However, implementing stringent regulatory measures can play a pivotal role in addressing this issue. By doing so, individuals will be more inclined to exercise caution before posting content knowing that their harmful actions will not go unnoticed or unpunished.

To achieve a consistent and effective approach in combating hate speech, it becomes essential to establish clear definitions and guidelines. By providing specific parameters and criteria, society can collectively agree on what constitutes hate speech and how it should be dealt with. This clarity is crucial in streamlining the process of identifying instances of hate speech and eliminating potential ambiguity.

By nurturing a more informed and responsible digital community, the fight against hate speech and disinformation can be better equipped to succeed. The lack of accountability in the digital realm has given rise to an unchecked dissemination of hate speech and disinformation. Implementing stringent regulatory measures becomes imperative in order to establish a sense of responsibility among users deterring them from engaging in harmful actions.

The establishment of definitive definitions and guidelines becomes vital in order to maintain a uniform approach towards identifying and addressing instances of hate speech in a consistent manner. The lack of accountability in the digital landscape has become a breeding ground for the dissemination of hate speech and disinformation without any sense of responsibility.

Regulatory measures function as a strong deterrent, compelling individuals to carefully consider their online actions that could potentially promote hate or disseminate misleading information. The apprehension of facing legal consequences or other penalties serves as a significant incentive for users to be more cautious and deliberate in understanding the implications of their online behavior.

To achieve a consistent approach towards combating hate speech, it becomes essential to establish clear definitions and guidelines. By providing specific parameters and criteria, society can collectively agree on what constitutes hate speech and how it should be dealt with. Setting definitive boundaries allows for a streamlined process of identifying instances of hate speech eliminating potential ambiguity.

These clear guidelines assist in establishing a uniform and fair response when addressing incidents of hate speech avoiding any biases or disparities in dealing with similar cases. This standardized approach imparts a sense of fairness and clarity ensuring that the consequences faced by perpetrators of hate speech are appropriate and proportional. By disseminating information regarding the harmful effects of hate speech and the

importance of upholding integrity in online interactions, individuals gain a deeper understanding of the impact of their words.

Raising public awareness and promoting education helps foster a more responsible digital culture empowering users to discern between acceptable and harmful online behavior. By embracing these multifaceted strategies, strides can be made towards cultivating a more accountable and harmonious digital society.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the rapid and unrestricted spread of false information and fake news in the modern era of technology is a matter that requires immediate attention and necessary measures to be taken. This unhindered flow of misinformation bears the potential to dismantle public trust in institutions, create disharmony within communities, and worst of all incite acts of violence.

The digital age has witnessed an unnerving surge in the diffusion of fake news and misinformation. With the advancement of technology, anyone can create and circulate false narratives with minimal effort and no accountability. These falsehoods penetrate deep into the minds of individuals preying on their unsuspecting nature and influencing their thoughts and actions.

By exploiting the ease of access to information in the digital era both individuals and organizations can now manipulate public opinion to suit their own interests, be it political, economic, or personal. This unrestricted expansion of misinformation poses a grave threat to society as a whole eroding the very foundations on which trust and communal harmony are built.

The seeds of discord sowed by fake news infiltrate communities leading to deep divisions and conflicts. The resulting disunity prevails both in physical spaces such as neighborhoods and workplaces as well as in virtual platforms where social media algorithms serve to amplify these divisions.

The divisive nature of misinformation cuts at the very fabric of societal cohesion and poses a significant challenge to the creation and maintenance of a peaceful coexistence. Additionally, the impact of fake news and misinformation extends beyond the realm of social disharmony and poses a tangible threat to public safety. In instances where malicious actors purposefully spread false narratives, the consequences can ripple through society with alarming speed and severity.

Given the gravity of the situation, governments, media organizations, and technology companies need to cooperate in tackling this mounting crisis. Governments have the responsibility of implementing legislation that holds individuals and organizations accountable for spreading false information with harmful intentions while also educating citizens on the dangers of misinformation.

By enacting rigorous regulatory measures, defining clear boundaries, and promoting public awareness and education, individuals can be motivated to exercise caution and responsibility in their online actions. These multifaceted strategies can help in combating hate speech fostering a more accountable and harmonious digital society.

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The Ethiopian Herald

Established in 1943

Published daily except Mondays
By The Ethiopian Press Agency

Office of the CEO

Tel. 011-126-42-22

Fax. 251-011-156-98-62

email- epa@press.et

Advertisement and Dist.

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The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy

STEMpower, Visa's partnership empowers young minds, fuels economic development in Ethiopia

BY HIZKEL HAILU

Ethiopia can be considered as a suitable country for international organizations to work jointly with the government due to several factors. The Ethiopian government has demonstrated its willingness to collaborate with international organizations and promote investment and partnerships. It has implemented various policies and initiatives to attract foreign direct investment and foster a favorable business environment.

Apart from this, the country's economic potential, infrastructure development, human capital, renewable energy potential, and focus on financial inclusion make it an attractive destination for international organizations like STEM Power and VISA to work jointly with the government. Collaboration in these areas can contribute to Ethiopia's economic growth, job creation, and sustainable development goals while providing opportunities for the organizations to expand their operations and make a positive impact.

STEMpower, a leading non-profit organization dedicated to promoting STEM education, and Visa, a global payments technology company, are proud to commemorate the successful completion of their three-year partnership in Ethiopia. Together, they have been instrumental in empowering the youth with essential skills in entrepreneurship, business management, and financial literacy. Through their collaborative efforts, more than 2,600 young men and women have received comprehensive training, resulting in the establishment of 59 start-ups and contributing to job creation and economic growth in the community.

The joint project between STEMpower and Visa aimed to equip young innovators and aspiring entrepreneurs in Ethiopia with the necessary tools and knowledge to succeed in the business world. Over the course of three years, these ambitious individuals received comprehensive training, coaching, and mentorship. The program's focus was on nurturing entrepreneurship skills, fostering business management acumen, and promoting financial literacy among the participants.

The project has had a profound impact on the lives of the youth involved. Through their dedication and hard work, 59 start-ups were established, showcasing the entrepreneurial spirit and potential within the community. These new ventures have contributed to job creation and economic growth, empowering young entrepreneurs to become drivers of change in their society.

To celebrate the achievements of the young entrepreneurs, STEMpower and Visa have recently hosted an event here in Addis Ababa. The event provided a platform for program participants to share their inspiring stories, industry experts to provide valuable insights, and a display of the successful start-ups established through the project. It was a momentous occasion that highlighted



the transformative power of education, mentorship, and collaboration.

On his remark during the occasion, State Minister for Labor and Skill, Nigussu Tilahun highlighted the positive impact of the project on Ethiopian entrepreneurs and job creation. According to him, the project has provided opportunities for thousands of Ethiopian entrepreneurs to establish their own businesses and generate employment directly or indirectly.

Through enabling individuals to become entrepreneurs, the project has likely contributed to economic growth and development in Ethiopia. Entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in fostering innovation, creating jobs, and stimulating economic activity. When individuals start their own businesses, they often hire employees, thereby expanding the job market and reducing unemployment rates, he noted.

Furthermore, he emphasized the government's commitment to follow up and support the project. This commitment indicates that the government recognizes the importance of entrepreneurship and job creation in the country's economic development. By pledging support, the government aims to ensure the sustainability and growth of these entrepreneurial endeavors.

Simenew Keskes (PhD), the Country Director at STEMpower, expressed immense pride in the project's impact on the lives of Ethiopian youth. He emphasized the significance of providing young people with the skills and resources necessary to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams and make positive contributions to their communities.

Abel Tefera, the Project Manager at STEMpower for his part, extended heartfelt appreciation to the coaches, trainers, judges, and partners who played a pivotal role in the project's success. Their support in providing suitable training venues created a conducive learning environment for the young entrepreneurs.

Abel further expressed the organization's readiness to register 1000 women Ethiopian entrepreneurs from the January 1, 2024.

According to him, after taking essential trainings, coaching and the competition, winners will receive startup money award from the project coordinators. He also announced that they will work on women and physically disabled youths in collaboration with IBM and Embassy of Finland in Addis Ababa.

Visa, as a global payments technology company, recognizes the importance of financial inclusion and creating opportunities for underserved individuals. Yared Endale, a Country Manager at Visa Ethiopia, highlighted the company's commitment to expanding access to formal financial services and understanding the financial needs of diverse populations. Through collaborations with organizations like STEMpower, Visa aims to deliver tailored local market solutions that empower individuals and uplift communities.

The collaboration between STEMpower and Visa to empower young entrepreneurs in Ethiopia holds significant economic advantages for the country. By equipping youth with essential skills in entrepreneurship, business management, and financial literacy, the project has fostered a culture of innovation and enterprise. The establishment of 59 start-ups through the program has contributed to job creation and economic growth, providing opportunities for employment and income generation.

These young entrepreneurs bring fresh ideas, creativity, and a drive for success, which can lead to the development of new industries and increased productivity. Additionally, the emphasis on financial literacy equips these individuals with the knowledge to effectively manage their businesses and make informed financial decisions, which in turn strengthens the overall economy. The economic benefits of empowering young entrepreneurs extend beyond the immediate impact, as their ventures have the potential to attract investment, drive innovation, and contribute to Ethiopia's long-term economic development.

Seble Geremew, a beneficiary of the STEMpower-Visa entrepreneurship project, expressed her deep gratitude for the invaluable opportunity she received.

She emphasized that the project has been a life-changing experience, providing her with crucial skills and resources to pursue her entrepreneurial dreams. She further highlighted how the comprehensive training, coaching, and mentorship provided through the project have equipped her with the knowledge and confidence to start her own business.

As to her, the support she has received in developing her business plan, refining her entrepreneurial skills, and navigating the financial aspects of running a company. Acknowledging that without the STEMpower-Visa project, she may not have had the means or guidance to establish her own startup, she stated that she has also created job opportunity for other youths in her "Conte Pastry" around Bole Medhanealem, Addis Ababa.

Ezedin Kamil, another fortunate entrepreneur who benefited from the STEMpower-Visa project, is grateful for the incredible opportunity he has received. He expressed his appreciation for the comprehensive training, coaching, and mentorship provided through the project, which played a pivotal role in his entrepreneurial journey. According to him, the project equipped him with essential skills in entrepreneurship, business management, and financial literacy, enabling him to turn his innovative ideas into a successful startup.

He also emphasized how the support and guidance he has received from the project mentors and coaches helped him refine his business plan, develop strategies, and overcome challenges along the way. Highlighting the impact that the project has had on his personal and professional growth, empowering him to create his own job and contribute to the local economy, he further expressed his excitement for the future.

STEMpower, a pan-African charity with a decade-long commitment to promoting STEM education, plans to expand its operations further. In 2024, the organization intends to reach more than ten new countries while strengthening its existing STEM Centers in countries like Ethiopia, Burundi, Cameroon, Ghana, Liberia, Kenya, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, Somali land, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. This expansion will enable STEMpower to provide hands-on STEM programs and entrepreneurial support to an even broader range of students across Sub-Saharan Africa.

The collaboration between STEMpower and Visa in Ethiopia has proven to be a resounding success, empowering thousands of young entrepreneurs and driving economic growth in the country. By providing comprehensive training, coaching, and mentorship in entrepreneurship, business management, and financial literacy, the project has nurtured a culture of innovation and enterprise. The establishment of 59 start-ups and the creation of job opportunities demonstrated the transformative impact of education and collaboration.

Art & Culture

Multimedia- platform to boost the art industry

BY NAOL GIRMA

The art industry demands comprehensive efforts of actors and statesmen as it is sensitive and touchy sector that navigate the fate of the nation. Indeed there are numerous multimedia issuing license and engaging in the sector however their national stewardship and social responsibility remain in question. Most of the time, producers put emphasis in the hustling of money than providing the nation with vicarious learning. Nonetheless, it might be also a hasty generalization to conclude in such a way since it is also of paramount importance to investigate achievements of certain multimedia registering glittering success on the sector. Though the primary objective of companies is to be competent in the business arena, it is an undeniable fact that there are some that appeared to be beacon of light for those crawling the toil.

Be it as it may, there are some multimedia discharging responsibilities based on tenet of professionalism and serving the nation and themselves adhering to principles.

Here it would be counterproductive to mention some of the firms that travelled lucrative distance in the sensuous beauty sector.

Toneter Eteal Trading Pvt. Ltd. has been operating in theatre, film issuing licence from relevant authorities ever since its inception. The Company has ample experience in printing and publishing books and making various secular and spiritual video productions, producing theatres, films, musical works and radio and television dramas. It is an organization that is designing and working on projects that can benefit the country and society in the future.

According to Mesay Admasu, General Manager of Toneter Eteal Multimedia, in collaboration with different relevant authorities and other stakeholders, The Toneter Eteal Multimedia is currently working on various art works by inviting different artists including young and new poets.

The other area in which the company engaged in is the production of documentary films which is an art form that one can explore country's history, culture, religion and other different social values and has great impact for generation to come depicting yesterday and building tomorrow. Especially for countries like Ethiopia, which are multi-cultural, multi-religious, and which have travelled chronology for the most known human history, documentaries are a unique artistic tool - for the diverse nations to introduce themselves, their culture, and their religious values to others and record



their history and prepare it for the posterity.

“Our company, Toneter Eteal Trading Pvt. Ltd., has been doing an unimaginable job in shaping, recording and preserving our social values that have been steadfast for centuries in different destinations in every corner of our country.”

According to documents, the film industry was introduced to Ethiopia almost a century ago and movies were introduced during the aforementioned time span. It is obvious that the world's leading film industries have contributed a lot for the wellbeing of nations. Especially, two of the world's biggest film industries (producers) have done a great deal of job in shaping their history and culture over the centuries. Thus, if multimedia scale up best practices from renowned movie industries, they can inscribe fingerprints for the overall development of the country and betterment of the society.

“In the concurrent world every now and then it is not uncommon to watch science fiction movies that predict the destiny of the earth we live in. In this sense, our country Ethiopia is the owner of a never-ending history, a never-ending culture. However, most of the time our history and culture is the central subject matter of our films and albeit not displayed to that vigour. Our company Toneter Eteal is making great efforts to ensure that the content of the films it produces have a national theme and emphasize the cultural and religious values of the diverse society living in the every corner of the country. We are fully hopeful that we will bring a big change in the film market of our country in the coming years.”

The company is also organizing different art programs cognizant of the fact that there are more and enormity of cultures and events supposed to be organized in the metropolis. Much art is produced beyond the popular and widely accessible. However, there are very limited numbers of formal art evenings that have a fixed time and place and operate with a large amount of capital. Art programs



Mesay Admasu

If multimedia scale up best practices from renowned movie industries, they can inscribe fingerprints for the overall development of the country and betterment of the society

are feasts which present a band of several arts that are self-contained and can stand alone at a common table and invite the audience and art lover to enjoy. As the arts are very volatile and edible by their nature,

it is believed that it will have a feast when they have a limited time and time to gather. Especially, in terms of satisfying the needs and feelings of the majority of the audience, art events that include many arts are very preferable. Toneter Eteal has been working in this field for many years and one of the mentioned programs is the main "Lefe Wolefe" art program.

The other area the company engaged in is promoting cultural events which is mostly designed to entertain. Those are events of some significance related to some art form, culture or values. These events aim to spread cultural themes. These can refer to various arts such as art, music, photography, literature, etc.

In addition inauguration of cultural centres is the other focus: Graduation ceremony of any centre that has direct connection with culture. It mainly focuses on the open spaces of museums, art centres, dance schools, etc.

Moreover the Company also paves the way for the development of Poetry. Veteran and young poets will present their works at each stage. This is a platform for veteran poets to present their works that have many social benefits and to educate the community, and for new and young poets to introduce themselves and their works.

Discourse is also the other area organized by the company. The discourse is an educational one on a specific topic and is a serious program presented by scholars or professionals who are directly related to the chosen topic. The subjects focus on the basic points that should unite us as a society in diversity and, aim to create a common imagination and understanding.

The company also facilitates different national programs that express the culture of different ethnic groups and traditional music made in their own language as well as other modern songs with social significance.

Global Affairs

Fashion Forward: Protect Africa from 'Fagia' Amid Alarming Global Stocktake

Thousands of bales of cheap, poor-quality secondhand clothing arrive on boats and ships docking on Africa's extensive 26,000-kilometer-long coastline, dotted with at least 100 ports and harbors. From Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Uganda, and Kenya, Africa's ecosystems are choking with cheap, air-polluting, and emissions-producing low-quality clothing as they often contain plastic-based fibers.

High volumes of very low-grade used clothing commonly known as fagia, Swahili for sweep, as they are often sold to fagia traders in large volumes and for very little money—to cut into tiny pieces and sell as industrial rags and thereafter be used as industrial fuels—significantly cause air pollution and emissions.

The first-ever global stocktake is set to conclude at the ongoing COP28 and is a process for countries and stakeholders to assess progress towards meeting the goals of the Paris Climate Change Agreement. The world is not on track to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, and the fashion industry has come under heavy criticism. Now some in the sector have expeditiously switched to sustainable fashion.

"We are a hub for climate-focused solutions derived from nature. We are helping the fashion and textile industry transform into a circular economy by developing and scaling new fibers and yarns that are made from seaweeds," says Tessa Callaghan, co-founder and CEO of Keel Labs.

"Rather than using and mitigating the systems that we currently have, we are pairing an existing supply chain—in fiber and textile manufacturing—with new raw materials. For us, that is seaweed, which is able to negate the water, land use, and chemical usage that really make the fashion industry so polluting. We work with brands to help them transition to a better, cleaner future."

Protein Evolution, also represented at COP28, is the U.S.'s first biological recycling company with validated technology and a clear supply-chain roadmap that enables plastic production from waste, not fossil fuels. The result is recycled plastic, which makes a low-carbon, circular plastic economy possible.

A circular economy is anchored on waste management, mitigating pollution by keeping products and materials in use for longer, and regenerating natural systems. In the fashion industry, circular fashion refers to a regenerative approach that ensures that clothing and textiles are designed, produced, and consumed with great consideration for the environment and related ecosystems, minimizing waste, pollution, and the use of natural resources.

UN research indicates that greenhouse gas emissions must peak before 2025 at the latest and decline 43 percent by 2030 to limit global warming to 1.5°C; crossing the 1.5°C threshold risks unleashing far more severe climate change impacts. To halt the pace and impact of the ongoing climate



The stocktake calls for a systems transformation that follows a whole-society and whole-economy approach that mainstreams climate resilience and development aligned with low greenhouse gas emissions

crisis, it can no longer be business as usual for the fashion industry.

Fast fashion—rapidly producing high volumes of clothing—causes extensive damage to the planet, exploits workers, and harms animals. An estimated 300,000 metric tons of clothing are dumped in household bins annually; approximately 80 percent of it is incinerated, while 20 percent goes to landfills.

The cost of fast fashion to the planet can no longer be ignored. The textile industry is responsible for 10% of all global CO2 emissions, which is more than all international aviation and shipping emissions combined. At the ongoing COP28 Summit, delegates heard from fashion industry players about steps being taken to reverse its negative impact on the climate, environment, and all its ecosystems and health.

"I would like to call what we do fashion farming, actually. We are trying to grow regenerative cotton and turn it into fabulous fabrics for our fashion lines. We have been working on this for the last five years, and we are trying to get farmers in our areas to try and succeed in regenerative agriculture. The idea is to build healthy, resilient, and interconnected ecosystems," said Muzaffer Kayhan, CEO, SÖKTAŞ Tekstil.

"At SÖKTAŞ, we recognize the value and the inherent resilience of interconnected ecosystems. Through employing centuries-long regenerative practices, we seek to undo the negative environmental effects of industrial agriculture.

"We are the world's first company to completely use plant-based fur as an alternative to animals, synthetic furs, and

all sorts of fluffy materials. We work with fashion brands to provide an alternative to material that is more responsible, sustainable, and nature-derived—an ethical and green solution," said Roni GamZon, co-founder and chief commercial officer, Biofluff.

New reports are highlighting the urgency of scaling up green solutions as greenhouse gas emissions hit new highs, temperature records tumble, and climate impacts intensify. According to the Emissions Gap Report 2023: Broken Record: Temperatures hit new highs, yet world fails to cut emissions (again) finds that "the world is heading for a temperature rise far above the Paris Agreement goals unless countries deliver more than they have promised."

The Paris Agreement inspired near-universal climate action and played a central role in catalyzing cooperative action so the world could address the climate crisis. But the global stocktake shows implementation of the Paris Agreement is lacking across all areas and not where it should be.

Governments will take a decision on the global stocktake at COP28, which can be leveraged to accelerate ambition in their next round of climate action plans due in 2025. The stocktake calls for a systems transformation that follows a whole-society and whole-economy approach that mainstreams climate resilience and development aligned with low greenhouse gas emissions, and the fashion industry is expected to scale up green solutions and significantly contribute to the global journey to net zero.

(SOURCE: INTER PRESS SERVICE)

Law & Politics

Would the international community rebuff Egypt's stance?

BY SOLOMON WASSIHUN

Egypt's decision to call off the GERD talks and walk away from the negotiating table after the conclusion of the last four rounds of negotiations initiated after the unexpected meeting of Ethiopian and Egyptian leaders in Cairo last July surprised few.

The marathon negotiations on the dam are almost as old as the dam itself and have been interrupted by frequent deadlocks. It began in November 2011, when the first meeting of the tripartite technical committee, which included the irrigation ministers of Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia, was held at the suggestion of the then Ethiopian prime minister. Unfortunately, the twelve-year negotiation process did not succeed in shaping and polishing Egypt's rigid and harsh stance to match that of the other two parties, especially Ethiopia. The Egyptian stance is still outdated, unfair and no longer in line with current political and economic realities.

Egypt's fixation on the outdated colonial treaties and its delusional mantra of "historical rights" were the obstacles that led to the tripartite negotiations being repeatedly end in deadlock and failing without achieving the desired goal - a negotiated outcome approved by all three parties.

The statement made by the Ethiopian authorities last week after the news of the failure of the negotiation underlines the Egyptians' fixation on the past. "During the four rounds [of negotiation], Ethiopia endeavored and keenly engaged with the two lower riparian countries to address the major issues of difference and reach an amicable agreement. Egypt, in contrast, maintained colonial era mentality and erected roadblocks against efforts toward convergence."

Negotiations essentially involve a dialogue guided by facts, logic and good faith, looking at issues from different angles and being flexible enough to consider the other side's arguments, let the more convincing idea win and make concessions where necessary.

However, the Egyptians' approach exhibited none of these characteristics of a negotiating party seeking consensus and an agreement that would bring security and satisfaction to all sides. Rather, they were concerned with asserting their interests, making accusations and apportioning blame, rather than fully engaging in dialogue to build mutual understanding and create a common ground for consensus.

"Talks need to be productive and showing genuine commitment is one way of ensuring that. Ethiopia's commitment has barely been reciprocated by Egypt throughout the just concluded trilateral talks. Not only has Egypt taken part in these talks half-heartedly, but it has also worked against the success of the talks. The statements



Egypt issued before and after each round of talks indicate this lack of genuine interest and commitment to reach an agreement. Egyptian negotiators also did not display a serious commitment to reach an acceptable solution," says a recent statement from the Ethiopian foreign office.

The Egyptians know that it can not achieve its ultimate intention at the negotiating table, since its arguments have no logic and legal grounds. Essentially what the Egyptians asked was an agreement that provided the guarantee that under any circumstance Abbay River was primarily to serve Egyptian needs, while Ethiopia would only be entitled to use Abbay after the Egyptians got enough water in their reservoirs.

Based on such a crazy agreement proposal, Ethiopia would enter a legally binding commitment to drain the reservoir of GERD, during the dry season, to ensure that Egyptian dams are always brimming with Ethiopia's water throughout the year and under any climatic conditions.

This means the GERD power generation output and all related development activities would stay idle until the dry season ends regardless of its length, be it one or five years.

Simply put the negotiated agreement that Egyptians are seeking to achieve is the one that makes the GERD to be a stand-by reservoir for the dams and irrigation systems in Egypt and Sudan. No government would voluntarily agree to enter into such kind of commitment.

The gist of Article Six, of the negotiation document that reportedly was the focal point of divergence of the negotiating parties, boils down to making GERD a reservoir for the dams of the lower stream nations, Sudan and Egypt.

"We will not jeopardize Ethiopia's future development aspirations, and we will not guarantee a permanent figure for the release

of water either during the drought season or the rainy season until water division is made clear through agreement," said the Chief Ethiopian negotiator, Ambassador Seleshi Bekele.

Ethiopians, Sudanese, Egyptians, and the rest of the riparian states all are equally privileged children of the Nile. No single child can have special privileges over the Nile. That is the overriding truth. Colonial history is in essence a history of injustice, greed, and violence, so it can not be used as evidence in the 21st century to advance one's argument.

Egypt and Sudan as well, do not accept the reality that it's just another child of the Nile just like the nine others. Evidence for that is they did not sign and ratify the [CFA] Cooperative Framework Agreement.

It is this agreement that would provide an appropriate response for an equitable and peaceful use of the Nile among the riparian states. Egypt does not like such an agreement because it works toward a fair share of the Nile among its riparians. They only want to continue getting an unfair share, just as they did in the past.

As a law scholar mentioned a decade ago, the Nile Basin Cooperative Framework Agreement would have ushered in the era of the beginning of the end of Egyptian hydro-political hegemony. "Herodotus described Egypt as the gift of the Nile. It seems as if the upper riparian states, from whose mountains the Nile gushes downstream, are asking Herodotus in retrospect: whose gift is the Nile anyway?" writes the scholar.

The past is gone. Africa is changing, and other riparian states' populations are fast growing, with expanding desires and ambitions for development like the Sudanese and the Egyptians.

After walking out of the negotiation, the Egyptians seem to be devising a mechanism of coercion. The statement issued last week by the Egyptian authorities corroborates

this assumption. "Egypt reserves its right, in accordance with international charters and accords, to defend its water and national security in case of any harm," said Egyptians.

That would not be the first time they used such a tactic to bully Ethiopia into signing an unjust agreement that would permanently jeopardize its rights to use its river Abbay equitably without causing any significant harm to the two downstream countries.

In 2020, Egypt, having been teamed up with its VI strategic ally, the US under the Trump administration, very nearly succeeded in coercing Ethiopia into signing a GERD deal cooked by the Americans with the Egyptian recipe. Despite the explicit warning OF severe consequences, Ethiopia stood its ground in defiance of the diplomatic and economic cohesion and successfully defended its sovereign rights to use its resources.

With the AU taking the leading role the international community should rebuff Egypt's decision to discontinue the negotiation and exert all the political and economic leverage to push Egypt back to the negotiating table.

It is indeed a shame for the regional body, AU, to fail to provide the appropriate leadership in facilitating a successful platform and negotiation mechanism for the tripartite states to devise ways to resolve one of the long-running and major disputes in the continent.

The AU should at least make noise to preempt the highly probable next move of the Egyptians. Taking the GERD dispute back to the UNSC, the UN Security Council, notifying the latter that the issue is an African problem that should be settled by the African themselves with African solution. Failure to do such preemptive actions would give one more credible and solid reason for skeptics who still question the relevance of AU.

Planet Earth

Chebera Elephant Paw Lodge ignites hope to rescue endangered Elephant population in Ethiopia

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Elephants contribute significantly to the biological balance of their habitats and give several ecological, economic, and social advantages. As a result, elephants may help the environment by dispersing numerous seeds. They consume a broad range of plant species and help disseminate seeds across long distances through their droppings, helping forest regeneration and biodiversity.

They are also in favor of changing the environment. While they go across their habitats, elephants make paths and clearings that provide other species access to water supplies and fresh chances for plant development. Additionally, they can improve soil quality and encourage the growth of flora by aerating the soil through their movements and feeding habits. By offering important ecosystem services like carbon sequestration and water control, elephants' presence in natural habitats supports the general health and functionality of these settings.

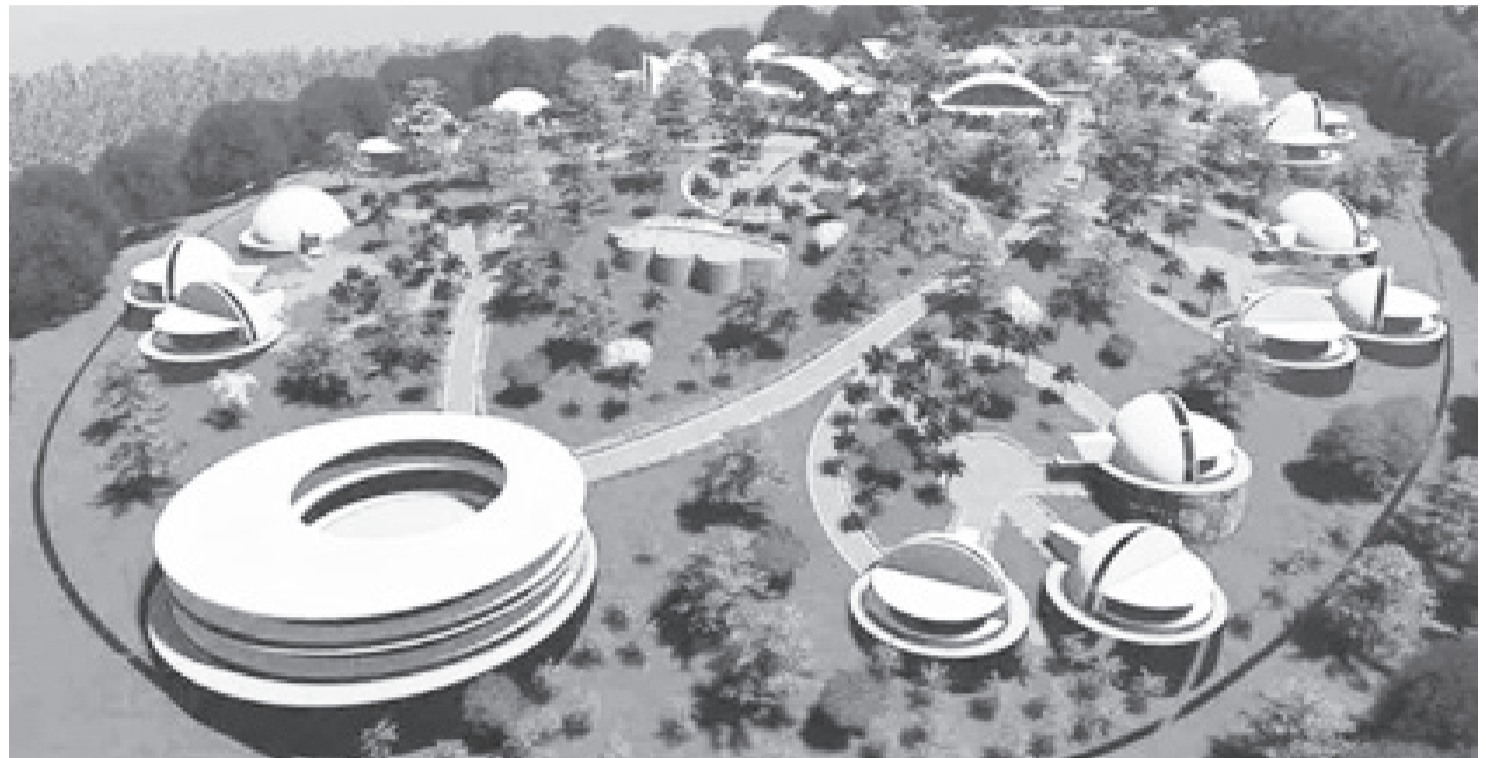
Due to their popularity as a wildlife attraction, which draws tourists to national parks and reserves and boosts local businesses and communities, elephants also benefit a nation's economy. Besides, elephants are highly valued both culturally and spiritually in many nations, where they are frequently used as representations of power, conservation, and wisdom. They are also essential for economic prospects since local populations can profit from jobs created by conservation efforts aimed at safeguarding elephants, which can be found in ecotourism, wildlife management, and other related businesses.

Ethiopia is home to the African elephant, the biggest terrestrial mammal on the planet. The country contains various national parks and wildlife reserves where elephants may be found, including the Babile Elephant Sanctuary and the Omo National Park.

Haramaya University Biodiversity lecturer and expert Dr. Anteneh Belayneh told The Ethiopian Herald that the Ethiopian people are fond of elephants. It was stated that, unlike other concerns, the people who live by the habitats of elephants have share the same opinion about them. The reason for this is that villages follow the elephant to save their lives during times of drought because the elephant searches for areas with water and food.

Elephants can also indicate appropriate locations for semi-pastoralists in times of drought since they feel where water is found. They also associate their own existence with serenity. As a result, most people referred to elephants as peacemakers and ecological strategists, he added.

Despite the conservation efforts that are underway to protect these magnificent creatures and their natural habitats, the population of elephants, in some parts of the country, has been declining due to habitat loss and poaching. Taking this view into account, the government, especially following the political reform that took



Chebera Churchura Elephant Paw Lodge

place in mid-2018, focused on protecting, preserving, and beautifying the natural resources of the country. The inauguration of Chebera Elephant Paw Lodge is a good example and indicator of harmonizing nurture, preservation, and entertainment.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said “We will consolidate building a better Ethiopia by turning our blessings into tangible resources. Ethiopia is a country endowed with many blessings, and the Konta Zone where the lodge is found is a perfect display of natural wealth. We should strongly desire and understand three things to transform Ethiopia to a higher level; and those are seeing, acting, and maintaining prosperity”.

He explained that “the richness of vision is to look properly at what is in front of us and realize that there is a better opportunity in it. The premier said a person who is not lucky enough to see prosperity may consider the wealth next as debt. He also pointed out that if we cannot see the blessings given to us, others may see and take them away. Many have not been fortunate enough to see their wealth because of a lack of seeing their prosperity and their wealth has been taken and exploited by others. However, the ability to know the wealth around us alone does not bring results, he stated, adding that it is important to work hard for full utilization of the resources. Protecting and sustaining history is as important as showing kindness and hospitality to the Ethiopian people to tourists as well as giving protection to them.”

House of People’s Representative (HPR) Speaker, Tagesse Chafo stated that the Chebera Churchura Elephant Paw Lodge is a transformative example for Ethiopia’s development praising its ability to turn local tourism gems into national prosperity. Noting that Ethiopia is blessed with natural resources in all its corners, the speaker added that these resources have great potential to contribute to job creation, economic growth, and prosperity. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure mutual benefit by identifying and developing the national resources.



Minister of Mines Engineer Habtamu Tegegn said that the newly inaugurated Chebera Churchura Elephant Paw Lodge has been built as a tourist attraction of international standards. The national park is home to the endangered African elephant species, buffalo, wild boar, deer, and antelope, among others. Several rivers also cross the densely forested park and it has five lakes.

Indeed, the Lodge is necessary not only to beautify and attract tourists but also to maintain and safeguard the elephants and biodiversity of the nation. It might also be an excellent model for the Babile elephant sanctuary. By coincidence, the elephant has found itself in the Babile Sanctuary, where it can travel no farther. Because it cannot travel down to the desert because there is a tremendous risk waiting for it, including the sand that hindered it. If it goes, it will end up in the Indian Ocean. It can't travel to the front because the steep mountains of Eastern Hararge, particularly the Gara Mulleta, are in the way. Furthermore, agricultural settlers inhabit the Eastern Hararge Mountains.

Unlike other elephants that live elsewhere, which can move and change their place the Babile Elephant has nowhere to go and its fate depends only on the Sanctuary. Therefore, the elephant is in a very critical situation and forced to live in an isolated ecosystem.

The sanctuary, on the other hand, has

experienced significant man-made and environmental problems. Factors affecting the sanctuary include illegal settlements, land grabbing, agricultural development, unplanned investment, poaching, climate change, invasive migratory weeds, and recurrent drought.

Hence, the Chebera Churchura Elephant Paw Lodge provides hope for the Babile Elephants since the government's attention wakes regional governments, the local community, and essential stakeholders to work together to rescue them by beautifying and making the area tourism destinations.

Especially, the completion of the Chebera Churchura Elephant Paw Lodge inspires the concerned bodies to make the sanctuary eastern part of Ethiopia a tourist destination by linking the historical city of Harar, Dakota stone, Lij Iyasu detention area, and Kundudo mountain with its horses. Saving the elephant helps to save rivers, the communities, and to fight climate change.

In general, elephants play a vital role in maintaining healthy ecosystems and contribute to the well-being of both natural environments and human societies. The Chebera Churchura Elephant Paw Lodge can set a good example for protecting and conserving elephant populations across the country. This is, in turn, essential for ensuring the ecological, economic, and social benefits to be sustained for future generations.