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Study outlines priority areas to revive HSs, livestock sector

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA-The EIAR study revealed that addressing quality related problems, improving the marketing system and providing institutional support are tools to solve challenges witnessed in the Hide and Skins (HSs) and livestock sector.

Presenting a research in the HSs production and market status, challenges and prospects, Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR) Agriculture Economics Senior Researcher Rehima Musema (PhD) stated that the country has not yet utilized the sector's immense potential.

Over 80% of HSs are collected from farmers and pastoralists but only 20% that are collected from abattoir

See Study outlines ... page 3

Premier confers with Gen. Dagalo

ADDIS ABABA (ENA)-Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed met with leader of Sudan's Paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo.

"Earlier today I received Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo and his delegation for a discussion on securing peace and stability in the Sudan," said on X, the former twitter.

Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, arrived in Addis Ababa yesterday and he was

welcomed by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Demeke Mekonnen at Bole International Airport.

In related news, Executive Secretary of IGAD, Workneh Gebeyehu also said in his social media post that IGAD is committed to supporting the endeavour to restore peace and normalcy in Sudan.

The secretary said that: "As we embark upon a new year and commemorate Sudan's

Independence Day, my heartfelt thoughts turn to the people of Sudan."

Workneh added that IGAD will reinforce endeavours to restore peace and normalcy to the lives of brothers and sisters in Sudan.

"The hard-won independence fought for by the Sudanese people stands as a beacon that we must safeguard from dimming. Through the endured trials, the resilience of the Sudanese people shines brightly, reminding us that even this, too, shall pass," he stated.



Wogenie Markos (PhD)

Ethiopia's seaport quest safeguards Nat'l, regional dev't: Economist

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA -Ethiopia's quest for seaport is instrumental to safeguard the national and regional economic growth and

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AUC renews commitment to expediting Ethiopia's DDR program

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- The African Union Commission (AUC) appreciated the progress in the implementation of the Demobilization, Disarmament, and Rehabilitation (DDR) of the TPLF ex-combatants, pledging more financial and technical support for the process.

The above was disclosed at a press briefing held yesterday by the AUC Commissioner of Political Affairs, Peace and Security Bankole Adeoye and Ethiopia's Foreign

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Enhancing involvements of PWDs at National Dialogue for successful outcome

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Gov't, private sectors ought to work closely to combat illicit trade: ECCSA

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA – The government and private sectors should work hand in glove to prevent illegal trade, so said Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Association (ECCSA).

In his opening message on the Second National Illegal Trade Summit that held yesterday, ECCSA President Eng. Melaku Ezezu said that a close collaboration among the government and private owners required to combat illegal trade.

The business sector plays an important role for country's economic growth so that an integrated effort must be exerted among stakeholders to have a healthy and formal business system, he indicated.

At the summit, State Minister of Trade and Regional Integration, Fesha Yitagesu, remarked that trade is the back bone of the national development.

However, it requires controlling illegal trade to ensure a healthy trade system, he said, adding that the government would work with stakeholders and private sectors to encourage legal trade.

He also mentioned the necessity of cooperation with neighboring countries to have healthy trade system and prevent illegal trade, ensure modern business running system.

Since illegal trade is driving the legal traders out of the sector and harming the country's economy, the solutions proposed in the discussion will be used as input for policy making, he added.

Ethiopian Customs Commission Intelligence Director Segni Sefaon his part said that contraband and illegal trade are negatively impacting the country's development.

The country is also working with partners to combat the problem, he added.

Preparations in full swing for holiday visitors: State

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – Amhara State Communication Bureau said that the preparations for the colorful celebration of the upcoming Genna (Ethiopian Christmas) and Timket (Epiphany) festivities is in full swing.

Approached by the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Bureau Head Mengesha Fentaw (PhD) stated that preparations have been finalized to welcome local and foreign tourists who would come to attend the festivities.

Since the celebration of these festivities requires extensive preparations, the state government and other concerned bodies are joining forces to accord a warm welcome to the guests. Accordingly, preparations have been finalized in terms of upholding peace and security, getting ready amenities, transport, and other services.

Mengesha further noted that some foreign media's propaganda about the state's security status is far from reality and misleading. The past unrest in parts of the Amhara State



has been improving, and things have been returning to normalcy. "Currently, there is no security threat for visitors and the community."

"various committees have been formed to ensure the seamless conduct of the festivities and to make the tourist's stay at here comfortable and memorable. We invite both local and foreign tourists to come and take part in the colorful festivities."

According to him, Amhara State is one of the

areas with numerous tourist attraction sites that have been serving as the dependable source of foreign currency to the country.

So far, COVID-19 pandemic, unrest and other challenges have been highly impacted these and national tourist inflow by restricting the mobility of people. To revitalize the tourism industry's contribution to the national economy, it is crucial to all stakeholders make consolidated efforts to address such setbacks, the Bureau Head remarked.



Amhara Bank generates over 1.8 bln Birr revenue

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - Amhara Bank announced that it has generated over 1.8 billion Birr revenue during the 2022/2023 fiscal year.

On the second ordinary general assembly held yesterday, Board Chairperson of the Bank Melaku Fenta stated that the bank recorded a total income of 1.8 billion Birr obtained from loans and advance interest rate, deposit interest, fee and commission incomes.

The bank also mobilized additional one billion Birr of share capital from remaining commitment of the existing shareholders while total paid up capital reached 5.8 billion Birr, the Chairperson indicated.

Moreover, the bank engaged in sustainable financing activity providing 15 billion Birr in terms of loans and

advances extended to various sectors of the economy, Melaku stated.

The bank's total asset reached over 28 billion Birr and its deposit hit over 20 billion Birr, he noted.

According to him, the number of branches has grown to more than 295 with over one million customers nationwide.

Since its inception, the bank has been discharging its social responsibility playing due role to ensure socio economic development, the Chairperson said.

It has also contributed agricultural machines like tractors by investing about 222 million Birr to increase productivity thereby improve the lives of farmers, he mentioned.

He added that the bank is also actively engaging in infrastructure development, educational excellence, and environmental conservation activities.

Initiative increases Ethiopia's fish production

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA–Yemat Tirufat initiative has enabled Ethiopia witness a 20,000 ton increment in fish production, said Ministry of Agriculture (MoA).

MoA Fishery Resource Development Desk Head Fasil Dawit (PhD) told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the country has earned a significant amount of income by producing 60,018 tons of fish in the past five months.

The Fish production has shown a 20,000 ton increment compared to the 40,000 tons produced last year the same period, he said, adding it has also created over 25,000 jobs.

The Head attributed the success to Yemat Tirufat initiative that was launched by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) in November 2022 aimed at achieving food self-sufficiency and increasing export and job creation.

According to Fasil, his ministry is working on using better species and modern production techniques to achieve more in fish production so that various activities are being carried out in coordination with relevant bodies.

He said the current fish production must grow in accordance with the national plan and the suitable conditions including abundant fish and water resources.

Additionally, the government is also working on supplying the necessary materials for fish production in order to attract private owners in the area, he stated.

As to the Head, the lack of an integrated master plan, fishing equipment and the increase in feed prices are among the major reasons for the low fish production in the country.

On the other hand, he said the ministry of agriculture is working on rice, horticulture and poultry development where young people are widely engaging. "The fish production is positively contributing to the productivity of the three," he said.

He added that rice production has been increased by more than 150 percent, and the by-products of the fish production are being used as inputs for the poultry and horticulture farming.

Bureau says preparing city tour for AU–Summit guests

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – Addis Ababa Culture Art and Tourism Bureau announced that it has been making necessary preparations to organize city tour for 37th African Union Summit guests.

Bureau Tourism Sector Deputy Head, Hafetaye Geberegziabiher told The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the all preparations have been carried out to welcome leaders who come from various directions to attend the upcoming AU summit. The Bureau is ready to receive the guests and to show them the city's historical places including Ethiopia's struggle for African unity and freedom.

In this regard, among the visiting sites in the city, Adewa Museum project has come at the forefront as it is a symbol of black people's freedom.

As to him, the Bureau is also ready to visit the sites from which Nelson Mandela (freedom fighter) trained. This visiting will



open an opportunity to develop the area as various bodies are engaged in. He also reminded that the South Africa's Foreign Ministry visited the place where Nelson Mandela was trained.

He further stated that the guests will visit Unity, Friendship, and Entoto Parks so that they will be made feel comfortable

in the city. Besides, the city has received significant advantage from Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) as concerned bodies give due attention to exploiting the summit properly.

“Various activities are expected to be carried out to serve as opportunities. The Bureau has held constructive discussion

with hotels managers and owners so as to make the summit fruitful. As a result, hotels are committed to provide guests with different cultural activities and related issues. Besides, a National Committee has been set up to host the 37th Africa Union Leaders Summit and the 44th Executive Council Meeting,” he stated.

AUC renews...

Affairs State Minister Misganu Arega. During the occasion, the two parties signed a million USD grant that aimed to expedite the DDR implementation.

Speaking at the event, Commissioner Bankole said that the AUC has decided to grant a million USD to Ethiopia to support the progress of the implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA). “This grant is the first-of-its-kind from the AUC as the Commission has established a Peace Fund that aims to finance peace agreements' implementation in member states.” Ethiopia has become the first beneficiary of the Fund and the AUC will maintain its backing of the DDR processes until its full implementation.”

For his part, Foreign Affairs State Minister Ambassador Misganu Arega praised the AUC continued support for the DDR program and mentioned the Commission's gesture that further funding is important

for the full implementation of the COHA. “We have registered significant progress in the DDR with the AUC's unwavering backing. This agreement is also another practical support which laid a millstone in financial mobilization.”

The AU's contribution for the signing of the Pretoria Peace Agreement is crucial and visible. Since then, the Union upholds its support and the Ethiopian government is very much committed to work with the former in the DDR implementation, the state minister emphasized.

The National Rehabilitation Commissioner Teshome Toga also welcomed the AUC's support, mentioning its significant role in advancing the DDR program.

“We have been campaigning for financial mobilization,” Teshome noted, adding that the European Union has pledged a 16 million euro grant to the DDR implementation.

Ethiopia's seaport quest

security, a noted economist said.

Hawassa University Economics Teacher and Researcher Wogenie Markos (PhD) told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that it is hardly possible to maintain the securities of imported goods through rental port alternatives without self-owned seaport access.

In addition to the huge economic significance, the economist noted that possessing seaport is highly valuable to halt national and regional security threats.

He said: “A quest to sea outlet is not something fancy for the fastest developing economies like Ethiopia, rather it is a viable tool to ensure its and other neighbors security and privacy issues since they are the preliminary requirements to sustain the nation's overall perspectives.”

Studies show that African countries that have access to sea port registered 1% economic growth while contributing about 0.7% of the neighboring countries' economies, he mentioned.

As to him, landlocked countries including Ethiopia contribute merely 0.2% of economic growth to the neighboring countries.

Mentioning that Ethiopia has been spending a huge amount of finance for port rental services, Wogenie said that accessing own seaport would enable the nation to invest themoney for industry expansion projects thereby expediting its economic development and neighboring nations as well.

In addition, it helps to accelerate the import and export facilities at a reasonable cost.

It is crystal clear that being landlocked has negative impact on the overall trade facilitation, so it is Ethiopia's right to quest for seaport to provide export items at affordable price and hold normal competition and provide quality products to the global market, he pinpointed.

Due to its proximity to the sea outlet, the economist remarked that Ethiopia's seaport quest is trustworthy for national and regional integration to ensure mutual benefit.

Study outlines...

meeting the quality level. On the other hand, 60 % of the production is targeted for export purposes.

However, pre-slaughter defects, weak veterinary care, traditional methods of slaughtering, as well as poor handling, preservation and transport to market and shortage of chemicals are the sector's major challenges, Rehima elaborated.

“Moreover, inadequate network of stakeholders in the HSs value chain, lack of incentive for quality improvement, poor quality and perception and limited promotion on local products are other setbacks identified in the study.”

According to the researcher, preparing training manuals and incorporating extension programs are essential to ensure quality. Also, it is important to strengthen health services to improve livestock production and HSs and to prepare adequate inputs to preserve the surplus production.

Establishing a seamless market linkage among the HSs value chain actors is vital to address the purification problem. Establishing a platform to link stakeholders, and revising HSs and LLP policies and strategies is also something worth equal consideration.

“Not only Ethiopia is blessed in livestock

population and has potential to produce substantial HSs, but it also has the capacity to contribute to the leather sector. Despite such enormous potentials, the sector is still under-utilized”

She pointed out that the government is expected to give due emphasis and provide appropriate attention and support for the (HSs) and livestock sector. “The reduction in Ethiopia's market share from the export means the reduction of the country's presence in the global leather market losing regular customers.”

Collaborated effort is needed to address the aforementioned challenges and to reinstall

the unique features of the Ethiopian HSs in the international market, she stressed.

Representatives from the Ministries of Agriculture, Industry, Hide and Skins Suppliers association, Industries and other stakeholders were in attendance in the workshop and exchanged views on the findings of the study.

Accordingly, the participants recommended the establishment of a governing and supervisory body in the livestock sector and to facilitate the market system and ensure quality and to organize adequate capacity building activities and other measures.

Opinion

Second-generation Ethiopian Diasporas are invited to come, connect to their roots

BY HIZKEL HAILU

Ethiopia, a land rich in history, culture, and natural beauty, has extended a heartfelt invitation to its second-generation diaspora to come and connect to their roots. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD)'s call for homecoming aims to bridge the generational gap, reconnect Ethiopians with their ancestral roots, and collectively contribute to the nation's vibrant growth.

Premier's call to the second-generation Ethiopians is an acknowledgment of the enduring connection between the country and its diaspora. By encouraging the younger generation to reconnect with their cultural heritage, Ethiopia is taking a significant step towards bridging the gap between generations. The rich tapestry of events planned for the homecoming offers a unique opportunity for meaningful connections and a celebration of shared heritage.

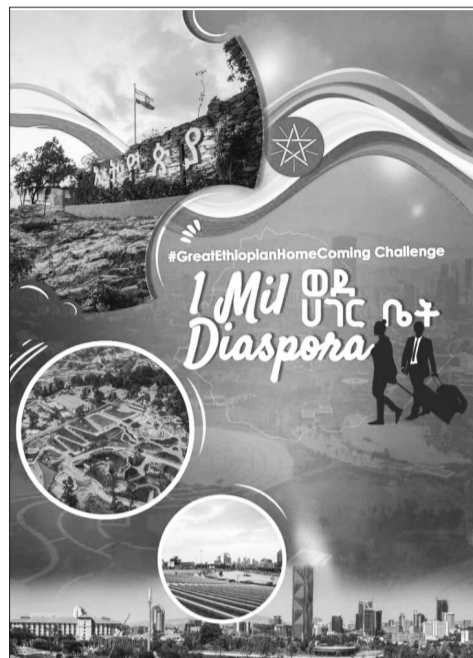
The first phase of the homecoming, "Connect to Your Multi-Cultural Roots," provides a platform for the second-generation Ethiopians to immerse themselves in the diverse cultural fabrics of their homeland. From Ethiopia Week to Ethiopian Voices, various events, visits, conferences, and public lectures have been organized to facilitate a deeper understanding and appreciation of Ethiopian traditions and customs. This phase, spanning from December 30, 2023, to January 29, 2024, promises to be an enriching experience for the participants.

This phase sounds like an incredible opportunity for second-generation Ethiopians to reconnect with their cultural heritage. The participants will have the chance to immerse themselves in the diverse cultural fabric of Ethiopia. Owing to the fact that the first phase of the homecoming coincides with holidays like Epiphany or Ethiopian Timket and The birth of Christ or Christmas, participants will have the opportunity to witness and actively engage in these significant cultural and religious events.

The second phase, "Connect to Your Historical Origin," is coinciding with the Victory of Adwa, and holds historical significance. From February 28, 2024, to April 8, 2024, second-generation Ethiopians will have the opportunity to delve into the country's remarkable history and commemorate the achievements of their ancestors. This phase serves as a reminder of Ethiopia's resilience and strength, fostering a sense of pride and connection among participants.

For many second-generation Ethiopians, this phase further allows the second-generation Ethiopians to reconnect with their extended families and strengthen familial bonds. It provides a platform for reunions, celebrations, and shared experiences, creating lasting memories and bonds that transcend geographical distances. This familial connection contributes to a sense of belonging and provides the diaspora with a deeper understanding of their heritage, lineage, and ancestral roots.

The third and final phase, "Leave Your



Legacy and Save Your Holiday," takes place from June 17, 2024, to September 30, 2024. During this period, participants are encouraged to actively contribute to Ethiopia's development by engaging in volunteer activities and initiatives. From planting seedlings to other meaningful projects, the third phase is an invitation to make a tangible impact and leave behind a lasting legacy for future generations.

This phase offers an opportunity for the second-generation diaspora to engage in philanthropic activities. By participating in volunteer events and initiatives, such as planting seedlings, supporting community projects, or contributing to social causes, participants can make a tangible difference in the lives of local communities. This engagement fosters a spirit of giving back and reinforces the importance of social responsibility thereby strengthening brotherhood and sisterhood relations with their fellow Ethiopians in the homeland.

The homecoming initiative is not intended to be a one-time event but rather a catalyst for long-term engagement and collaboration between the second-generation diaspora and Ethiopia. Through ongoing dialogue, partnerships, and exchange programs, the initiative aims to create sustainable connections and opportunities for the diaspora to contribute to Ethiopia's development in various sectors, such as business, academia, technology, and innovation.

Ethiopia's call for homecoming epitomizes the nation's unwavering commitment to welcoming its global diaspora. It not only promotes cultural exchange and understanding but also harnesses the potential of the second-generation Ethiopians to contribute to the country's progress. By embracing their roots, reconnecting with their heritage, and actively participating in Ethiopia's development, the second generation can forge stronger bonds with their country of origin while leaving a lasting impact for generations to come.

The homecoming initiative plays a crucial role in strengthening the cultural identity of second-generation Ethiopians. By immersing

themselves in the traditions, languages, and customs of their homeland, participants can gain a deeper understanding of their roots and develop a stronger sense of belonging.

Apart from providing a unique platform for cultural exchange between the second-generation diaspora and local communities in Ethiopia, this initiative can create a way for participants to share their experiences, perspectives, and traditions with their fellow Ethiopians, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures. This exchange not only enriches the participants' own cultural awareness but also contributes to the preservation and promotion of Ethiopia's rich cultural heritage.

Additionally, the homecoming initiative also presents an opportunity for the second-generation diaspora to contribute to Ethiopia's economy. As participants engage in various events and activities, they can support local businesses, invest in tourism infrastructure, and explore potential avenues for collaboration and investment. This, in turn, can foster economic growth and create new opportunities for both the diaspora and the country.

On top of that, the influx of second-generation diaspora members can have a significant positive impact on Ethiopia's tourism industry. As participants explore the country's attractions, they can serve as ambassadors, sharing their experiences with friends, family, and networks around the world. Their personal connections and recommendations can attract more tourists, leading to increased revenue, job opportunities, and the overall growth of the tourism sector that has also a direct positive impact for the nation's economic growth.

Moreover, many second-generation Ethiopians have acquired valuable knowledge, skills, and expertise in various fields around the world. The homecoming initiative provides a platform for them to share their experiences and contribute their expertise to Ethiopia's development. By transferring knowledge and skills, the second generation can play a vital role in sectors such as technology, entrepreneurship, healthcare, education, and more.

The initiative, therefore, provides educational opportunities for the second-generation diaspora to learn about Ethiopia's history, politics, economy, and social dynamics. Through conferences, public lectures, and visits to various institutions, the participants can gain insights into the country's development trajectory, challenges, and aspirations. This knowledge can foster a deeper sense of connection and enable the diaspora to become advocates and ambassadors for Ethiopia's progress on the global stage.

According to the writer's view, the homecoming initiative can also facilitate the building of networks and relationships among the second-generation diaspora and the local communities. Through interactions with fellow participants, local residents, government officials, and businesses,

lasting connections can be established. These networks can serve as a foundation for collaboration, partnerships, and ongoing engagement between Ethiopia and its diaspora.

By the same token, Ethiopia's call for the second-generation diaspora to come home signifies the country's commitment to engaging with its global diaspora. By extending a warm invitation and offering special discounts on flights and accommodations, the Ethiopian government is actively encouraging diaspora members to reconnect with their country of roots. This engagement can pave the way for ongoing dialogue, collaboration, and mutual support in various areas of interest.

The initiative further serves as a platform to showcase Ethiopia's immense potential to the second-generation diaspora. From its breathtaking landscapes and historical sites to its vibrant culture and emerging economy, Ethiopia has much to offer. By experiencing the country firsthand, participants can gain a deeper appreciation for its diverse attractions and contribute to promoting Ethiopia as a compelling destination for tourism, investment, and business opportunities.

All in all, Ethiopia's call for the second-generation diaspora to come home is a multifaceted initiative that aims to strengthen cultural identity, foster economic growth, facilitate knowledge transfer, build networks, and engage with the global Ethiopian diaspora. It presents an opportunity for second-generation Ethiopians to reconnect with their roots, contribute to their homeland's development, and forge lifelong connections.

Through this homecoming, Ethiopia embraces its diaspora as a valuable asset and envisions a future of shared prosperity and unity. This initiative further goes beyond a mere visit; it fosters cultural exchange, promotes tourism, offers educational opportunities, encourages philanthropic engagement, strengthens family bonds, and paves the way for long-term collaboration. By reconnecting with their ancestral roots and actively participating in Ethiopia's growth, the second generation can play a pivotal role in shaping a brighter future for both themselves and their country of origin.

Ethiopia's invitation to the second-generation diaspora is a testament to the country's enduring spirit and its desire to strengthen ties across generations. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD)'s call for homecoming, offers a unique opportunity for second-generation Ethiopians to reconnect with their cultural heritage, contribute to the nation's growth, and foster a collective spirit of unity.

As the second-generation diaspora embarks on this transformative journey, Ethiopia stands ready to welcome them with open arms, celebrating their shared heritage and embracing a future of shared prosperity.

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

Editorial

Come, discover your roots!

In the sacred book of the holy bible, Jeremiah says "Can an Ethiopian change his skin or a leopard its spot?" (Jeremiah 13:23).

For many, this roughly means an Ethiopian cannot deny his identity under any circumstances. This is true at least for Ethiopians and Ethiopian origins living in the other hemisphere of the globe. Even if the communities are geographically-detached, they are mentally-attached to their homeland. Ethiopian Diasporas are known to the world as a people of deep patriotic sense and having unbreakable connection with their roots.

And, the 2018 reform was a turnaround in the country's relation with its Diaspora communities. The political and democratic changes that followed the reform turned Ethiopian Diasporas from street protestors to the staunch supporters of national causes. The genuine gesture of the incumbent and the strong patriotism of Ethiopian Diasporas have mended the strained relations.

Soon after assuming premiership, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed traveled to different parts of the globe to shore up the community's support to the socioeconomic development of the country. This and other strings of measures have emboldened exiled politicians and opposition figures to return to their homeland. Banned political parties and media outlets were allowed to operate in the country. The removal of draconian laws and the amicable ties between the leadership and the diaspora communities paved the way for greater engagement in national undertakings. Since then many Ethiopians and Ethiopian born foreign nationals have highly been engaged in many areas of intervention.

The Diasporas have even had a key role in fending off external pressure and acquainting the outside world with the unvarnished truth about their country of roots. The communities have been backing their homeland in sending much-needed remittance and providing technical and financial assistances to various projects including Abbay Dam.

Regardless of political differences and as opposed to the misdeeds of some Diasporas, the community has been enthusiast to leave a mark in their country. Ethiopian communities abroad are known for their love of their nation and deep entrenched feeling towards their compatriots at home. The strong sense of patriotism and Ethiopian values are also manifested in the second generation who are born in foreign countries.

Lately, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's (Ph.D.) urged the second generation of Ethiopian Diaspora to come to their roots and visit the country of their ancestors.

The call is instrumental to connect them with their country of origin and facilitate notable contribution in the national development, so said Tourism Minister speaking journalist this midweek.

"The call is a significant milestone for foreign-born Ethiopians to trace their roots, culture and history, explore new and existing destinations and make connections to contribute to the future of the country."

The Premier's second-generation Ethiopians call, which is to be held under the theme 'Back To Your Origins,' would be an opportunity for them to return to their origins and learn, understand and get immersed in the culture and history of their county, according to the minister.

To accord a warm welcome, Ethiopian Airlines and hotels have made discounts. This special event helps the foreign-born Ethiopians to get acquainted with their roots through social, cultural and psychological connections.

The event will be imperative for the second generation of Diasporas to serve as ambassadors of their roots and share their experience to the rest of the world. The special occasion is both rewarding to the community and the country as well. It allows the Diasporas to experience the diverse cultures of the Ethiopian people. It would also serve as a golden opportunity for the community to discover the history of their homeland and their roots.

For the special event to be a success, partners particularly in the hospitality sector should accord decent services to the communities. And, the community should, by putting aside any differences, come to their roots to witness the peculiar values of their ancestors' firsthand.

Opinion

Ethiopia should uphold its successful economic diplomacy in the new year

BY STAFF REPORTER

The ending year 2023 has seen a lot of historical developments in Ethiopia's diplomatic journey. As the country's political and economic course has been recovering from the strike of COVID 19, the conflict in the norther part as well as other international and regional developments, the country has succeeded to score achievements that are helpful to forward progress in the years to come.

One of the biggest achievements the country scored in the year was the approval of its quest for membership in the new global economic bloc known as BRICS.

At the recent 15th annual summit of BRICS member states held in Johannesburg, South Africa; Six countries including Ethiopia; Argentina, Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates joined as new members. IN a congratulatory message following the country's joining the Union; Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (Dr.) said that Ethiopia joining the group is one of the biggest diplomatic victories recorded in the last few decades.

According to the Prime Minister; Ethiopia's joining the group is a great victory achieved through many talks and struggles. Ethiopia was allowed to join due to the fact that the country was qualified by many standards. Ethiopia was able to enter the group because of its economic growth, population and the ability to listen to the world, as well as its future hopes, as it is a country with great influence in Africa.

Along with this Ethiopia has also maintained its unreserved efforts to keep its momentum of attracting as much foreign investment as possible. To achieve this goal the country has been streamlining its economic diplomacy works. Among the major indicators for the effectiveness of the diplomacy works is the flow of considerable number of foreing investors in the industrial parks.

Another thing is that the establishment of industrial parks, in various pars of the country where foreign developers have been able to work well, has made it possible for foreign direct investment to be high or increased, says Dr.

When we think about what foreign investments have done so far and come to our country, the biggest thing is that there is a big market opportunity in Africa. Africa is the second most populous continent; In addition, the presence of a large number of young or productive

workforce is another interesting factor. In addition to this, the inclusion of potential incentives in the investment law of the government policy is something that can be seen as an opportunity.

According to scholars, there are key sectors included in the ten-year master development plan. In particular, the mediation efforts made to attract foreign investment are disappointing. Apart from that, the industrial parks that are being built and the provision of infrastructure by the government is a good opportunity, he said.

Eventhough the foreign companies braved to joining the country's attractive investment opportunity, it is undeniable that some others were also deterred by the news of conflicts that appeared in parts of the country. Yet, the government is taking unreserved efforts to ensure peace and stability. For the sake of economic stability, it should be possible to deal with inflation, lack of foreign currency and similar macroeconomic factors.

Another issue is the lack of institutions with sufficient enforcement capacity, or even those that do exist, have problems with limited enforcement capacity. There are good laws in place, but failure to enforce those laws can cause investors to lose confidence. Investment will have good results when there is confidence and stable political conditions. It is also important to address the gaps in the implementation of foreign investment loans, the efficiency of imported machinery and the limitations in the provision of land by the state government and the federal government. He said that the government should pay attention to these issues.

Another important issue that the country is working strenuously at the moment is to treat the economic impacts that it is facing because of its geographical status as a landlocked country. This it will have high costs. The cost of land transportation is also high for incoming and outgoing goods. There is also a bureaucratic problem to come home from the port. Things that can be done easily take several working days; Corruption in the customs area is a hindrance to investment. Therefore, the government has to clean up the existing problems so that the investment flow reaches a better level.

The government, relevant institutions should exert maximum efforts to repeat the economic diplomatic achievements in the new year so that the country can resume its effective journey of ensuring economic development, peace and stability.

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



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The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy

Efficient manufacturing enterprises for structural economic transformation

BY BACHA ZEWDIE

Various efforts are being made to alleviate the problems of manufacturing enterprises and to increase their role in the process of structural economic transformation. Among the activities are efforts underway that enable enterprises create mutual relations and market linkages. As part of this effort, a national exhibition and bazaar of manufacturing enterprises aimed at revitalizing manufacturing enterprises, called "Our Product", was held from December 13 to 17, 2023 in Addis Ababa under the theme of "Let Ethiopia produce and we purchase".

At this exhibition and bazaar, more than 85 manufacturing enterprises performed the activities of selling and promoting their products and making agreements that enable them to work together; they also participated in panel discussions about the sector's activities.

According to the Director General of Ethiopian Enterprise Development, Ambachew Nigussie (PhD), the exhibition and the bazaar have great benefits in terms of product supply and promotion, market linkages and experience sharing. The exhibition was a big platform where more than 85 manufacturing enterprises participated and more than 50 thousand visitors attended.

In order to increase the competitiveness of manufacturing enterprises, it is necessary to facilitate market opportunities, and in this regard, many efforts have been made for enterprises to benefit from the market in the past years. While explaining about the multifaceted benefits of the exhibition, he said; "The exhibition will help manufacturers to provide quality and competitive products and the society to contribute to the development of the national economy by using local products. In addition to selling product, it helped enterprises to exchange experience and work together. It also showed the sector's development level."

According to the Director General, efforts are being made to improve the performance of the manufacturing sector in import substitution; supplying to the foreign market, and creating a wide range of employment. In the past few years, especially with the attention given in connection with the homegrown economic reform program, it has been possible to record encouraging results. Thus, in the past five years, the number of enterprises has increased to more than 26,000 and more than 570,000 jobs have been created through the activities carried out to establish and strengthen small and medium-sized productive enterprises. This indicates that more than 100,000 jobs are being created every year.

In addition, in the last five years, more than 15.5 billion Birr has been made available for business operations and more than 14.3 billion Birr for production equipment loans to solve the sector's financial problem. This shows that more than six billion Birr has been provided to the sector every year.

He recalled that Ethiopian Enterprise



Manufacturing companies supporting economy by enhancing import substitution

Development was established in a new form by the Council of Ministers' Regulation No. 526/2023 to lead and support the manufacturing enterprise; to prepare among others; the sector's road map, operational guidelines and manuals in a new form and use. They are working closely with the stakeholders to improve the previous ones and confirmed will continue to strengthen the large-scale activities that have started to develop operating systems that can produce better results by facilitating critical support and creating opportunities for citizens to be engaged in the manufacturing enterprise sector.

According to Melaku Alebel, Minister of Industry, the platform will help to increase the role of small and medium industries in the process of expanding the country's economic base and enabling strong and sustainable growth. To bring manufacturers closer to consumers and stakeholders; to solve the bottlenecks of the sector and by showing the quality level of the country's products, it will increase the purchasing power of the buyers.

In addition, by removing unnecessary players from the trade chain and providing products at affordable prices, it will reduce the cost of living; create a reliable market for producers; and thereby create job opportunities; attract new industries and strengthen existing ones; and bring many benefits. In particular, it will play a major role in reducing the country's dependence on foreign production gradually, and will greatly increase the culture of citizens to use their country's products, he said.

Melaku mentioned that the government has designed a ten-year development plan based on the homegrown economic reform program and is making great efforts to build a sustainable and competitive economy by paying special attention to the five economic sectors (agriculture, manufacturing, mining, tourism and information technology). Many activities have been carried out to ease the bottlenecks in the manufacturing sector and encouraging results have been recorded.

According to him, the policy direction of the sector has been reformed along with implementing strategies. Among these strategies are leather development, capacity building, import substitute products, and communication strategies to fill the perception gap in the sector.

The strategies and guidelines are policy implementation frameworks designed to address operational bottlenecks. Work has been done to identify what kind of guidance each sector needs. These strategies were prepared on the premise that 'if the current problems cannot be solved based on research, the sector will collapse completely'. He realized that the issue of using/not using the strategies is a matter of improving/not improving the performance of the manufacturing sector, so that the strategies should be implemented with full capacity to provide lasting solutions to the sector's problems.

In order to solve the coordination problem in the sector, an industrial movement based on the experience of other countries as well as Ethiopia's future vision, promising results have begun to be achieved. In particular, bringing back industries that had been closed for more than five years and creating employment opportunities for 10,000 citizens is considered to be no less successful than establishing new industries.

More than 370 small to high level industries have been brought back to production. It has been possible to produce import substitute products worth more than 2.3 billion Birr per year. This has created more job opportunities, allowing new manufacturers to start operations.

It has been decided to raise the loan rate from 12% to 24%, which was previously offered to the manufacturing industry. Foreign investors who can supply inputs to local producers in industrial parks are allowed to create up to 100% input linkages and support small and medium producers. Guidelines have been implemented to increase the participation of domestic investors in industrial parks. A special procurement direction has been given for government institutions to make transactions from local producers so that local producers do not face market linkages.

Unfavorable guidelines for the supply of foreign exchange are constantly being revised and great efforts have been made to create favorable conditions for the development of the sector. Leadership at all levels has been able to pay attention to the sector and make it work.

According to Melaku, import substitution of the manufacturing sector is expected to grow

from its previous 30% domestic market share to 65% in the coming years, and from its current low performance (400 million Dollars per year) to nine billion Dollars. In terms of job creation, a direction was set to create job opportunities for five million citizens in the sector. A big goal has been set to increase the production capacity utilization to 85 percent from the current level.

"Achieving these and other plans in the sector will enable the national economy to bring about a structural transformation, so it is necessary to follow a different way to achieve the goals. The sector has wide opportunities and the results of its implementation have shown that it is possible, but there are issues that require the support of all stakeholders in the future," Melaku said. He emphasized the need to improve government service delivery, increase financial availability, solve resource supply problems and improve infrastructure provision.

According to him, since lack of quality of service affects competitiveness of the industries, it is necessary to improve efficiency problems at all levels in the provision of government services and solve them in a sustainable way so that small and medium industries can expand.

As the manufacturing sector has high financial needs, access and affordable financing should be done. In particular, commercial banks should follow a direction that eases the financial problems faced by small and medium enterprises, as there are many gaps in this area.

Resource availability issues should be resolved through strong linkages. As industries need electricity, space, water, roads, logistics and other infrastructure in particular, the commitment and cooperation of all government bodies is necessary to solve the shortage of these services in a sustainable manner. In order to solve these problems, it is necessary to make the "Ethiopia Tamirt" movement more effective and strengthen the established clusters, so all institutions should fulfill their responsibilities, the Minister said.

Habtamu Shiferaw, Product Manager of "Colba" Leather Factory, said that such platforms have a positive contribution to market linkages. "The exhibition and the bazaar helped us find a market. It helped to understand the needs of the consumer and to look at the work of other manufacturers.

Stating government's support is insufficient; Habtamu said that there is a serious foreign exchange problem. According to him, leather factories require a lot of chemicals and machinery; foreign currency is also needed to import chemicals and machinery. Currently, the leather factories in the country are weakened due to lack of foreign exchange.

In addition, a lot of work needs to be done to maintain the quality of raw hides and skins. "The government should do extensive awareness raising activities through the media. Improving the quality of raw hides and skins will increase export competitiveness. Habtamu said.

Art & Culture

Intangible Cultural Heritages- Ethiopia Can Also Make Additional Proposals

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

It was recently announced that UNESCO has recently added over 50 traditions to their list of intangible cultural heritages around the world. Earlier last year, UNESCO had added other tangible or intangible heritages to its list. This is bound to continue in the future too since humanity is in possession of so many known and unknown heritages that it may take another decade or two to register all of them and add them to its growing list although some of them are in urgent need of safeguarding.

According to a recent blog post Time Out, “70 countries submitted nominations for consideration by UNESCO committee this year, and more than 50 were accepted to the organization’s Intangible Cultural Heritage List. Of those, six are in need of urgent safeguarding, including the practice of olive cultivation in Turkiye and Mek Mulung, a traditional Malaysian performance that involves dancing, singing and acting.

Africa, once considered “the dark continent” by the colonialists is now a continent teeming with inexhaustible cultural and artistic heritages from north to south and from east to West. European travelers who wrote about Africa set their eyes only on its rivers and lakes, its mountains and dry lands simply because geopolitics was their prime interest to chart of the course of their conquests. Few were those who dared penetrate the African countries and meet the traditions and cultures that formed the soul of the continent.

Many foreign travel writers wrote about Africa from two opposite perspectives. The first was one of admiration and shock while the second perspective is largely hostile and geared towards highlighting some of the negative aspects of the African heritages. British explorer James Bruce who tried to trace the source of the mighty Nile River was captivated by the beauty of the Nile valley and the course of the river while writers like Joseph Conrad used the Congo River as a “laboratory” for examining the so-called darkness of Africa in the eyes of the European colonialists.

Bruce was not an explorer per se but served as a British consul in Algiers in 1763 and afterwards. the idea behind his journey to discover the source of the Nile might have been one of curiosity but the real reason might as well be his interest to promote the colonial penetration of Africa by the British. “Intent on reaching the source of the Nile River, Bruce left Cairo on an arduous journey by way of the Nile, Aswan, The Red Sea and Massawa eventually reaching the Ethiopian capital of Gondar on February 14, 1770.”

Joseph Conrad had a different intent when he based his novel “Heart of Darkness”

about his trip on the Congo River aboard a ship and related his personal experience and his observations on how the crew on the ship behaved and thought about the country they were discovering for the first time. One thing must however be clear. Conrad was not advocating colonialism or serving the cause of the colonialists. He was rather opposed to colonialism. A recent analysis by Michael Wasney of the short novel by Conrad rather supports this view. “Heart of Darkness examines the horrors of Western colonialism depicting it as a phenomenon that tarnishes not only the lands and peoples it exploits but also those in the West who advance it.”

It has now become clear more than any time before that Africa is not synonymous with darkness but with light as its cultural and artistic heritages testified and continue to demonstrate the continent’s immeasurably vast tangible and intangible artifacts and their contribution to human civilization in general. As defined by UNESCO, “An intangible cultural heritage is a practice, representation, expression, knowledge or skill considered by UNESCO to be part of a place’s cultural heritage.” Examples of intangible cultural heritage include songs, music, dance, drama, skills, cuisine, crafts and festivals. They are forms of culture that can be recorded but cannot be touched or stored in physical forms.”

A similar definition of intangible cultural heritage given by Wikipedia says that, “An intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is a practice, representation, expression, knowledge or skill considered to be part of a place’s cultural heritage.” In order to see the difference between tangible and intangible cultural heritages, it would be important to know what tangible cultural heritages are. “Tangible cultural heritages refer to things we can store or physically touch. Examples of tangible cultural heritage include traditional clothing, tools, buildings, artwork, monuments, and modes of transportation.” For instance, among the Tangible cultural heritages Ethiopia is legitimately proud of are, according to UNESCO, Simien national park, Rock hewn churches of Lalibela, Fasil Ghebi Gondar region, and Aksum. Some of the intangible cultural heritages of Ethiopia are Timket or the festival of Jesus Christ’s baptism, Meskel, the Geda system, and Fichee Chambalaalla or the New Year festival of the Sidama people. The following are World Heritage Sites in Ethiopia. These are: Aksum, Fasil Ghebi, Harar, Konso, Awash, Omo, Lalibela, Simien.

According to recent information, the UN’s Educational Scientific and Cultural organization has added 55 new inscriptions to its intangible cultural heritage list for 2023, in an effort to safeguard traditional art, dance, food, craftsmanship and rites of passage. the cultural practices include Italian opera singing, rickshaws and rickshaw painting in Bangladesh, Peruvian

traditional cuisine. It was also known that 70 countries had put forward at UNESCO’s annual Intergovernmental, Intangible heritage Committee meeting held in Kassane, Botswana this week.

According to one source, “Six cultural practices were added to the list because they need urgent safeguarding such as the Malaysian theatre tradition that shares legends through dialogue, song and dance. This heritage was popular since the 18th century and is now in danger of dying out.” There are also other cultural practices that need urgent safeguarding because they are facing the same threat of extinction.” It is known that with the latest addition, UNESCO’s living heritage list now includes 730 cultural practices spread over 145 countries.

Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular are known to be home to immense treasures of tangible and intangible cultural heritages. The historical relics are also part and parcel of the tangible cultural heritages while there are still hundreds if not thousands of undiscovered heritages hidden in churches, monasteries, mosques and other spiritual places. The search and discovery of these relics and heritages particularly here in Africa, is like a challenge to restore the lost soul of Africa during and before colonialism and since independence. It is important to ask at this juncture what purpose can these cultural heritages fulfill or why we take the trouble to trace and recognize our cultural history and heritages.

One of the most important challenges Africa is facing at present is to consolidate its sense of unity and purpose because historically colonialism and the post-colonial moment have been working against unity and towards further cultural Balkanization or fragmentation. The post-colonial moment in particular has been marked by Africa’s cultural domination by the West by subverting traditional cultural heritages and practices. The struggle against cultural subversion has proved difficult in view of the erosion of Africa’s traditional practices, rituals and heritages by the irresistible advances in modern technology.

Africa cannot and should not turn its back to modern technology. What it has to do is to use modern technology to promote its heritages in such a way that the people would attain spiritual freedom as a precondition to any kind of modern development. Africa cannot develop by ignoring its cultural heritages because they create a sense of cohesion, unity and purpose among the peoples. “Cultural heritage objects are symbolic. They represent identities in terms of culture and natural surroundings. Connection to and traditional activities around these objects create a sense of community.”

Objects of heritages are used alongside practices of heritage to shape our ideas about our past present and future. This is an indispensable mental precondition that

could serve as the basis for Africa’s material development. Cultural symbolism in itself may not serve any purpose until it is put in the service of social development. On the other hand collecting and familiarizing cultural heritage for its own sake might not have any functional purpose like admiring art for art’s sake. Ours is a fast moving world and Africa is no doubt left behind in the global race for all-round development.

UNESCO as the UN agency entrusted with the registration and recognition of the world’s cultural heritages is also expected to create the conditions for the preservation of these cultural heritages, particularly in Africa where the financial resources and the skill and expertise such a task require are largely non-existent. The preservation of these heritages has long and short-term advantages in terms of creating economic values to African countries through tourism and travels. “Preserved heritage has become an anchor of the global tourism industry, a major contributor of economic value to local communities.”

The new generation of Africans particularly faces the task of preserving cultural heritages for posterity with the added bonus of discovering new sites and relics in addition to what past generations have achieved in this regard. to this end, UNESCO should not only be the registrar of new African cultural heritages but also the generator of economic value by subsidizing the growth of the tourism industry because not only culture is something that might disappear after a long time but also serve the present moment by not only creating awareness and cohesion among African communities but also real economic development without which conservation remains a hollow dream or an activity without vision or purpose.

Side by side with this, Africa should work hard to uncover it’s still hidden cultural gems. Ethiopia has not come forward with an intangible cultural heritage this year; but it does not mean that it has no more intangible heritages that it should bring forth at the next meeting of the UNESCO committee on intangible cultural heritages. It is therefore up to every African or Ethiopian to think of some cultural heritage that has the potential of meeting the criterion for consideration as an intangible heritage worthy of recognition.

Think of the Gurage culture of *inset* cultivation for instance. The culinary art of turning false banana as a drought resistant food source into edible item or its meticulous preparation as one of the most delicious Ethiopian cuisines may be worth contemplating. What if we try to take this cultural heritage to the next UNESCO meeting on tangible and intangible cultural heritages? Opera singing is not a new discovery for Italians because it has always been part and parcel of their heritage whereas the cuisine based on false banana (i.e, inset) must not only be something new but also magical or amazing to the world.

Science & Technology

My visit to India's technology, innovation hubs

BY MERID KIFLU

Technological developments and new innovations are helping in creating a united world that accelerates globalization. The advancement of new technologies and innovations is easing making business interactions globally and streamlining tasks. Considering the growing benefits of technology, world's technology companies and technology and research institutes are busy in a new era of competition to innovate latest products in the sector.

Countries, both in developed and developing world give due attention to the development and advancement of technology. Countries are investing their maximum capacities both to introduce and make available technologies to bolster their development endeavors and to develop their own technological products using local initiatives. This shows that technology is becoming a daily chore in every country.

In this regard, technology companies and research institutes in the technology and innovation sectors play a vital role in developing the technological advancements in each country. Countries are exploiting the benefits of technology for their economic development and to make businesses in a simple and easy way. Likewise, technology helps to improve the education system of countries and enables the new generation to be skillful to invent and create new innovations.

Especially, higher educational institutions play a paramount role in accelerating the technological development and innovations of a country. Higher education institutions and research centers in the technology sector are becoming technology and innovation excellence centers and countries are investing in developing research hubs.

India is among the rising countries of the world in the technology sector. India is home to internationally known technology manufacturing companies and well-known higher education institutions in the technology sector. These higher education technology institutes based in India are full of modern and improved research tools and experiments that allow their students equipped with practical experiments.

Recently, the Indian government has invited journalists from 18 African countries to take a tour of technology institutes and innovation facilities in India. I was among the journalists gathered from Africa to visit India. It was my first visit to India and I visited different technology institutes, centers and technology companies during my stay in India, including one of the most noted technology institutes, the Indian



Institute of Technology in Delhi.

Indian Institute of Technology Delhi is one of the 23 Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) established to be a center of excellence for training, research, and development in science, engineering, and technology in India. Established as the College of Engineering in 1961, the institute was later developed in to an institution of national importance under the "Institutes of Technology (Amendment) Act, 1963" and was renamed "Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi." It was then accorded the status of a deemed university, with the power to decide its own academic policy, conduct its own examinations, and award its own degrees.

Since its inception, over 48,000 students have graduated from IIT Delhi in various disciplines, including engineering, physical sciences, management, and social sciences. The students graduated from this well-known technology institution are now scientists, researchers, managers and innovators in various disciplines. IIT graduated over 5070 in Ph.D. degrees, 15,738 in Bachelor Degree in Technology while the rest obtain master's degrees in engineering, sciences, and business administration. These alumni, today, work as scientists, technologists, business managers, and entrepreneurs. In doing so, they are contributing a significant role for the promotion and development of industrialization across the world.

Speaking to African journalists who visited the institute, Shiv Prakash Yadav, Institute's Public Relations Officer, made a briefing about the history and current status of the institute and its contributions in the technology sector for India and beyond as well. In his explanation, he stated that the institute has a lot of workshops that enable

students to carry out their experiments and practical research tasks. The workshop stations include 3D printers, metal and metal fabricators, aluminum fabrication machines, laser cutters, metal 3D machines and other basic materials for experiments and researches.

In addition to the teaching-learning process and the research tasks, the institute creates linkages between technology industries in the country and students of the institute. The linkage between the students-industry helps the students to understand the practical activities of the technology companies that also help them to easily create connections for job opportunities after graduation. The linkage also helps the students innovating new products and ideas and present in their innovations to industries.

The second visit was to the technology hub of Hyderabad city, a place where talented young researchers and innovators with various creative endeavors conduct research activities. In the center, startup technology innovators submit early drafts of their work. The draft works are evaluated at the center, and the center helps investors to develop their ideas and research outcomes in to products and investments. The startup technology innovators who join the center got professional supports, advices and other supports that equipped them to change their innovational ideas in to products.

T-Hub (Technology Hub), India's largest incubation center synergizes startups, corporations, government institutions, academia, and investors to drive transformative change. In 2022, T-Hub have completed seven successful years of empowering India's innovation ecosystem.

T-Hub is a premier innovation hub and ecosystem enabler based in Hyderabad,

India. It leads India's pioneering innovation ecosystem and strives to create impact for startups, corporations, and other ecosystem stakeholders. The hub aims to enable and empower technological ecosystem as well as promote innovations.

Incorporated in 2015, T-Hub has provided over 2000 national and international startups access to superior technology, talent, mentors. It also creates connections between customers, corporations, investors, and government agencies and other stakeholders in the innovation ecosystem to work together and to create business connections.

T-Hub has elevated innovation for leading national and global corporations, transforming their business models for the better. Collaborating with innovation partners and enablers in Telangana, India, and across the world, T-Hub is building a future-ready innovation ecosystem.

During my visit there, I observed that young technology innovators are striving to develop their creativity and skills through the support they receive. Experts are assigned to support the talented innovators at the hub, who following and supporting the innovators to change their ideas in to products. The expert helps the novice technology innovators by pursuing their ideas and works. In addition to this, a center has been facilitated for budding technology innovators to demonstrate their works.

This place is known as Technology Workshop. It is a place where tech startups can prototype their works. There are technologically advanced tools for every task. Particularly, laser cutters and 3D printers account for the highest number. With the help of these tools, they turn their technological innovations into reality.

Society

Enhancing involvements of PWDs at National Dialogue for successful outcome

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

As the nation mobilizes its resources to ensuring economic prosperity and realizing sustainable peace, the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) is untiringly working to execute its assignments to arrest the long-lasting grievances and narrow all the political differences.

As it was indicated by the Commission, this open discussion is instrumental to identify root causes of conflicts and; allows reaching mutually agreeable solutions and advancing development.

To this end, the Commission is actively engaged in bringing sustainable peace all over the country by using all the available platforms. That is why it is engaging with several sections of the society and discusses issues that can bring sustainable peace and security throughout the country. By bringing together diverse stakeholders, including government representatives, competing groups, religious and community leaders as well as other relevant parties, the Commission has been endeavoring to create platforms for dialogue and negotiations.

In fact, Commission's unwavering engagement demonstrates its commitment to discuss matters with various opinions and concerns and the extent of its willingness to fostering an atmosphere of trust and cooperation between and among different groups and at the end of the day realize what is expected- to bring in peaceful resolution and sustain peace and security across the country.

Mainly understanding the irreplaceable value of encompassing each and every segment of the society, it is trying to involve different sections of the community and make the process more inclusive and fair.

In this regard, according to the Federation of the Ethiopian National Associations of Persons with Disability (FENAPD), various activities that enhance the participation of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) are ongoing.

As indicated by the General Director of the Federation, Abayneh Gujo, due to conflict and security related challenges that came to happen in the country at different times, citizens are prone to social, economic and political crisis.

As part of this concern and seeing the role of every Ethiopian towards reaching consensus, building national peace, and ensuring sustainable growth, the Federation of the Ethiopian National Associations of Persons with Disabilities (FENAPD) has recently discussed on the role of individuals with disabilities to

ensure sustainable peace through dialogue.

Interviewed by ENA, the General Director said that peace is not something that would be compromised with. Preserving national peace and security lies on its peace and stability. For this very reason, discussing matters that can be source contentions in a peaceful way, identifying the root causes of the conflict and addressing them in amicable matter is of critical importance to sustain peace.

In this regard, the National Dialogue Commission that was established to bring to resolve grievances and ensure sustainable peace through holding peaceful dialogue and increasing the active participation all section of the society has key role to play. However, for the successful realization of the process, the participation of all is decisive.

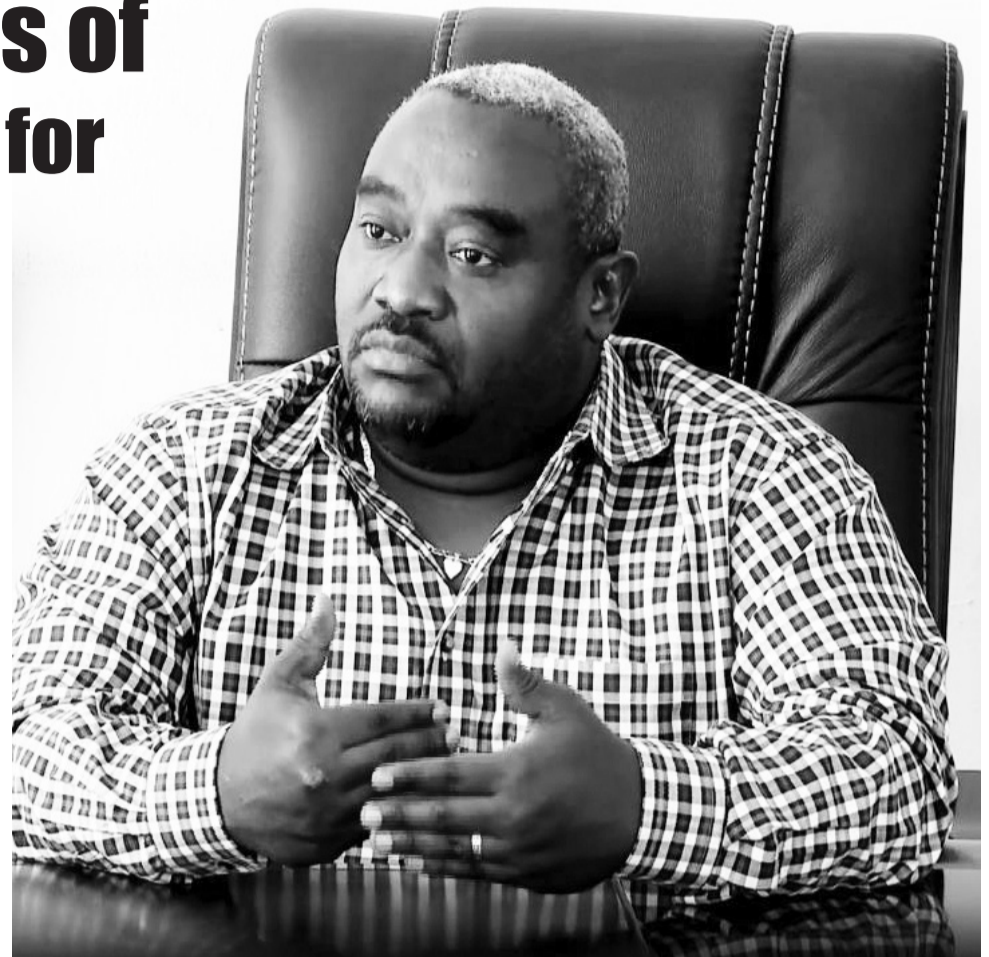
As one member of the society, those individuals with some type of disabilities are also responsible to play key role in the efforts put forth to ensure peace. To this end, the Federation is working aggressively to create awareness among its members, according to him.

Underscoring that the active involvements of every Ethiopian citizen add value to the works of the Commission Abayneh said that the participation of individuals with disability and their inclusiveness in the dialogue clearly shows the decisiveness of the Commission to ensure peace within short time.

When asked by this reporter to comment the contribution of persons with disability in the national dialogue, Amare Hailu, a person with physical disability, said that PWDs are highly susceptible to peace and security related problems. The recent activity of the Federation to create favorable platforms and mechanisms that would enable people with disabilities to participate effectively in the national dialogue is worth appreciating.

He also said that, arranging the required accommodations such as sign language interpretation, captioning or accessible transportation should be taken into consideration. Additionally, it is crucial to actively seek the vires and opinions of people with disabilities and ensure that they are given equal opportunities to voice their concerns and contribute to the dialogue.

Ethiopia, as a nation that aspires to become economically strong and democratically model to other African countries, has taken the principles of inclusiveness and representation as fundamental pace and it is striving to ensure the equal rights of people with disabilities in decision-making process that affects their lives. Certainly, by actively involving people



Abayneh Gujo, General Director of the Federation

Above all, their active participation can leave a mark in the Ethiopian politics by addressing specific challenges they faced: accessibility, inclusion and equal opportunities.

Most importantly, enhancing the involvement of people with disabilities in the national dialogue process can help curtail the stereotypes and misconceptions about their abilities. Active participation of individuals with disabilities will create an opportunity to promote awareness, understanding, and empathy in society, leading to more inclusive and encouraging environment for everyone.

Indeed, involving people with disabilities in the national dialogue in Ethiopia is not a matter of inclusivity and human rights but also a way to employ their potential and expertise. Their participation can lead to better policies, increase understanding, and create a more equitable society that truly values diversity.

As it is witnessed from Ethiopia's and other countries experiences, whenever there is political instability and insecurity, it is women, children and those physically disabled members of the society who are directly or indirectly becoming vulnerable to violence and conflicts. Like that of women and children, physically disabled individuals are seen encountering additional sufferings in times of war, conflict or instability.

Despite the fact that they are the one who are direct victims of conflicts and instabilities, unquestionably, people with disabilities have key role in the economic progress of the nation and in the peace process.

Thus, enhancing their involvement in country's overall activities and creating enabling environment that is conducive to their day to day activity is not something that would be ignored.

As the saying goes "Disability is not inability" individual with disability has a lot to contribute in the peace building process

with disabilities in the national dialogue process, Ethiopia can benefit from their unique perspectives, experiences and insights.

As the saying goes "Disability is not inability" individual with disability has a lot to contribute in the peace building process. Using their experiences and insights, they can contribute valuable ideas and suggestions that can be taken as inputs to address the basic challenges of the country faced.

Liberia fuel tanker explosion kills more than 40

More than 40 people have died after a fuel tanker crashed and exploded in central Liberia, the country's chief medical officer Francis Kateh has said.

The tanker overturned along a road in Totota town, about 130km (80 miles) from the capital, Monrovia.

It burst into flames soon after people rushed to the site to scoop fuel from the tanker, eyewitnesses said.

A pregnant woman was among the dead, and some of the bodies were burnt to ashes, Dr Kateh said.

He told local broadcaster Super Bongese TV that more than 83 people had been admitted to hospital for their injuries following Tuesday's disaster.

Patients with more serious injuries had been transferred to hospitals in Monrovia for treatment, Dr Kateh added.

The cause of the crash is unclear.

Video footage shows that a large number of people, including children, had gathered around the tanker after it overturned.

Some had buckets and jerrycans and others were on top of the tanker when it burst into flames.

Liberia's President George Weah has expressed his condolences to the families of the dead, saying he found images of the tragedy "deeply disturbing", his office says.

Mr Weah has given the health authorities his "full backing to beef up manpower and equipment where necessary in their frantic effort to save lives", the statement adds.

Source:BBC

DR Congo elections: Fayulu's supporters clash with police in Kinshasa

Police in the Democratic Republic of Congo have clashed with opposition supporters demanding that last week's presidential poll be annulled.

Leading opposition candidates have denounced the election as a sham and have demanded a rerun.

Several people were wounded as police fired tear gas and threw stones back at protesters in the capital, Kinshasa.

The government banned the protest, saying it would not tolerate attempts to undermine the electoral process.

Election officials have so far not said exactly how many polling stations opened or how many people voted in the 20 December election.

About 44 million people were registered to vote at about 75,000 polling stations.

With just over nine million ballots counted so far, President Felix Tshisekedi is in the lead with almost 80% of the vote as he seeks a second term.

Football tycoon and mining magnate Moïse Katumbi is trailing him with about 16%.

Former oil executive Martin Fayulu, who claims he was robbed of victory in the 2018 election, is in third place with about 4%.

Mr Fayulu's supporters burnt tyres and clashed with police outside his campaign headquarters in Kinshasa.

Police took up positions on key roads in the city and thwarted an attempted march to the headquarters of the electoral commission.



Mr Fayulu said that 11 of his supporters were injured, while police reported two injuries on their side.

Opposition supporters allege that the poll has been marred by rigging

The election was marred by logistical delays and administrative chaos, forcing voting to be extended to a second day in some parts of the country.

The opposition has also accused the electoral commission of orchestrating fraud and ballot stuffing in order to pave the way for Mr Tshisekedi to be declared the winner.

The commission has denied the allegations.

DR Congo is roughly four times the size of France, but lacks basic infrastructure. Even some of its main cities are not linked by

road.

About two-thirds of the country's 100 million population live below the poverty line, earning \$2.15 (£1.70) a day or less.

Voters also chose parliamentary, provincial and municipal representatives, with about 100,000 candidates in total.

The elections were not held in parts of the east because of insecurity.

Dozens of armed groups have been competing to control parts of the region, home to much of the country's vast mineral wealth.

This includes vast reserves of cobalt, a vital part of many lithium batteries, seen as essential to a future free of fossil fuels.

Source:BBC



This is Ethiopia

Chebera Churchura: An area endowed with natural beauty

COMPILED BY STAFF REPORTER

The renovation of the existing and the construction activity of new tourism destinations across the country is continuing in a more concerted manner than before.

Particularly, over the past years, following the initiatives launched by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, dubbed as 'Dine for Sheger', 'Dine for Nation' 'Dine for Generation' projects, massive renovation and construction works of tourist destinations are undertaken in all parts of the country.

Among the areas getting due attention in these initiatives, the Chebera-Churchura National Park, which is located in the Dawuro Zone of South West Ethiopia and part of the 'Dine for Nation' project is the one.

The area apart from having a breathtaking natural beauty, it harbors diverse birds and 37 species of larger mammals. It provides home to wild African elephants that are commonly rare within the protected forest areas and open grasslands, by which the park harbors over 500 individuals moving in different herds.

Watching wild animals, mainly a parade of elephants walking gracefully within the park, as well as the buffalo, antelope and deer is a common scene.

As to documents, the park contains four types of habitats, grasslands, woodlands, mountain forest and riverine forests. Most of the park which is covered by 62 percent is wooded grassland dominated by elephant grass (*Pennisetum purpureum*), with montane woodland comprising 29 percent along with woodland and riparian forest the rest.

Palm trees are significantly diverse within the park's ecoregion. Dominant woody vegetation includes *Ficus*, *Combretum*, *Ehertia*, and *Albizia* species. The natural forest harbors non-timber forest products known for economic value such as Enset, coffee, coriander, and piper species. So far, 106 woody plant species were identified of which six are endemic to Ethiopia.

The park is home to 37 species of large mammals. It provides home to wild African elephants that are commonly rare within the protected forest areas and open grasslands, by which the park harbors over 500 individuals moving in different herds. Mammals that are also found in Chebera Churchura national park include lions, leopards, servals, greater kudus, colobus monkeys, vervet monkeys, hippos, defassa waterbucks, warthogs, and Cape buffalos.

There are also 237 species of birds in the park. Among these species of birds, white-winged cliff chat, banded barbet, Wattled Ibis, Ethiopian oriole, and thick-billed raven are endemic to Ethiopia.



According to Philip Briggs, a renowned Africa expert and author of many Bradt guidebooks to African destinations, including the guide to Ethiopia, Chebera-Churchura National Park is one of the last elephant strongholds in Ethiopia.

Philip wrote in his webpage that the Chebera-Churchura National Park has a good variety of animals. The game rangers are skilled at tracking elephants and buffalos. Other wildlife one might spot while hiking includes lesser and greater kudu, defassa waterbuck, hippo, bushpig and giant forest hog. Guereza monkeys are common in the riverine forest, while Vervet monkeys offer lots of entertainment in the campsite.

"Nature-lovers wishing to get off-the-beaten-track should consider a visit to Chebera-Churchura National Park. The elephants are shy, but tracking these giants in the jungle is a thrilling experience.

While expressing the area Philip said that, due to the large span of altitudes, Chebera-Churchura covers a lot of different habitats and landscapes. There is a big chunk of lush jungle-like forest crisscrossed by streams and animal paths. Further afield the forest thins and gives way to woodland savannah. Several hot springs and crater lakes can be

reached on hiking excursions.

And the best time to visit the Park, according to the expert, is in the dry season from November to February. The park is best explored on foot, so the wet season months from April to October can be a bit more challenging. However, the scenery is at its best during this time.

Last Saturday, this stunning, naturally endowed tourist attraction, 'Chebera Elephant Paw Lodge' within the Chebera Churchura National Park was inaugurated by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in the presence of, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen, Speaker of the House of People's Representatives, Tagesse Chafa, regional chief administrators and high ranking government officials, as well as invited guests.

The lodge located between Konta and Dawro Zones is part of the Premier's tourism destination projects being constructed in the country through the 'Dine for Nation' initiative, it was learnt.

According to documents, the park is highly attractive because of its undulating landscape with high hills, rolling plains with incised rivers and perennial streams, four small crater

lakes (Keriballa, Shasho, Koka) valleys, and gorges. The rivers are lined by dense forests, which provide habitat for the Buffaloes and elephants, as well as forest birds like trogon and turacos.

The park covers a total area of 11,900 hectare/1250 square kilometers and elevations range from 500-2000 meters above sea level. Its annual rainfall ranges from 1200 mm to 2300 mm and temperature ranges from 10-29°C. Wet seasons are from March to September and dry seasons are from December to February. The park harbors four small creator lakes such as Keriballa, Koka, and Shasho. There are 49 perennial rivers crossing the park. The river Zinga which is one of the tributaries of the Omo River rises from the northeast highlands of the area and crosses the central part of the park.

The Shoshuma River rises from the northwestern highlands of the Konta area, flows across the northeastern part of the park and joins the Zinga River inside the park and drains to Omo River. There are also natural caves existing in the park.

The park also contains various hot and cold springs like Toshima, *Nechwuha* (to mean white water) and waterfalls like Barbo waterfall.