



The Ethiopian Herald

Vol LXXX No 074 6 DECEMBER 2023 - HIDAR 26, 2016

Wednesday

Price Birr 10.00

Ethiopia's BRICS admission fosters ties with Russia - President Putin

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA- Russian President Vladimir Putin said that Ethiopia's admission to the BRICS family will further strengthen the two countries cooperation in various areas.

The President made the above remark while receiving the letter of credence of Ethiopia's Ambassador to Russia Cham Ugala Uriat.

At a ceremony held in Moscow, President Putin said it is his government desire to bolster the two countries diplomatic relations that spanned over 125-year. "Ethiopia's admission to BRICS will further consolidate the Ethio-Russia partnership in strategic areas."

According to information obtained from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's (PhD) recent visit to Russia and the signed cooperation agreements take the two countries relations to a higher level.

It is to be recalled that leaders of the BRICS economic bloc approved the admission of Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Egypt, Argentina and the United Arab Emirates in their Johannesburg Summit last August.



ካስማ ፈርኒቸር
ካስማ የብሔራዊ ገበያ ቤት
Gurd Sholla Century Mall 3rd floor
+251913230014 ይደውሉ

Facebook: Kasmafurniture
Twitter: Kasma Furniture
Instagram: Kasma.furniture
LinkedIn: kasma furniture
Website: kasmatur.com

Formal university-industry linkage to see day of light soon

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA-The government is wrapping up activities to create a formal university-industry linkages as the new directive to guide the interaction between the two is under completion, Ministry of Industry (MoI) announced.

Speaking to Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), MoI Strategic Affairs Chief Executive, Tilahun Abay said that his organization is collaborating with Ministry of Education (MoE) to formalize university-industry linkage- an important platform which grants both parties to exchange benefits under legal circumstances.

There was an informal linkage between industries and higher educational institutions because of absence of legal framework, he

See Formal university ...page 3



Debt relief crucial to shore up macroeconomic stability

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia's ability to secure a 1.5 billion USD debt relief from creditors would have a paramount importance in reducing interest payment and easing payable along with supplementing forex reserves, actors in the area said.

See Debt relief ...page 3

Council recognizes gov't's adherence to Muslim's cause

• New Islamic Center to build in Addis

BY BETLEHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- The Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC) has recognized the reform government's adherence to address the Muslim community's long-held demands and its commitment to religious equality.

The council bestowed recognition awards to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) and Mayor Adanech Abebe for their unreserved support and response to the demands of the Muslim community. The recognition ceremony was held under the theme 'Next Chapter for Holistic Change at the Millennium Hall.'

Speaking at the occasion, EIASC President Sheikh Hajji Ibrahim Tufa stated that the reform government has taken bold steps to

See Council recognizes ...page 3



Wise measures to solve problems attached to fertilizer supply
Page 6

Sin against "the gone off their rockers" referred to
Page 7

Why the UN COP28 Climate Talks Must Serve Farmers to Achieve a "Just Transition"
Page 8

News

AfCFTA vital to pursue climate policies: ECA

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA - The United Nations Economic Commission of for Africa (ECA) announced that Africa is capable of increasing its renewable energy use by pursuing climate policies with the African Continental Free trade Area agreement (AfCFTA).

A press release sent to *The Ethiopian Herald* indicated that a study conducted by ECA and CEPIL on the implementation of AfCFTA in line with renewable practices and low carbon strategies, was presented at a COP 28 side event themed "Africa's Trade and Green Transition: A Continentally Coordinated Approach."

Presenting the findings, Simon Mevel, Economic Affairs Officer at the ECA said that implementing AfCFTA can boost intra-African trade by 35% in 2045 while increasing Greenhouse Gas (GHG)

emissions less than 1%, compared to no AfCFTA or climate policies.

The study also identified that AfCFTA and Africa's climate objectives are compatible since adopting climate policies with AfCFTA could reduce GHG emissions by 25% while still increasing intra-African trade by 31-34% depending on climate policy considered, he stated.

Pricing carbon in Africa seems to be an effective and efficient mechanism to help African countries meeting their climate objectives defined under their NDCs, Simon mentioned.

According to him, the findings show that climate policies can help accelerate Africa's renewable energy transition. Pursuing climate policies with AfCFTA could increase Africa's renewable energy use 5-12% in 2045 compared to no AfCFTA or climate policies.



Melaku Desta

On the occasion, Melaku Desta, Coordinator of the ECA's Africa Trade Policy Centre (ATPC) said that AfCFTA creates opportunities for the continent to industrialize and transform through increased trade and stands as a beacon of hope for fostering intra-African trade, economic integration and shared prosperity.

He cited analysis that shows intra-African trade could be 35% higher in 2045 with AfCFTA in place, as compared to without the free trade agreement.

About two-thirds of the absolute intra-African trade gains would benefit industrial sectors supporting economic transformation, the Coordinator stated, adding that supporting this increased trade requires major investments in transportation infrastructure to meet the AfCFTA needs which would be well over 2 million trucks, 100,000 rail cars, 150 vessels and 250 aircraft.

It was learnt that coordination on climate policies through carbon pricing produces better outcomes than uncoordinated approaches like existing NDCs. This suggests African countries can provide an effective African-driven response to address climate change by working together.

Confucius institute renews agreement with AAU

• Celebrates 10th Anniversary

BY ZEKARAI WOLDEMARIAM

ADDIS ABABA - Confucius institute has celebrated 10th anniversary of launching service at Addis Ababa University (AAU).

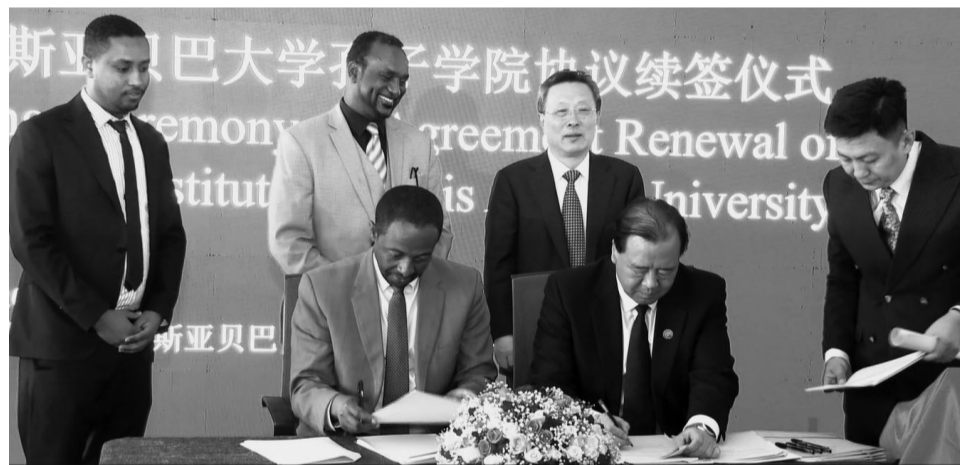
The institute has been serving as a platform to provide language teaching and training between Addis Ababa University (AAU) and Tianjin University of Technology and Education (TUTE).

At the event, Education State Minister Kora Tushune appreciated the efforts of Confucius University at Addis Ababa University to promote friendship between Ethiopia and China through cultural exchange and training Chinese language so that Ethiopians can understand China better.

He further expressed the Ministry's commitment for the effectiveness of the works of the institute as the government values the ever growing cooperation between the two countries.

Chinese ambassador to Ethiopia, Zhao Zhiyuan on his part said as the two countries have elevated our relationship to "All Weather Strategic Partnership", more and more talents are needed who can speak each other's language and who understand each other's culture for greater cooperation and brighter prospects.

The Institute can and should play a notable role. I believe, with the strong support of our two governments and the joint efforts of the two universities, the Institute will make even greater contributions to mutual learning between our two civilizations and



mutual communication between our two peoples.

AAU President Samuel Kifle (PhD) said on the occasion that Ethiopia and China have reached the all-weather comprehensive agreement and also enjoy more interwoven interests in the political, economic and social fields.

Learning the language that is spoken by the most populous and the second largest economy of the world will open more chance to the people, the economy and the future leaders of the university.

Cognizant of this fact AAU has attached due importance to work with Chinese university and Confucius institute and pledged that the University will further enhance its collaboration with China.

On the occasion, Tianjin University Technology and Education (TUTE) Board Chairman Zhang jingan noted that in the past 10 years the two universities have worked to provide high quality language teaching and training service to respond to the needs of Ethiopian people to know Chinese language and

culture.

This has contributed its share in assisting the efforts to cultivate local Chinese language talent in Ethiopia.

He further expressed firm belief that the cooperation between Confucius Institute and Addis Ababa University will continue outstanding jobs of cooperation and exchange between the two universities and to deepen the exchange between China and Ethiopia.

It was learnt that AAU and TUTE have also signed an agreement to renew their partnership for the coming years.

AAU Confucius Institute Director Prof. Gao Lili told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the institute has so far graduated 200 Chinese language student and has opened degree program at AAU as well as certificate program for other AAU staff members and government offices, among others.

The institute has also been working to cultivate local talent in Chinese language so as to facilitate communication between Chinese and Ethiopian nationals, she added.

Bishoftu to access GPS tracking service soon

• SSGI develops 4 technology models, 10 apps

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopian Space Science and Geospatial Institute (SSGI) disclosed that Bishoftu town would get GPS tracking technology service this December.

SSGI Director-General, Abdisa Yilma told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that preparations have been finalized to implement the GPS tracking technology service in Bishoftu town this December. It would simplify the mobility of people and ease access to the location of houses, roads, institutes and others. GPS service would be inaugurated in the near future.

Locally developed GPS application (system) facilitates are of instrumental in following mobility of people by identifying each block, road, house and building, institute and others through its code. Similarly, locally developed GPS service would be expanded to Addis Ababa, Bahir Dar, Adama, Debre Birhan, Hawassa, Jimma and other main Ethiopian cities this year.

"The base mark of Bishoftu town is prepared. A mobile based GPS system service would be implemented at the end of December. It has been conducting science, remote sensing, astronomy, geodynamics and other research studies. Furthermore, it mainly develops different technology models," he added.

Hence, this Ethiopian fiscal year, the institute has been developing four technologies and ten different app models that are essential for decision making and would be of crucial input for future activities, he added.

In collaboration with higher education institutes, it has been offering post graduate training in Astronomy and Astrophysics, space science and application, remote sensing, geodynamics and others to overcome shortage of educated manpower in the sector, Abdisa explained.

News

Efforts underway to make Debre Birhan Smart City

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – DebreBirhan University is finalizing the preparation of a Smart City structural plan for DebreBirhan city that would serve for the next fifty years.

The university has held a consultation forum with stakeholders on making DebreBirhan, a Smart City to enhance its overall development.

On the occasion, DebreBirhan University President Nigus Tadesse said that the university is finalizing the preparation of the city structural plan that would serve for the next fifty years.

Accordingly, he stated, the base map is finalized and the analysis of the already collected socio economic data has been commenced.

Transforming DebreBerhan to a smart city is crucial since urban development requires continuous planning intervention, Nigus noted.



The consultation forum

In its current growth level, the city demands applying smart city approach integrating and incorporating ICT, he indicated.

He said that the city has been expanding and growing more than expected in a short period of time as it is one of the rapidly

growing cities in Ethiopia.

However, the president mentioned that there are gaps in preparing and implementing structural plans.

Amhara State Urban Cluster Coordinator and Urban and Infrastructure Bureau

Head Ahmedin Muhammad (PhD) on his part said that urbanization causes its own challenges and limitations.

For him, advancement of technologies alleviates manmade and natural disasters happening in urban areas.

Utilizing the latest smart city technologies is crucial to overcoming urbanization problems, improve citizens' life, develop infrastructure, access services and others, he said, adding that preparing and implementing proper smart city strategy would contribute to realize Digital Ethiopia 2025 as part of country's digital transformation.

According to the Head, there are eight regiopolises and some 683 cities in the state.

Implementation of smart city approach in DebreBirhan would make the city livable, develops green economy, digitizes services, ensures sustainability and facilitates overall development, it was learnt.

Council recognizes...

address genuine demands of the Muslim community including the recognition of the Supreme Council as a legal entity. The improvement in the council's institutional organization is also the contribution of the government.

The establishment and expansion of interest-free banking as well as the allocation of land for mosques are also areas the current government recognized by the council. The government is at present conducting a series of discussions and reviewing situations that help to solve public discontent.

“Peace is the center of Islamic teaching and we are committed to play our role towards ensuring enduring stability in the country. Peace is the backbone of Ethiopia's growth and every actor should come to a roundtable to resolve differences through discussion,” Hajji Ibrahim pleaded.

Addis Ababa Islamic Affairs Council President Sheikh Sultan Aman Eba expressed gratitude for efforts that the City Administration put forth. Prime Minister Abiy and Mayor Adanech Abibie have played an immense role in the legalization of the EIASC, the flourishing of non-

interest banking and the provision of worship places to the Muslim community.

After receiving the recognition, Mayor Adanech Abiebie said the Muslim community has a big share in making all the efforts a reality. “Despite the challenges, the nation is going under reform and people from diverse religious backgrounds have made a noble contribution in enabling the country to pass the tough times.”

Owing to this fact, the Mayor called on everyone to play their share in ensuring peace. She also highlighted that the government will take the lion share in

peace building.

On the other hand; it has been stated that a center will be built in the name of the renowned Islamic scholar Hajji Muhammad Sani Habib. The construction of the center will be on 4000 square meters in Lemi Kura Sub-city and Addis Ababa Islamic Affairs Council President Sheikh Sultan Haj Aman assumed the responsibility for the construction.

Government officials, Muslim scholars, diplomats, members of the Inter Religious Council and the Muslim community were in attendance at the recognition event.

Debt relief...

Last week, the National Bank of Ethiopia Governor Mamo Mihretu stated that an agreement is reached with creditors to secure a 1.5 billion USD debt relief agreement. The governor's remark was confirmed in a statement from the Paris Club of creditor nations.

Approached by local media, a renowned Economist Constantinos Berhetesfa (PhD) stated that Ethiopia's debt transfer would play a pivotal role in supplementing Ethiopia's forex reserves in a sustainable manner. In this regard, Mamo announced for a parliamentary committee recently that the federal government will “save around 1.5 billion USD that would have gone to debt servicing.”

Among other benefits, the debt retention helps to attract investors, share huge projects that are held by the government to the private one (selling capital market), and lucrative investment sectors.

Curbing inflation, ensuring effective foreign currency administration, increasing

the foreign currency inflow, adjusting the trade balance and controlling debt pressure are areas that need serious attention of relevant actors. Evaluating the budget performance between the states and the federal government is also something worth equal consideration, the expert recommended.

By the same token, Finance State Minister Eyob Tekalign (PhD) alluded to an overarching debt restructuring process that supersedes the suspension. He revealed the terms of the suspension would cease to apply once “the bigger restructuring ends.” The federal government serviced 1.8 billion USD in foreign debt in 2020/21 and another 1.6 billion USD the following year.

The official creditor committee (OCC) under the Paris Club has agreed to suspend the service of Ethiopian government-guaranteed debt between January 2024 and December 2025, while China (who co-chairs the Club with France) has reached a separate debt suspension agreement with Ethiopian officials.

Formal university-...

said, adding that MoE has initiated a new framework that allows higher educations to have a formal linkage with industries.

MoI is also keen to ensure a well principled linkage between educational institutions and industries that is why it is playing part for the completion of the new directive shortly to guide the cooperation, Tilahun indicated.

“The university-industry linkage needs institutional platform. It would create full cooperation to implement consultations, capacity building initiatives, researches and technological development processes,” he added.

The Manufacturing Industries Development Institute also takes an initiative to strengthen its linkage with research and educational institutions, according to him.

He further said that the government will make interlocks between the industrial sector and other development institutions by drawing lesson from industrialized



countries.

Tilahun pointed out that the national strategic plan is also anticipated to transform the agriculture-led economy through promoting large scale mechanization and improved linkage with the industry sector.

The government has adopted a seven year strategic plan and initiatives like “Let Ethiopia Produce” to build industrial capacity. All reforms and adopted frameworks are expected to facilitate government's plan to transform the economy from agriculture-led to industrial economy, he expressed.

Opinion

Towards recording wins against corruption

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Millions of billions of dollars, which would potentially convert the planet into a paradise for its inhabitants, have been pumped into personal gain. As a result investment in various sectors is made dwarfed from time to time. It is also well recognized that high levels of corruption and poor governance are widely believed to be constraints to economic growth in developing countries like Ethiopia. It is also well known that corruption, GDP per capita and growth rates have been having highly correlated feature as the former is immensely contributing to the dwindling state of the latter ones.

True, in actual facts, causality runs from higher income to lower corruption, rather than the other way around. Besides, successful, pro-poor economic performance is most likely to be sustained through a continuation of a domestically-driven reform and policy agenda, and that fears of a slowdown in growth due to perceived weak governance are in fact misplaced.

Though corruption is a notoriously difficult concept to define, a number of its manifestations are clearly telling citizens in what way corruption hurts citizen, and the country at large. The problem is more to do with whether people see corruption as being a deviation from ethical norms or from legal norms. Yes, corruption as being process oriented, it has somehow altered the normal processes of society. Be that as it may, the society has to condemn the act if they would like to live in an even world of work, living and societal status quo.

Unequivocally, as widely witnessed worldwide so far corruption is a major obstacle to economic development as it reduces domestic investment, discourages foreign direct investment, inflates government spending, and shifts government spending away from education, health, and infrastructure maintenance toward less efficient public projects. International pressure against corruption is useful, but more critical is reform of domestic institutions and a focus on the incentive problem.

No doubt, corruption hinders economic development by reducing domestic investment, discouraging foreign direct investment, encouraging overspending in government, and distorting the composition of government spending from education, health, and infrastructure maintenance toward less efficient but more twisted public projects. Corruption can be symptomatic of many social ills so the fight against it must be multifaceted.

Together with an associated drive for economic liberalization, notably in the area of international trade, globalization has increased the pressure on countries to be more transparent and accountable in the management of their economies. More to the point, it created incentives for policymakers to reform policies and institutions for countries to benefit themselves out of the rising international flows of capital,

technology, and information. While nations are most eager to exploit the widening opportunities were initially the larger emerging economies, other developing countries also sought to access markets and attract investment flows in the new environment.

Sound macroeconomic policies, a healthy regulatory environment, more transparent and accountable public institutions, and protection of property and investor's rights have become essential prerequisites for attracting foreign direct investment and for accessing financial markets at reasonable terms against corruption.

Poor governance also affects countries' income distribution and poverty. Why relatively wealthy choose rent-seeking activities such as employment in the government bureaucracy, army, and police rather than engaging in productive and entrepreneurial activities, because they have found that high and rising corruption is associated with higher income inequality and poverty.

While there is a large consensus that the negative impact of corruption on economic growth, some continue to argue that the effect of corruption on growth is context specific and associated with factors such as the country's legal and institutional framework, quality of governance and political regime.

Yes, in some highly regulated countries that do not have effective government institutions and governance systems, corruption can compensate for red tape and institutional weaknesses. Corruption is also likely to undermine the regulatory environment and the efficiency of state institutions as rent-seeking distorts incentives and decision-making processes. Not only does corruption affect economic development in terms of economic efficiency and growth, it also affects equitable distribution of resources across the population via increasing income inequalities, undermining the effectiveness of social welfare programs and ultimately resulting in lower levels of human development. This, in turn, may undermine long-term sustainable development, economic growth and equality with the specific intention of collecting bribes from those needing to circumvent the restrictive bureaucracy.

Therefore as economies develop, the sort of economic corruption that could exist when the capitalist sector was small is no longer tolerated, and the sort of political corruption that could exist in a pre-capitalist economy is no longer required to anything like the same sort of extent.

Here, substantiating the means of overcoming corruption in order to ensure effective state governance and sustainable economic development of the country is crucial. The destructive effects of corruption are considered at two levels: at the state level, national level, and at the level of citizen, personal level. The state is formed by people, and their tolerance to corruption

depends on their value systems and a vital position formed by society and family. One can fight against corruption effectively, first of all, by forming the competence of responsibility in the citizens of the country, that is, their conscious attitude to the requirements of society, the ability to be responsible for their own lives and actions.

Anti-corruption tools are investigated at the state level and at the level of personality formation. Effective governance under the influence of corruption pressure not only prevents the country from developing in a normal way, inhibiting foreign investment and reducing national wealth, but also activating the migration outflow of a responsible part of the population, the best part of the national gene pool, thereby destroying the nation. Anti-corruption campaigns often include an awareness raising component which highlights the negative consequences of corruption; the idea is that awareness will empower citizens to demand a change. So the saying goes, "Charity begins at home," the family is the best institution that can produce THE generation that would confidently and effectively combat this social menace.

It is undeniable fact that corruption is one of the most pervasive types of crime: it fuels transnational crime, wastes public resources, destabilizes countries, and impedes good governance. So long as no country is immune to this threat and cancerous to development and change, advancing a holistic approach that establishes anti-corruption regimes which balance prevention and enforcement and empower internal such as inspectors, and external like the legislative, journalistic, citizenry superintendence needs to be well focused.

As legal reforms are insufficient without capacity to implement or enforce them, such as the ability to effectively investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate crimes, corruption is increasingly transnational in nature; the ability of officials of individual countries to prevent and pursue corruption must be complemented by national, regional, continental and global efforts and measures to support effective international cooperation and partnerships. Efforts to strengthen countries' systems have to be prettily enhanced by strengthening their respective competence and abilities to cooperate internationally and building up frameworks that facilitate such cooperation and firm determination of exerting combined efforts. This includes capacity building efforts related to strengthening international legal cooperation, complex case investigation, asset recovery, and multi-country networks of practitioners.

The major point here is leveraging coordination and learning to scrap corruption is one of the lucrative means to get rid of the severe impacts of this social menace and get it vanished if possible. Hence, improving the effectiveness of foreign assistance and policy approaches is needed. True, corruption and poor governance are key factors holding back any country's

overall development and socioeconomic advancement, too. It is indeed possible to fight corruption successfully with the right knowledge, patience, and commitment to transparency. To fight corruption, citizens of a given country, must first understand what corruption is as underlying the various forms of dishonesty—grand, political, and administrative, which include public resource transfers to private entities, allocation of public resources to political allies, and misuse of public funds—is the most important factor to take appropriate actions against the deed.

Lack of transparency of critical financial and other information that is central to economic development, in particular revenues and budgets, has taken the lion's share in making corruption rampant. Besides, weakness or total absence of institutions, systems, and processes that block leakages, is another factor. Next, the pervasiveness of impunity—limited political will to hold accountable and punish those found guilty of such corruption adds fuel to fire. Even though building institutions takes time and does not deliver the quick results that typically attract politicians or donors to the emerging countries like ours, it is essential for individual countries and the world in general to fight corruption systematically and ensure long-term stability and reliable economic growth. These days, countries are fortunate to have technology that helps them build electronic platforms to manage government finances, biometric systems to bring integrity to their personnel and government payment systems, and web-based platforms to provide transparency of government finances.

Yes, Ethiopia or Africa needs to focus its anti-corruption fight on long-term, high-return institution building activities, coupled with the justice infrastructure and political will to hold those who transgress accountable.

Countries thus should combine efforts with building strong and independent audit and justice systems, including a well-resourced judiciary to create an environment that enables strong and accountable civil society organizations that provide oversight of government. Such strong and independent institutions have a salutary effect on political will as they exert the necessary pressure on politicians, even at the highest levels, to act. Such initiatives take patience and determination though, since building these institutions, systems, and processes may take time. Only with these pragmatic approaches can Ethiopia, the continent and/or beyond record wins against corruption.

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

Editorial

Exigent need for sea access: LLDCs' legitimate request

As global leaders have convened at the UN Climate Change Conference, in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, to address the urgent need for climate action, the plight of landlocked developing countries (LLDC) must not be overlooked. Among them, Ethiopia stands as a prime example of nations that desperately require access to the sea- a vital lifeline for its economic prosperity, regional stability and integration and climate resilience.

Unfortunately, the absence of sea access exposed landlocked countries to heightened vulnerability to climate-related disasters, water stress and economic instability.

Landlocked developing countries consisting of 32 nations, has brought forth a burning issue that holds significant political, economic, and social implications for their countries and regions as a whole.

At the high-level meeting of the LLDCs, Ethiopia's Finance Minister Ahmed Shide emphasized the necessity of addressing unique climate vulnerability of landlocked developing countries through partnership. More importantly, he encouraged an urgent need for cooperation and unity among landlocked and developing countries in the region. Structural limitations, combined with challenging geography and climate constraints, leave landlocked countries disproportionately susceptible to the adverse impacts of climate change.

Ethiopia, like its landlocked counterparts, grapples with dual challenges of shaping its own power and mitigating the devastating effects of climate change. It is within this context that Ethiopia's willingness to collaborate with regional partners in multiple instances becomes apparent.

The land of Ethiopia presents numerous economic opportunities and holds strategic importance for the Horn of Africa. However, the lack of sea access hampers not only the country's economic progress but also affects the entire region. What is more, it exacerbates the already pressing climate challenges Ethiopia and the whole of Africa are struggling with.

Obviously, Ahmed's statement at the sideline meeting of the UN Climate Change Conference highlights Ethiopia's eagerness to engage in cooperative efforts with regional countries and development partners in order to address the issue of port service ownership and access- a reflection of their commitment to good neighborliness.

Undoubtedly, Ethiopia's pursuit of sea access is grounded in the principle of mutual benefit, aiming to advance the interests of the region. Currently, sea access for Ethiopia is not an issue to be compromised with. When the country gets direct access to maritime trade routes, it can better harness its resources, enhance regional integration and foster sustainable economic growth.

As the nation strives for policies promoting mutually advantageous, economic growth among the Horn countries and beyond, the significance of sea access cannot be overstated in terms of regional integration which is one of the goal of Ethiopia's Pan-African spirit.

Climate change looms over the entire planet, sparing no country from its profound impact. Yet, it is the landlocked developing countries that bear the brunt of its devastating blows. Ethiopia finds itself among the countries grappling with multifaceted challenges induced by climate change and exacerbated by the absence of sea access.

Whenever discussions on climate change and strategies for averting its catastrophic consequences circulate among participants, the urgency of sea access for landlocked developing nations like Ethiopia becomes glaringly apparent. It is pivotal that the international community recognizes the dire need for sea access for landlocked countries and takes collective action.

By championing the cause, the international community can alleviate the economic struggle of those landlocked developing countries, enhance regional stability, and bolster their capacity to effectively combat the threats posed by rapidly changing climate.



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.

Department

email: etpresspromotion@gmail.com

Tel. 011-156-98-73/011-811-13-15

Telegram :- 0976084707 - press

Editor-in-Chief: Worku Belachew

email- workubelachew@press.et

Address- Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-city

Woreda - 05, House No----

Tel- +251 111 26 41 98

Managing Editor: Wakuman Kudama

Email: wakuma220@gmail.com

Deputy Editors-in-Chief:

Alem Hailu

Elizabeth Mengistu

Zekarias Woldemariam

Desta Geberehiwot

Daniel Beyene

Website: www.press.et

email: ethiopianherald@press.et

Fb/ /Ethiopian Press Agency/

The Ethiopian Herald

Opinion

Combating illicit border trade entails cooperation of all stakeholders

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Illegal border trade is a very complex, intricate and difficult issue to handle by concerned government authorities. It has a multifaceted, complex and complicated implications. It affects and involves the whole paraphernalia of economic, social and security arrangements of a country. In the context of Ethiopia, addressing, tackling and dealing with illegal border trade necessitates a comprehensive and multilateral approach that involves cooperation, collaboration and mutual assistance with neighboring countries. This measure is critical for enhancing border control measures and for developing relevant and applicable economic strategies. Those experts dealing with problems of border trading have studied and suggested measures to be implemented.

Some of the key aspects and measures that could be considered by Ethiopia with respect to border trade are: understanding the causes; enhanced border control; cooperation with neighboring countries; legal reforms and harmonization; economic development in border regions; public awareness and education; law enforcement and judicial measures; customs modernization; international assistance and cooperation; and regular monitoring and evaluation. Each of these measures is presented below in detail.

In understanding the causes of illegal border trade, it is helpful and supportive to identify, recognize and categorize the underlying factors that are driving illicit and dishonest trade along the Ethiopian border. These factors may include economic disparities between neighboring countries. Also, weak border control by anyone or all of these countries may cause leakages along the borders, which are sometimes difficult to check and control. Moreover, informal trade practices between traders in the countries bordering Ethiopia may open the door for banned or illicit trade. It is observed that the absence of serious legal controls and alternatives in neighboring countries have exacerbated contraband trading along the Ethiopian borders.

Excessive illegal border trading damages the economy of bordering countries. It may require enhanced border control. This measure demands investment in border infrastructure. Existing infrastructure may need improvement and enhanced modernization using latest technology in the field of construction. These measures include checkpoints at border crossings to facilitate legal trading. Improved roads with facilities for checking enhance control over the movement of goods between neighboring countries. These measures may be accompanied with advanced technological solutions. Joint investment in modern technology is beneficial for all neighboring countries. The technological inputs are mainly electronic surveillance, monitoring systems that strengthen border control efforts.

Combating illicit trade requires the cooperation of concerned neighboring countries. Regional cooperation agreements enhance collaboration with neighboring countries to address and tackle the issue collectively. They may need shared strategies and intelligence network that can help combat and avoid cross-border illegal trade effectively. They may also need to strengthen cooperation between customs authorities to streamline the process of legal trading. They have to install detection mechanisms to deter illicit activities along the borders. Mechanical control may not be sufficient. Patrolling of the borders is useful to check movements of goods on both sides of the borders. However, those guards patrolling the borders for controlling illegal trading have to be highly skilled, honest and dedicated. They have

to be free from corruption. Illicit traders tend to corrupt border guards for continuing their border trades uninterrupted.

Legal reforms and harmonization of trade policies with neighboring countries is very critical. These countries have to work towards harmonization of policies to prevent discrepancies and inconsistencies. Their border activities have to be coordinated and synchronized by developing common policies and strategies. These measures will reduce disparity between countries that may drive illegal trade. The slightest disparities and differences create beneficial imbalances that attract illegal traders. These traders take advantage of marginal differences that contribute toward their earnings. This, however, depends on trade facilitation arrangements between neighboring countries that contribute to legal cross border trade. In so doing, they also reduce barriers. If difficult barriers and hurdles are reduced or eliminated, they create legal environment which encourage contrabandists to resort to.

Economic development in the border regions promotes economic opportunities that attract legal border traders. Experts revealed that Ethiopian traders prefer safe and legal business operations along the border areas. They have a preference in favor of legal trade. They tend to invest in economic development projects in border regions. Such investment provides legal economic opportunities for local communities. The members of these communities are candidates for dealing in illicit activities. However, if they are given the opportunity to engage in legal enterprises, they are bound to be successful. Such opportunities reduce the incentive for engaging in illegal border trade in the country. It induces them to create employment opportunities for themselves and others. Activities in the border areas require special skills which new comers have to acquire from those who have been engaged there earlier.

Public awareness and education is a vital instrument for attracting the Ethiopian unemployed youth to formal sector integration. With time they are transformed into legal operators in different sectors of the Ethiopian economy. They are made aware of their legal duties in trades they are engaged in. Communities are also made aware of the benefits of legal trades that are beneficial for them. In these processes informal sectors become transformed into the formal economy. They become law abiding citizens that work and earn income out of which they pay taxes to the government. Local economic integration may, in the long-run, be transformed into external trade relations. Local products may be exported to earn foreign exchange. Imports may be replaced with locally produced goods thereby saving foreign exchange.

Simplification of customs procedures increases awareness about customs procedures. These reduce the consequences of engaging in illegal trade. Simplification is not simple. It requires an in-depth study of the necessary procedures to eliminate unnecessary bureaucratic activities. Such activities are nothing but burden on those who engage in border trade. Burdensome bureaucracy is nothing but a loophole for penalizing border trade operators. It delays the flow goods into and out of Ethiopia. To reduce trade impediments, the relevant law enforcement and judicial measures have to be in place. Law and order is nothing without law enforcement agencies in the country. Again these agencies are ineffective unless equipped with the necessary resources and skills. They have to be trained to effectively and efficiently combat illegal trade. Resources have to be earmarked for every law enforcement activity related to border trade in Ethiopia.

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

Business & Economy

Wise measures to solve problems attached to fertilizer supply

BY BACHA ZEWDIE

This is the main harvest season and a time of preparation for farmers to the next harvest period. Nowadays, harvest seasons have been increased in Ethiopia. Farming, which was normally done once a year in anticipation of winter, has now become accustomed to summer irrigation in many areas.

After harvesting the crops sown in autumn, the next irrigation is done. This irrigation therefore requires many inputs. Among these, the issue of soil fertilization is one that farmers have been tested by. It is known that the government has been making various efforts to address the fertilizer demand of the farmers. However, due to various reasons, soil fertilization has been a challenge for the farmers.

In countries like Ethiopia where national development and economy is based on agriculture, failure to meet the needs of the farmers causes many problems. If the farmers get out somehow today, the pressure it will put on the people tomorrow is not easy to estimate. Therefore, it is necessary to think ahead to meet the agricultural inputs needed by the farmers. That is why the Ministry of Agriculture has already bought soil fertilizer and is working hard to reach the farmers in order to prevent a repeat of last year's problem.

Recently, the Ministry of Agriculture briefed journalists about soil fertilization. This concerns the pre-purchase of soil fertilizer which is urgent in Ethiopia. State Minister of Agriculture, Sophia Kassa (PhD) said that fertilizer procurement is done through the federal government. It will be done based on the potential of the country. Accordingly, it is planned to provide more than 23 million quintals of fertilizer for the 2023/24 crop season, but it is known that the country's purchasing capacity for this year's crop season is 19.4 million quintals of soil fertilizer that cost 930 million Dollar. Out of this, 14.79 million quintals of fertilizer has been purchased so far.

There are two types of fertilizers that are most in demand by farmers. They are NPS and Urea; but their usage is different. For example, during sowing season, NPS Boron is needed and it accounts for 60%. Urea, which the farmer uses when the crop reaches the budding season, covers 40%. She explained that out of the 19.4 million quintals of soil fertilizer, 8.2 quintals is urea and the remaining 11.19 million quintals is NPS.

According to the State Minister, last year, 12.8 million quintals were purchased; not including that was purchased for Tigray region. Compared to last year, there is a significant increase. This makes Ethiopia purchase the largest volume of fertilizer in its history. Apart from that, this crop season has also seen good performance by importing the soil fertilizer quickly.

As she said, the first ship arrived on



December 28, 2022 last year. This year, however, the first ship loaded with 51,420 metric tons of urea arrived at Djibouti port in October 2023.

For the 2023/24 production season, up to 29 November, 2023; 207,295 metric tons of urea fertilizer arrived at the port of Djibouti, of which 104,304 metric tons of urea were transported to the country. She further explained that from 1st December to 14, 2023, three ships loaded with 174,500 metric tons of NPS Boron are expected to arrive in Djibouti.

As stated repeatedly, the State Minister explained that it was likely to make several improvements in terms of making the issue of soil fertilization available to the semi-pastoralists and farmers early. She mentioned that there are various reasons for this success. Among these reasons, the main ones are changing the existing purchasing policy; reorganizing the board of the Agricultural Works Corporation and establishing a technical committee; making purchases using different purchase options; and making purchases when the price of fertilizer is reduced.

In addition, the opening of 11 LCs, which has never happened before; identification of areas that need fertilizer for the irrigation, autumn and the main harvest seasons and purchase will ensure that the success is sustainable and guaranteed. At the current purchase rate, there is little left over for the harvest. For this reason, some purchases have been made recently. She said that the rest will be bought when the price of fertilizer is reduced.

According to the State Minister, the Ministry of Agriculture controls only the transportation from Djibouti to the central warehouse and the information provided is based on this. The price will be fixed by the government in order to ensure that the farmers purchase with the same price of the last two consecutive years in order to prevent the market price from increasing after the harvest. After that, cost of transportation, loading and unloading fee and warehouse rent will be added to the farmers upon arrival in the regions. Therefore, this year, as she believes, the farmers are not

concerned about the price issue. They are given the opportunity to buy with the last two consecutive years' price.

Another measure taken as to the State Minister is the work done to avoid improper transfer and exchange of fertilizers. This is a system that is monitored by the Ministry and ensures that the fertilizer reaches the farmers from Djibouti. She stated that it is to guarantee the delivery of fertilizer to the farmers. The main problem encountered in the last two consecutive years was, when they seized soil fertilizer that was being smuggled into the Amhara region, there was claim to be from Oromia and vice versa. Therefore, it was not possible to hold the smugglers and make accountable. But now, since it will be released with a code from the beginning, even if it is sold, it has a chance of being caught. Since the system also enhances accountability, it is being implemented this year, she said.

The State Minister stated that there is another practical work to be done during the same production period in connection with the supply of soil fertilizer, with the aim of bringing new regions into the system. Therefore, there will be regions that purchase soil fertilizers from the Agricultural Works Corporation. One is Afar region and the procurement from the central warehouse will be officially started. Next year, Gambella and Somali regions will be included in the purchase system.

She mentioned that regarding the distribution of fertilizer for the 2023/24 crop season, it is being done in consultation with the regions so that there is no security problem and the distribution is not disrupted. She stated that fertilizer is entering the regions even with convoy. Referring to the regions that take soil fertilizer widely, the Ministry compared it with last year. For Tigray region, 800,000 quintals was bought last year but this year, 700,000 quintals is bought. Similarly, Amhara and Oromia regions use the highest amount of soil fertilizer. Oromia region received 5.9 million quintals last year and this year, it received 8.92 million quintals. Amara region, which received 5.2 last year, will get 8.5 million quintals of soil fertilizer this season.

Despite the high increase in the price of fertilizer at the international level, the government has subsidized considering the capacity of farmers and semi-pastoralists. Referring to the data available in the last three consecutive years, she explained that the government has provided subsidies of 52 billion Birr. She said that the reason for this is that it is believed to have an irreplaceable role in stabilizing the market.

The State Minister mentioned that the implementation of these activities will solve many problems of which one is saving time and the other is avoiding rush to take fertilizer from the corporation and deliver it to the problem area. Fertilizer transportation from the region will not be done. They will get the soil fertilizer they need directly from their distribution center on time. She stressed that both regions and farmers should be aware of this and take action.

Ministry of Agriculture has already bought soil fertilizer and is working hard to reach the farmers in order to prevent a repeat of last year's problem

Saving is also seen during this production season's fertilizer purchase. "Because," the State Minister said; "We have reduced the burden of government subsidies by increasing our demand for fertilizers. Last year, we were given one billion dollars and it was possible to buy 12.8 million quintals, not including Tigray. This year, however, 930 million dollars have been allowed and up to 19.4 million quintals have been purchased. For this, the newly established technical committee negotiated with the suppliers and made the purchase possible. On the other hand, it has become profitable to buy fertilizer in anticipation of low prices."

Art & Culture

Sin against “the gone off their rockers” referred to



(Short Story)

BY ALEM HAILU G/KRISTOS

“The young chap more often than not you liked discussing with passed away,” a waiter in the pastry of EPA’s neighborhood rushed towards me no sooner I set foot there. He seemed eager to break the bad news.

“Which one?” I narrowed down my eyes to rummage through the storeroom of my memory.

“The one that hovers around our veranda and at times take a tea. Drawing a chair, he used to peruse the newspapers and magazines like Newsweek for hours on end.”

“Do you mean the one with a tiny swelling on his head? Are you referring to the one who puts on old suits?”

“Yes. Not a few who acquainted with him here say behind his back ‘he is a man of letters who has gone off his rockers,’” the waiter made a circle with his hands to show the chap is known to many.

“What happened to him?”

“Nothing is known! He was found dead in his bed,”

“As I was on a field trip, I didn’t meet him for almost a month. He is cut in the flower of manhood,” I crossed my face and added “yes, he was well versed in Theology. He was a lecturer in different Theology colleges before his mental sickness.”

The disturbing news conjured up in my mind the poem by John Liptrot Hatton. It is about the ephemerality of our brief existence.

Busy, curious, thirsty fly!

Drink with me and drink as I:

Freely welcome to my cup,

Could’st thou sip, and sip it up:

Make the most of life you may,

Life is short and wears away.

Both alike are mine and thine

Hastening quick to their decline:

Thine’s a summer, mine’s no more,

Though repeated to three score.

Three score summers, when they’re gone,

Will appear as short as one!

A spectacled old man who was sat on a chair on the next row of tables laid in the pastry said “I know the chap you are referring to. Once we quarreled as he was adamant on certain issues. He was talking over me as if my views bear no weight. He was a bit arrogant and looks down on others even those who settle his bills out of sympathy.”

“I know what you mean Sir. The problem surfaced for you were not aware of the mental health of the chap.”

“What do you mean by that?” the man frowned.

“Do you have knowledge about delusional people or individuals that falsely believe they are in the shoe of better off people or somebody great? As to my understanding this behavior is symptom enough for mental

sickness,”

“Is that so? God forgive my sin,” he showed sympathy.

“In our case, that chap was assuming himself a descendent of the royal family Haile Selassie I.”

“I see! Was that a symptom of the sick in the domain of mental illness? More specifically is that convincing self ‘I am great’?”

“Sure thing Sir! Unless the public is well sensitized about such realities during discussions conflicts and clashes could arise easily anywhere. Even there are reports physical harms wrongly inflicted on the mentally ill for want of sensitization works.”

“To my disgust, the chap once claimed ‘I am the ghost writer of the speech that Joe Biden made last night,’” the man laughed with a diffused feeling of sorrow.

“He could also say ‘though not explicitly expressed I am the coauthor of the book in your hand,’”

“I did witness that!”

“But except such departures from the normal course, there is nothing one could nitpick at the way he addressed theological, philosophical, psychological and political issues,” I enumerated the virtues with my fingers.

“I second you. Often, I was stunned how he probed into the heart of news be it international or local.”

“He could have made the best local newspaper and magazine reviewer of the papers in Amharic and English.”

“I noticed he was fluent in three languages. I did hear him saying ‘I am from Illubabour,’” the man said

“Where was he living?”

“As he told me a church uptown had let him a lodge. He used to say, ‘I have to worry about my daily bread, a worrisome thing which God never failed to address as he promised referring to birds on the sky.’”

“I used to financially help him when he behaved,” the spectacled man pointed to his pocket.

“Those who understood his condition extended help to him brushing aside the minor problem he poses when his mental illness pokes its face into discussions.”

“May his soul rest in peace!”

“Amen!”

“But how come you know about delusional illness?”

“Two decades and a half back I read on a private newspaper an article entitled ‘Is he a genius or a crack?’”

“The article was about a man living with mental illness.”

“Does he resemble the chap we are referring to?”

“Yes, in so many ways.”

“What was his problem?”

“He was a noted poet who popped up on the literary scene during the post war era. That is after the war waged to uproot fascists. Even the noted historian Richard Pankhurst had acknowledged this poet whose poems were reflective of that era.”

“Where did he go wrong then?”

“He convinced himself about his being a noted scientist. To the surprise of many he often was seen walking reading a book on the road even under a scorching sun.”

“Amazing!”

“He mirrored Alchemists. He was talking about turning sands to ions and the like.”

“He must have dramatized the narration,” the man laughed.

“Sure, he did that. Once when I talked him into confining himself to the wonderland of literature than dwelling on the unbeaten road of science, that may not be his calling, vexed he said, ‘Must I descend from an ivory tower to a boozing circle?’ I laughed till my sides split.”

“Go ahead. Tell me more about such issues,” A hoary-headed friend of the man came and joined us.

I continued downloading the knowledge I accumulated about mental illness.

“By the way I am a journalist,” I said.

“Yes, as I see you are rich in ideas,” the spectacled man nodded I guess that.

“There is a saying a doctor knows too much about too little.” “That is to say he is well versed in his sphere of specialization,” the hoary-headed man nodded and added “a gynecologist may not have inkling about Quantum Mechanics,”

“Yes. Back to the sayings a journalist knows too little about too much,” I said.

“When he goes out for reporting in all walks of life he picks something,” once more the bearded man cut in.

“Sure thing,” I said and reverted back,

“Two decades back I remember producing a documentary on the Gefersa Recuperating Center for people recovering after undergoing treatment for the mentally sick at Emanuel Hospital.

The documentary was one that afforded a peek into the plight of the people living with mental illness. It as well was one that shed light on the stigmatization they suffered. And it was also on how to delicately treat them. It was a hit in terms of awareness creation,” pausing for a while I continued,

“Staying in the center having library and farming plots discussing with each other those recuperating there got back in shape. They had also a question-and-answer program early at night shortly after an early dinner.

Among inmates, classes were arranged as some are intellectuals.

I found a doctor in educational psychology there. He came from America. There was

also a mechanical engineer from Germany. Both experienced mental sickness when told via a phone, ‘your mother/father passed away respectively!’”

“Both were living lonely and leading a life packed with anxiety and fear when less careful neighbors told them about the tragedy outright. Both could not cushion the impact. As such they experienced mental sickness.”

“Another female patient was from America. She and her husband were outstanding college students,” I belabored the topic.

“What happened to her?” both said.

“They got married. And their friends and relatives used to say to them ‘expect to give birth to a brilliant child.’”

The hoary-headed man cut in and said,

“I did hear this story on a TV documentary. They ended up giving birth to a Down syndrome child.”

“Yes, you did watch the TV show aired in two languages Amharic and English.”

“‘Expect the unexpected,’” the psychologists say the spectacled man swung his hand downward.

“They also say put the top loss,” cut in the bold-headed man.

“A multitude of people sensitized about mental sickness were extending help in large volume to the center following the show. Famous artist like Mohammed Ahmed were on the front line of the support soliciting efforts. Gradually the voluntarism on the sector ebbed out.”

“Sympathy is brief by its nature,” the spectacled man said.

“I know about the paranoia,” said the hoary-headed man and added “A friend of mine was a PHD candidate in Europe. They dumped him for the arguments and clashes he picked here and there not being thick skinned. He still believes his enemies are hot on his heels,”

Pushing his spectacle back, “There is a folkloric expression in Amharic which runs, ‘he who came across a snake once jumps out of his skin when he sees a bark of a tree!’”

“I had a colleague who came here crossing the Atlantic unwilling to shoulder racial discrimination. He was detained for four mistakenly hitting a police car owing to driving error. Wary by nature, he had to clashes with his bosses suspecting they could be after him. He believed CIA was sniffing his trail,” I took breath to add

“Anyways if politely handled and if well managed they could prove supper fit in the tasks they are assigned to. I know that from experience. I know such a man around Kazan chis that reads bible day long he helped me out in translating a religious book.

It is lately people stopped relating all mental illness with devil’s possession. Further sensitization works are called for,” I said pulling out money to foot the bill.

Global Affairs

Why the UN COP28 climate talks must serve farmers to achieve a “Just Transition”

DUBAI, Dec 5 2023 (IPS) - Food and agriculture is a top agenda item at UNFCCC COP28, as the world considers how to tackle the climate impacts of what we eat and how we produce it. The stage has been set for COP28 to be a “food COP”, but for commitments to translate to action, it must also be a “farmers’ COP”.

As countries unite at COP28 around the Emirates Declaration on Resilient Food Systems, Sustainable Agriculture and Climate Action, the Alliance of Champions for Food Systems Transformation and other country-led initiatives, it is farmers, fishers, and food producers who will be vital to actually implementing urgent climate action on the ground and in the water.

In addition to being critical to reducing emissions from food production, farmers and fishers are also some of those most affected by climate change. A just transition in agricultural production therefore presents a multi-faceted opportunity to reduce carbon emissions, restore nature, and ensure better and more resilient livelihoods for the world’s 600 million smallholder farmers, all while bolstering global food supplies.

To capitalize on this opportunity, farmers, fishers, and food producers must be empowered to adopt nature-positive production practices that enhance their livelihoods while simultaneously protecting nature and the climate.

Much attention will rightly be paid to how negotiators integrate food systems approaches, that consider food production, consumption and loss and waste, in the Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work on Implementation on Agriculture and Food Security, or Nationally Determined Contributions to the Paris Agreement. But if we are to translate global commitments into local action, all eyes must be on how finance is released to food producers so that they are incentivized to use practices that benefit climate, nature and people.

Money matters

Farmers and fishers are tending land and water to feed themselves and their communities, and to improve their livelihoods. While they are some of our most important environmental stewards, and many have a bond with nature, we cannot expect large-scale transitions to nature-positive practices while food producers are financially incentivized to implement unsustainable practices that focus on increasing yield at any cost.

Aid agencies and private financiers must fulfill existing financial pledges while allocating more climate finance for transformative solutions within the agriculture and food sector. In addition, studies have shown that USD540 billion of environmentally damaging agri-food subsidies need to be repurposed each year. WWF is part of the working group on repurposing agrifood subsidies and



Credit: Technoserve/ Nile Sprague

Women harvesting peas in Haryana, India,

supports, introduced at COP26, and is working with governments and private investors to rapidly change how agriculture and food is financed, to aid a transition away from unsustainable practices that produce a narrow range of unhealthy foods to nature-positive, climate-resilient food systems that provide everyone with enough healthy and nutritious food.

Effective and equitable resource distribution is critical. Farmers, fishers, and rural women must benefit from better access to the financial support available if we are to make food systems more resilient, inclusive and sustainable.

Seeing is believing

Building trust is also essential for the transition to more resilient food systems. While there is significant evidence that nature-positive production practices can deliver comparable yields and incomes to current practices, without degrading our natural world, farmers continue to face new challenges in the face of climate change. Increasing the availability of measurement tools and technology, and integrating them in national strategies for food systems, will help farmers implement practices demonstrated to be most effective.

Alongside finance, smallholders need full access to comprehensive information, training, and expertise that helps them maximize both productivity and sustainability. Partnerships like that between TechnoServe and WWF help provide farmers with pragmatic advice and support on how to adopt practices suited for their unique realities that sustain both their livelihoods and their environment.

Spread the word

If food systems transformation is to be

Supporting smallholder farmers to adapt to climate change and adopt nature-positive practices not only serves their needs and rights to a decent livelihood, but it also protects a vital and increasingly precarious source of food and food security for the entire world

achieved at the speed required, governments, businesses, development organizations, and food producers must work together to develop and implement scaleable models. This can be challenging given the fact smallholders are often dispersed across large rural areas. Innovative solutions like radio, video and chat bots accessed by mobile phones, as used by TechnoServe to support tens of thousands of coffee farmers across five countries to implement nature-positive production practices, can help drive scale and accelerate impact.

As we head towards a pivotal COP30 in Brazil, an agricultural and environmental bellwether, climate talks must now focus both on driving more ambitious global commitments, and on equipping and empowering smallholder farmers to implement solutions on the ground and in the water. Tangible action in landscapes, seascapes and riverscapes, especially those that are undergoing rapid conversion and degradation due to unsustainable food systems, relies on COP28 delivering enhanced financial support for nature-positive food production.

Supporting smallholder farmers to adapt to climate change and adopt nature-positive practices not only serves their needs and rights to a decent livelihood, but it also protects a vital and increasingly precarious source of food and food security for the entire world. There is a clear opportunity for negotiators and financiers to seize at COP28.

William Warshauer, president and CEO of TechnoServe, a non-profit providing business solutions to poverty

Joao Campari, global leader, food practice, at the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

(SOURCE:INTER PRESS SERVICE)

Law & Politics

Ethiopian diplomacy: From confrontation to cooperation

BY SOLOMON WASSIHUN

During the devastating two-year war in northern Ethiopia that ended a little over a year ago, Ethiopia's diplomatic relations with most of its development partners, especially in the West, were tense at best and confrontational at worst. This only happened because Ethiopia was determined not to bow to pressure from foreign powers and interference in its internal affairs.

The fight was not only on the field, but also had diplomatic and media dimensions. Ethiopia fought against the campaign of sanctions, alienation, and designation, denial of trade privileges and suspension of economic support.

But soon after the signing of the Pretoria peace Deal a year ago, Ethiopia's diplomatic relations that have been in the doldrums started to revitalize. The restoration process of diplomatic relations with the international community has continued to progress smoothly over the last 13 months, and now it appears that Ethiopia has almost fully restored its bilateral and multilateral relations with its development partners.

That is exactly the point the Ethiopian Foreign Affairs State Minister, Mesganu Arga, made last week when he summarized the present status of Ethiopia's diplomacy at a parliamentary session held to appraise the quarterly performance of his office. He asserted that the solid outcomes of the extensive work done by his office during the last three months show that Ethiopia's diplomacy is returning to its peak.

One of the patterns of events that further attest to this fact is the considerable number of heads of state and governments as well as the leaders of multinational agencies that paid an official visit to Ethiopia over the last year since the signing of the peace agreement.

Foreign Secretary Blinken of the US who previously never set foot in Ethiopia as the top US diplomat came to Addis Ababa last March and saw for himself the progress of the peace process in Ethiopia. That pivotal event set chain reactions of diplomatic events spurring the resumption of bilateral and multilateral cooperation instead of confrontation between Ethiopia and the Western world.

A little over three months after Blinken's visit, the US administration announced last June it had lifted the Human Rights Violation Designation on Ethiopia. That was an important step taken by the US, paving the way for the process of normalization of diplomatic relations and bilateral cooperation between the two countries, a process which is still ongoing.

The Americans made this decision not just to do a favor to Ethiopia; rather they know Ethiopia is an important African nation that can not be left to stay on the sidelines for

so long. An American analyst commenting on the US government decision wrote "This move showcases how eager the Biden Administration is to strengthen ties with Ethiopia, which it views as an anchor for U.S. engagement on the continent and a crucial player in African security and development initiatives."

Last April marked the first visit of a Western head of government to Ethiopia since the November 2022 signing of the Pretoria peace deal. Following its Premier visit to Addis, Italy decided to resume development cooperation with Ethiopia, putting on the table €125 million for the country's reconstruction. Soon leaders of other countries followed suit.

The start of normalization of diplomatic relations with US and EU countries has led to the resumption of financial support for development activities from such multilateral agencies as the World Bank and IMF. Even, the newly appointed World Bank Chief himself has included Ethiopia in the itinerary of his first world tour as the Bank's president. Besides an International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission held two discussions in Addis Ababa in two rounds, last March and September, with government authorities on the possibilities for IMF support for the country's reform program, Home Grown Economic Reform.

At the end of its stay in Addis Ababa about two months ago, this was what the head of the IMF delegation commented: "The IMF team noted the important steps that have been taken to bring down inflation and stabilize the economy [in Ethiopia.], including significant fiscal and monetary tightening. This has put in place a critical foundation for the success of the Home Grown Economic Reform Agenda, which aims to fulfill Ethiopia's considerable economic potential. The mission made good progress in discussing how the IMF could support the [Ethiopian] authorities' economic program. Discussions will continue in the coming weeks to reach an agreement on a set of reforms for the requested program."

A few weeks ago, a high-level Ethiopian delegation comprising the economic sector top brass including the Finance Minister, reportedly had fruitful discussions with the World Bank and the IMF officials in Marrakech, Morocco. There is high hope that the discussion will culminate in financial support that would be utilized in the implementation of the economic reform.

The recently announced rescheduling of the debt payment that enabled the nation to secure over 1.5bn USD in temporary debt relief can be considered evidence of the fruitful approach the government is taking while engaging international agencies.

There is one other major diplomatic success the Ethiopian government scored in its effort to return the nation back into the middle of the pack of the international community

Constructive engagement with all development partners based on neutrality, mutual respect, and benefit is the guiding principle of the incumbent government

bilateral and multilateral cooperation with various development partners. Constructive engagement with all development partners based on neutrality, mutual respect, and benefit is the guiding principle of the incumbent government.

For instance, the Premier and his entourage of senior officials have been on continual tour of Europe to meet European heads of state and governments and explain in person what Ethiopia has to offer as a business and development partner to Europe.

Premier Abiy started his latest European working tour with the country known as the economic powerhouse of Europe, Germany, which was the venue of the G-20 Compact with Africa Summit. In addition to participating in the summit which is said to be a platform for dialogue and cooperation between reform-oriented African countries, and G20 partners, he also met European political and business leaders including the Chancellor, Olaf Scholz of Germany and President Macron of France.

A few days later, the Prime Minister traveled to Austria for another official trip to Europe and then further east to the Czech Republic, an Eastern European state that has a long history of socio-economic relations with Ethiopia. Since the Derg era, the Czech Republic has been known to the Ethiopian population as a country that offers quality higher education. Many Ethiopians educated in the former Czechoslovakia, especially in science and engineering, have become successful in their fields and have served their country.

During his latest tour, the Ethiopian leader also got the opportunity to share his country's rich experience and success stories with a global audience about such pressing issues as boosting agricultural production, fighting climate changes with afforestation activities as well and green energy development.

At the UNIDO's 20th General Conference, held in Vienna, the Ethiopian Premier delivered a keynote address as guest of honor, highlighting the potential of inclusive and sustainable industrialization to create shared global prosperity. A few days later, he appeared before another international audience, COP28 UAE, where he met with more world leaders, and spoke about Ethiopia's effective measures against climate change, including the Green Legacy Initiative, the development of environmentally friendly energy and ensuring food security through sustainable agriculture.

In general, Ethiopia has come a long way since last year to rebuild its image and relations with the international community. Given the diplomatic successes so far and the rapid transition to normalcy in the war-torn Tigray region, it is almost impossible not to admire the resilience of Ethiopians and their determination to leave the past behind and embrace the future.

after the nation emerged from a conflict dubbed by some analysts as the bloodiest in the 21st century.

It is the decision of BRICS to accept Ethiopia as its new member starting from the upcoming year. The decision has been received with great surprise by the majority of the international community. On the other hand, it has solidified Ethiopia's stature as a major power in the Red Sea region in terms of its potential as a strategic economic and geopolitical player. There is no doubt that Ethiopia's admission to the BRICS club is a result of astute diplomatic wheeling and dealing and that the huge opportunities that the decision brings to Ethiopia will start unfolding soon.

After the signing of the Pretoria peace deal, Ethiopian senior officials, starting from the Premier himself, have made relentless diplomatic efforts to bring about a speedy return of normalization of

Planet Earth

Bolstering resilience to climate variability

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Greenhouse gases trap heat and make the planet warmer. Human activities are responsible for almost all of the increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere over the last 150 years. The largest source of greenhouse gas emissions from human activities in the United States is from burning fossil fuels for electricity, heat, and transportation.

Developing countries get hit with 78 percent of the cost of climate change in 2015. It will be rising to 87 percent by 2035. The industry, energy, and wealth that were long the preserve of a handful of developed countries are finally expanding rapidly in the developing world, and that's a very good thing. But this welcome economic growth has a dangerous side effect—carbon emissions, according to the Center for Global Development.

Compared to developed countries, a much larger share of emissions in developing countries comes from deforestation. Tropical deforestation made up more than one-fifth of emissions from Latin America in 2011, nearly one-third of emissions from sub-Saharan Africa, and two-fifths of emissions from Southeast Asia, it said.

About half of total carbon dioxide emissions have been released by a handful of now-developed countries. Industrialization massively increased standards of living in countries that developed early—and hugely increased their emissions, which have only compounded with time.

However, those who are considered major emitters do not want to take responsibility and are not ready to fund green development projects in developing countries. Even though the world's countries have had discussions for the last 28 summits and passed various decisions, they cannot change their words into actions.

On the other hand, climate change is now seriously affecting developing countries. Recurrent droughts, flooding, and so on are some of the major impacts observed in Africa, especially in the east African region.

In the COP-28 summit, where world leaders assembled together, climate financing was one of the points that received more emphasis. In the side meeting, The Horn of Africa Initiative (HoAI) recently orchestrated a pivotal high-level dialogue during COP28 in Dubai, uniting finance ministers, international organizations, civil society, and academics to confront the pressing need for bolstering the region's resilience to climate variability while amplifying coordination and financing endeavors. The initiative is paving the way for an integrated Horn of Africa.

Under the esteemed guidance of Ethiopia's Finance Minister and HoAI's Chairman, the panel featured ministers from Djibouti, the Governor of Wajir Province in Kenya, the Executive Secretary of IGAD, the EU Special Envoy for the Horn, the WB



Vice President for Eastern and Southern Africa, and the AfDB Director for Climate Change and Green Growth. Mrs. Boutheina Guerhazi, the Director for Regional Integration for Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and North Africa, adeptly moderated insightful discussions.

In his opening address, the Chair of the Horn of Africa Initiative spotlighted Ethiopia as a trailblazing example of investing in green initiatives despite numerous challenges. With the majority of funding originating from domestic sources, Ethiopia sets an inspiring precedent.

However, he underscored that addressing climate change is a collective responsibility shared by major and minor emitters alike. The Chair emphasized the pivotal role of the private sector in the climate finance architecture, extending an invitation to the Arab Development Coordination Group, including BADEA, to join the initiative as members. The HoAI envisions welcoming new members at its 19th Ministerial Meeting in Brussels on December 15, 2024.

During the discussion, Workneh Gebeyehu, the Executive Secretary of IGAD, emphasized the concerning results of the Climate Prediction and Application Center (ICPAC), stressing that the Horn of Africa is becoming more arid and hotter.

Infrastructure and communities in the region are extremely vulnerable, particularly in borderlands where governance, fragility, and issues with natural resource management are prevalent.

Communities and infrastructure in the region are extremely vulnerable, particularly in the borderlands, where governance, fragility, and natural resource management issues predominate.

As part of its Green Legacy Initiative, Ethiopia has planted 32.5 billion tree saplings so far. The Initiative is a massive undertaking with the stated goal of planting 50 billion tree seedlings by 2026.

The executive secretary praised the country's efforts to combat climate change,

particularly through its Green Legacy Initiative, calling it an example for the East African region and beyond.

Workneh praised Ethiopia for mobilizing its resources and people to carry out the initiative. "The main reason that Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative is a pioneering model for the region and others is that the country planted over 30 billion tree saplings by mobilizing its resources, with people's effort and coordination of leadership, and without pleading for external financing."

He noted that the country has not relied on external financing, such as from the World Bank or other countries.

Ethiopia has also been preparing billions of tree seedlings to share with neighboring countries in the East Africa region to help them combat climate change. Thus, it serves as an exemplary model for the East Africa region and beyond, he explained.

"This is a big thing. It has also been sharing it with countries in the region. Its symbolic significance is big. So this is a big example showing that there is big change by own effort, without expecting support, by mobilizing own resources."

According to him, eight countries in the region are highly affected by climate change-induced consequences.

The region is a practical showcase of climate change-induced consequences, including floods and droughts, which have been seen over the past few years, he stressed.

Noting that many countries take various measures to combat the effects of climate change, Ethiopia is one of these countries that is doing exemplary work, he pointed out.

Ethiopia also participates in global events to mobilize support for IGAD countries, and Africa seeks climate change funds to compensate for the damage it has encountered due to climate change, he noted.

Djibouti's Environment and Sustainable Development Minister, Mohamed A. Musa,

said the Green Legacy is a great example for Africa, and Djibouti is benefiting from the initiative.

"It is a good example, and Djibouti will take this example. We will work on it. Ethiopia gave us a lot of plants. So it is a good example for Africa."

He noted that Djibouti and Ethiopia not only enjoy relations in the transport area and electric power connectivity but also have been working on protecting the environment together.

Djibouti was also part of the Green Wall Initiative, and it also welcomes Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative, he added.

The Minister of Economy and Finance of Djibouti, Ilyas Dawaleh, underscored the significant impact of floods and droughts in the region. Highlighting the urgent need, Dawaleh emphasized the importance of strengthening water and agriculture systems to bolster resilience.

Annette Weber, representing the European Union, emphasized the critical role of policies and strategies in shaping the climate change and resilience agenda, urging concerted efforts to address the challenges faced by the region.

Boutheina Guerhazi, the Senior Director for Regional Integration, emphasized the HoAI's commitment to climate resilience through several programs funded by the World Bank.

Victoria Kwakwa, Vice President of Eastern and Southern Africa at the World Bank, echoed the need to scale up efforts to address the pressing climate challenges.

The Horn of Africa Initiative is a country-led regional integration platform that brings together seven countries and development partners such as the African Development Bank, BMZ, the European Union, and the World Bank.

Apart from providing emergency assistance to those exposed to climate change impacts, the major emitters should fund green development initiatives by third-world countries.