



The Ethiopian Herald

Vol. LXXX No 076 8 DECEMBER 2023 - HIDAR 28, 2016

Friday

Price Birr 10.00

ካሶማ ፎርኒቸር
Kasma Furniture

Gurd Sholla Century Mall 3rd floor
+251913230014

Kasmafurniture Kasma Furniture
 Kasma.furniture kasma furniture
 kasmafur.com



Photo: Gebabo Gebrie



Lensa Mekonen

Shewal Eid's UNESCO inscription to elevate Harari's tourism industry

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- The inscription of Shewal Eid, a religious Harari festival, under intangible heritages of UNESCO's list would increase tourist inflow, so said Ministry of Tourism (MoT).

The Shewal Eid festival is uniquely celebrated around the gate of Jegol Wall, Harari State on the 8th day of Shewal month that comes after Ramadan in Islamic calendar for three days.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), MoT's Promotion and Marketing Sector State Minister Lensa Mekonen said that the festival not only increases the flow of tourist but also it would

See Shewal Eid's ... page 3

Ethiopia, EU keen on ushering new era of partnership

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – The strategic partnership agreement between Ethiopia and the European Union (EU) helps to renew more push towards strengthening their strategic bilateral relations, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen said.

At the structured dialogue held yesterday,

Demeke said that Ethiopia and EU have been entertaining their strategic cooperation for long while the former and member states of the Union have enjoyed historic relations.

Having said stability is crucial for political, economic and social development of the region, the DPM emphasized that the problem of peace and stability in the Horn is the source of common concern for the two partners.

During the course of the session, Demeke said that IGAD, sub-regional organization and the AU are endeavoring to propose durable solutions to conflict affecting the Ethiopian people. Hence, he said: "We firmly convinced of the African Solutions to the African Problems."

"The Multiannual Indicative Program (MIP), which was signed recently, is indicative of our

See Ethiopia, EU ... page 3

ENDF receives medical equipment donation worth 1.5 bln Birr

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - Beherawi Jegnochna Hitsanat Amba charity has donated 1.5 billion Birr worth of medical equipment to Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF).

Biherawi Jegnochna Hitsanat Amba Deputy Board Chairperson Major Tesfaye Wondimu disclosed that the donation the charity handed over which includes wheelchair,

See ENDF receives ... page 3

Association's trade fairs attract domestic, foreign investments

- 14th AGRIFEX int'l trade fair opens to public

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – The international trade fairs have stimulated domestic and foreign investments in various sectors, said the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Association.

The association launched 14th edition Addis Chamber Specialized International Agriculture and Food Trade Fair (AGRIFEX) yesterday. The Fair would remain open until December 9, 2023.

In her keynote speech, Association President Mesenbet Shenkute said that staging

See Association's trade ... page 3



Institutions urged to apply new software for effective property mgt

• Metropolitan launches new property management software

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA—Addis Ababa City Mayor Adanech Abiebie has urged institutions to apply the new property management software to ensure proper utilization of government and public property, accountability and to fight corruption.

The mayor made the remark yesterday when she launched a new property management software dubbed Asset Management Information System (AMIS), which developed by Addis Ababa Public Property Administration Authority in collaboration with Addis Ababa Innovation and Technology Development Bureau.

On the occasion, Adanech called on some 668 institutions to apply the software instantaneously so as to realize efficient property management system and achieve Addis Ababa's ambition of becoming a smart city.

According to the Mayor, the institutions are obeyed by the law to use the software but require each institution's effort to build adequate knowledge to make it operational.

Authority's General Manager, Yesuf Ibrahim on his part said that his organization has been carrying out various activities to wisely manage assets of the capital in addition to the effort to adopt property management law, eliminate corruption and establish accountability.



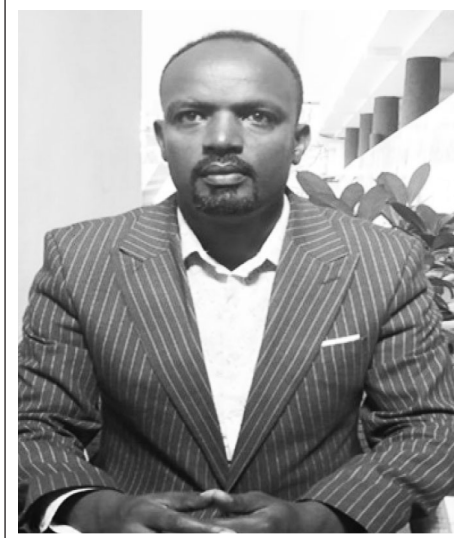
According to him, the launching of the new property management software is part of ensuring the digital 2025 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2060.

For Yesuf, the software was piloted in some 20 institutions to examine its effectiveness and it has been proved that it has so many advantages such as mitigating the property loss that the capital sustained for the past four years.

Addis Ababa Innovation and Technology Development Bureau, Software Sector

Deputy Head, Yemaneh Desalgne said "The newly developed software is able to save more than 31,000,000 Birr. This software will play a significant role in saving time, finance, and energy, making effective decision, facilitating activities, knowing the real resources, and the likes."

Similarly, the software used for renovating buildings, modernizing system, ensuring clarity, avoiding bureaucratic red tape and so on. So far, the software registered some 455 institutions and 28,948 properties worth over one billion Birr, he stated.



Tadesse Fikre

City issues investment licenses with 4.6 bln Birr capital

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA- Hawassa City Administration stated that it has issued investment licenses for about 12 domestic investors over the last three months.

Hawassa City Administration Investment Expansion Office Head, Tadesse Fikre told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that investment licenses were given to local investors who are keen on investing in various areas and register a total capital of 4.6 billion Birr over the last three months.

The licensed investors are going to engage in industry, hotel and loge sectors. Besides, most of the investors who took investment licenses in the state during the fiscal year are domestic ones, he added.

The office is also exerting utmost efforts to make the city's atmosphere convenient for local and foreign investors thereby expanding the investment in the state in particular and across the nation in general.

Moreover, beyond attracting local and foreign investors to the city it has been creating more jobs for citizens and is in a state of benefiting the community.

"The office is also ready to provide investors with the required support in various ways. The office is working hard to attract new additional investors to the city by fulfilling all what is required to run investment so in the years to come, and it has prepared about 70 hectares of land for a similar purpose," he added.

The city is following up investors' undertakings to make them more productive as well as to make the city investors' choice and tourist destination, head added.

Commission to reform cooperatives sharing Kenya's experiences

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA—Ethiopian Cooperative Commission announced that it is endeavoring to reform cooperatives sharing important experiences from Kenyan counterparts.

Ethiopian Cooperative Deputy Commissioner Shisema Gebreslassie told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the commission is working to reform the cooperatives in Ethiopia by taking the experience of Kenyan cooperatives as a benchmark.

"The Commission has taken Kenya as a model to help Ethiopia's counterparts make meaningful reform. Kenya is number one by having organized Savings and credit cooperatives in Africa and they have contributed some 45 % to the country's GDP. Since Kenya is the first in Africa for savings and credit services, the commission has taken its experience as a benchmark to reform Ethiopian cooperatives," he stated.

In Ethiopia, there are many cooperatives,



Shisema Gebreslassie

but their contribution to the market, economy and others is minimal. Therefore, the commission has started reforming

cooperatives via reinvigorating activities in terms of identifying the existing gaps in the cooperatives, success, and their capacity to play their important role in the country's economy, Deputy Commissioner said.

Shisema further pointed out that there are over 23,000 savings and credit cooperatives in the country, and these institutions cover one-third of the African level. The cooperatives in the country have not been working for the benefit of the general public though they are many in number.

Regarding the reform, an agreement has been reached to work together with different institutions with the up to the lower public relations structure thereby promoting cooperatives in Ethiopia.

As to him, cooperatives have over eight million members and have collected more than 50 billion from membership fee. Besides, they do have the capacity to provide interested ones with over 15 billion Birr loan every year.

Ethiopia, UNEP discuss environmental cooperation at COP28

ADDIS ABABA (ENA) - Planning and Development Minister Fitsum Asefa (PhD) and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UNEP, Inger Andersen discussed various environmental issues and areas of collaboration at the COP28 in Dubai.

In a bilateral meeting they held yesterday at the COP28 Climate Summit, the two sides emphasized the importance of focusing on environmental issues and agreed to move forward with implementing the decisions of the 19th Ordinary Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), according to the Ministry of Planning and Development.

This bilateral meeting highlights strong partnership between Ethiopia and UNEP and their shared commitment to addressing environmental challenges.

The parties also expressed their optimism for continued collaboration in advancing environmental protection and sustainability in Africa.

Fitsum emphasized Ethiopia's commitment to ensuring a unified voice for Africa during its AMCEN presidency.

She also confirmed that all efforts would be made to ensure fair representation of all sub-regions within the AMCEN bureau, respecting



Fitsum Asefa (PhD)

the decision of the 19th Ordinary Session.

The minister also invited Andersen to visit the Ethiopian Green Legacy Pavilion at the COP28 venue, to which Andersen confirmed that she would visit Ethiopia's Pavilion in the coming days.

UNEP congratulated Ethiopia on its presidency of AMCEN and Fitsum's selection as President.

The officials also expressed desire to avoid reopening of any outstanding issues that may have been suspended previously.

The two parties also agreed to work together to mobilize resources for the enhanced implementation of the Green Legacy Initiative.

Shewal Eid's UNESCO inscription...

play a vital role in building nation's positive image as well as enhance state's tourism potential.

She moreover said that the festival has a paramount of significance in allowing the youth to explore the cultural values and norms that are essential for their lives ahead.

Various art works, oral literatures and the unique cultural attires are said to give the festival extra color, as to her.

Highlighting that the festival is amongst the warmly celebrated social values in the country, the State Minister said exchanging of cultures and showcasing of handicrafts would also be expected at the festival.

"The more the nation promotes its tourism potentials, the better it would become known globally and benefit."

Besides attracting tourists and building positive image, the fact that heritages enlisted under World heritages would enable local tourists to know the tourism resources.

The State Minister extended her appreciation for Heritage Conservation as well as Harari State Culture and Tourism Bureau for the role they play to inscribe the religious festival under UNESCO.

Following its inscription, Shewal Eid religious festival became the fifth heritages which are enlisted under UNESCO's intangible heritages list.

It is to be recalled that the nation has inscribed the Bale Mountains National Park and Gedeo Cultural Landscape recently under UNESCO's intangible heritages.

Association's trade fairs...

international trade fairs like AGRIFEX would help to promote the investment potentials of those sectors.

Over the past several years, the chamber staged many consecutive trade fairs focusing on agriculture and food, manufacturing and technology among others. The previous edition of fairs played a pivotal role in stimulating investments in various sectors.

Trade fairs are ideal venues to form linkages among agriculturalists, technologists, industrialists, service providers as well as suppliers and buyers at all levels, she said.

The newly 10 years' development plan of the country is envisioned to sustain a rapid and inclusive economic growth. The plan could only be achieved through building a dynamic private sector, raising agricultural productivity and modernization of agricultural diversification, technological upgrading, innovation and others.

She further said that the trade fair is aimed

to introduce business enterprises and their products/services to the general public and the international business community, bring together technology suppliers and seekers, facilitate technology transfer, possibilities to make joint venture investments and to create a forum where local and international business communities could come together and others.

For his part, Addis Ababa Trade Bureau Deputy Head Mesfin Assefa stated that the Addis Ababa City Administration considers the Addis Chambers as a strategic partner to facilitate trade and investment in the city. The trade fair creates business to business linkages with local and foreign companies facilitating technology know-how, technology transfer, enhances domestic and foreign investment and others.

The government has been facilitating an enabling environment for the private sector to encourage domestic and foreign investments, he said.

Ethiopia, EU keen on ushering...

commitment towards strengthened relations and post-conflict reconstruction and macroeconomic recovery efforts of the country," he added.

Moreover, the DPM said the support of the EU and its member states in Ethiopia complements the effort to eradicate poverty and foster inclusive and sustainable development. Also, Ethiopia is committed to work with the EU to combat illegal migration, smuggling and trafficking of persons.

The EU support plays a crucial role to the country's effort to build a robust economy through the improvement of productivity. The support for micro, small and medium enterprises, human capital enhancement and well trained labor force are decisive in the national development efforts, the DPM remarked.

"Besides, EU's collaboration with Ethiopia also prolongs the private sector development and business climate improvement both in short and long development goals," he added.

The EU and its member states have been playing an enormous role through technical expertise and advice in supporting the rehabilitation of societies affected by natural disasters and conflicts as well, Demeke said.

Such structured dialogue is a platform to identify priority areas that would require improvement or further support in strengthening Ethio-EU and its member countries' strategic bilateral relations, he noted.

EU Ambassador to Ethiopia, Roland Kobia for his part said that Ethiopia is among the few countries engaging in strategic cooperation through balanced partnership and relations.

Amb. Kobia further remarked that the EU has opened its gate to Ethiopian exporters to the free single market via highly preferential and non-reciprocal trade scheme.

Having said the Ethiopian exports to the EU has grown to an average of 6%, the ambassador stated that the total value of exports to the EU amounted to 3.1 billion Euros in the last five years.

"EU is a real partner for the country in terms of peace, justice among other areas of strategic partnership," the Ambassador said.

The EU and its member states are keen to further strengthen strategic partnership and help the country efficiently and in a sustainable way if and only if there is two-way partnership, he added.

ENDF receives medical equipment...

syringe, glove, walking aids and adult diaper is obtained from various international organizations.

He also reaffirmed commitment to sustain the support for the national army.

During the handing over ceremony, Ethiopian Army Health Department Head, Lt.Gen Tigabu Yilma said that the ENDF is the major organ that strives to protect the national interest of the country.

Therefore, he stated the support highly helps to save life and provide care for disabled or injured military members in a sustainable manner.

Since the ancient times, Ethiopia's existence

relies on the strength and fortitude of its defense force, Lt.Gen Tigabu underlined.

Histanat Amba should be protected and conserved since it has been providing various equipment supports to the ENDF, he added.

"The material support we received today is very essential for the military so that it will be distributed to various camps and military hospitals in the country," he noted.

He further said that his department will also dispatch the materials to various military rehabilitation and treatment centers.



Opinion

Adverse implication of political trading (entrepreneurship) in Ethiopia

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Political trading is essentially the pursuit of opportunities for the purpose of accessing and establishing influence. It is the creation of benefits and gains through political intrigues. It is the application of political innovation for the sole purpose of exploitation of the resources of Ethiopia. The objective of gaining power is to achieve specific political goals that may help to manipulate resources, human as well as material.

Through securing influence in the context of Ethiopia, political trading can manifest itself in various forms. It may influence specific political, social, and economic conditions that prevail in the country. Here are some key points to consider with respect to political entrepreneurship in Ethiopia. These are: political reality; leadership and vision; ethnic and regional dynamics; democratic processes; social and economic policies; media and communication; civil society engagement; institutional reform; international relations; and challenges.

In the area of politics, Ethiopia is characterized by a diverse and multi-ethnic landscape. It is a country that is endowed with ethnic diversity. But, this endowment is diverted and abused by political entrepreneurs. They want to use political instruments for gaining unjustified economic benefits. These benefits and advantages entrench into state budget and revenues.

Fiscal distortions and abuses proliferated the normal economic operations, leading to abuse of power in different sectors of the economy. Such abuses discourage free, fair and legal operations that lead to corruption. This is a hidden economic crime that leads to accessing resources without productive labor in the service of the Ethiopian society at large. Those given the authority for auditing malpractices are themselves attracted to swim in the ocean of corruption, fraud, bribery, dishonesty and sleaze. Where auditors find it difficult to report malpractices, they become professionally discouraged. Politicians tend to recruit these auditors to misinform the public.

Politicians may devise strategies that appeal to various ethnic groups in Ethiopia. They seek to navigate the ethno-political landscape until they discover the right spot. The Constitution provides the political and geographic space for all Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia. But, they are not equally endowed with resources making them all

interdependent.

Productive exploitation of diverse resources of the country contributes to improvement in the standard of living of the people. However, this is preconditioned on free mobility of Ethiopians to engage in productive employment to earn decent income. But, alien forces do not allow the Ethiopian people to achieve higher income through productive engagement. They are not allowed to do so as this would make their poverty a historic event. These external forces have their hidden intent to exploit the natural resources of the country. Its resources are located above, below and on the ground requiring modern technology for identifying them. But, these forces need the cooperation of the local Banda for intruding in any corner of Ethiopia.

The export of some of these resources could generate foreign exchange with which Ethiopia may import whatever it needs to fulfill its development plans and strategies. These may be equally used by all the poor people of the country. It helps to finance basic needs such as agriculture, education, health, housing, rural roads, mining, etc. all of which generate employment for the youth that constitute a large share of the total population of Ethiopia. But, those alien forces engage political entrepreneurs to divert the Ethiopia people and engage them in ethnic conflicts.

In so doing, they force the people to become cannon fodders instead of becoming productive forces. These lead to mutual destruction out of which no one benefits. The rich natural resources of Ethiopia are its own natural enemy. They attract global powers that have already exhausted their own natural resources in their homeland. This is the motif and intrigue of the old colonialists and the current neocolonialists who had employed local Banda and political entrepreneurs to dismember the country. Ethiopia has in the past successfully repulsed these enemies to defend its long independence.

Political entrepreneurs in Ethiopia have emerged as pseudo-intellectuals and poorly farsighted persons who may guide the country to disastrous situations. Unimaginative and noncreative political entrepreneurs are obviously not realistic. They do not want to face the real economic and social problems of the country. They tend to deny the widespread poverty that is rampant in Ethiopia. Millions of people are suffering from hunger due to civil strife. Yet, the political entrepreneurs are deprived of specific

ideas that promote political, economic, or social transformation. They are not interested to influence the introduction of innovative policies, strategies and programs that promote economic and social development in Ethiopia.

The country suffers from the shortage of intellectuals that may address challenges that hamper progress. The political entrepreneurs have no country but their benefits and advantages. They have always capitalized on emerging opportunities that favor their interest.

Considering regional dynamics, ethnic-based entrepreneurship focuses on building support to local tribal groups in every region. In this respect, the ethnic diversity in the country may be abused by political entrepreneurs. These political entities work against ethnic diversity which is believed to be a natural phenomenon that brings diverse people of a country together. They have always looked for loopholes that disunite rather than unite the people of Ethiopia.

In a poverty-ridden country, it is absolutely necessary to endeavor for unity that guarantees growth and development in the country. This brings people together for strategic navigation of ethnic and regional dynamics that ensures positive development. It is, however, absolutely necessary to balance the interests of diverse people but located in different regions. Successful political entrepreneurs may be engaged in the act of balancing that accommodates the interests of various ethnic, tribal or regional groups.

Accommodating the interests of the Ethiopian people requires strong democratic processes. In this regard, one of the major requirements is political participation and election by the people for the people. But, in contrast to this principle, political trading often involves active participation by demagogues who preach falsehood to the ignoramuses. In electoral processes, political entrepreneurs may emerge through successful election fraud. To ensure success they form coalitions and alliances as a strategy for consolidating power.

Once in power, political entrepreneurs may initially focus on economic policies that foster development, attract investment, and address socio-economic challenges. They also design social welfare programs with the objective of poverty reduction, education, and healthcare. Such programs contain programs and projects that are designed to create employment opportunities for the youth. The political entrepreneurs

may employ effective communication strategies to win public support and convey their political messages. They engage with various media platforms as key instruments for their public propaganda and influence.

Political entrepreneurs may interact with civil society organizations to address social issues or garner support for specific causes. They may engage in political advocacy and activism to drive change. Some political entrepreneurs may focus on reforming existing political institutions for advocacy purposes. They create new mechanisms to address socio-economic challenges. These requires advocacy for the rule of law and institutional strengthening on the part of political entrepreneurs. These institutions also provide the basis for engaging in diplomatic initiatives to strengthen international relations. Such engagement helps to attract foreign investment, loans and grants for economic development in Ethiopia. In this respect, global advocacy is a prerequisite. Entrepreneurial leaders may actively participate in global forums and advocate for their country's interests on the global stage.

Global forums invite challenges and accountability concerns. In other words, political leaders may face scrutiny, with critics raising issues about transparency, accountability, and adherence to democratic principles. Also, ethical dimensions of political leadership, including the means used to achieve political goals, may be subject to discussion. Whatever the case may be, researchers think that political entrepreneurship in Ethiopia is influenced by the country's unique historical, ethnic, and political context. It implies studying complex dynamics, contacting diverse communities, and facing socio-economic challenges.

The efficiency, effectiveness and success as well as impact of political entrepreneurship will rely on the capacity of political leaders to connect with the aspirations of the people. This demands designing and implementing sound policies, programs and activities that fit the complex Ethiopian political reality. It is, therefore, advisable to stay informed or trained about the political situations only from reliable official sources. This is possible only when peace and security reign in the country with the cooperation of all concerned parties and the government in power. This presupposes a preemptive strike to remove political trading in Ethiopia.

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

Editorial

Air Force ever alert to defend country's sky!

Feared by its arch-foes and respected by its people, the Ethiopian army is celebrated for its uninterrupted valor and bravery. And, this time the force is only getting better with new wings and cutting-edge technologies added. With sweeping reform works, the country's defensive and offensive capabilities have been consolidated.

In fact, since the onset of the reform, Ethiopia has been extensively working to modernize its security organizations. There have been strings of measures taken by the incumbent to boost the manpower and firepower of the country's military organs. From adding a naval force to refurbishing military training facilities, the government has zoomed in on scaling up the defense capabilities of the country to fend off any threats coming from land and air.

Using available state of the art equipment and investing in skilled human power, the Ethiopian military has upgraded itself within a short period. Building a powerful military is imperative to repel any attacks directed against the country and help preclude any attempts to do so. As the saying goes if you want peace prepare for war, having well-equipped and well well-trained, and well-financed military forces is must must-have ingredient to usher in the country in the avenue of propensity and tranquility, a task the country has been doing in the past years.

With the fabrication of sophisticated and modern manned and unmanned aircraft and drones, countries have been finding it hard to protect their aerial sovereignty. Even countries with modern weaponry and powerful air forces have seen their airspace breached by other nations or groups. Situated in the strategic place and fiercely contested region, where there is increased militarization, and unlawful activities, defending the land and airspace of the country with modern forces is worthwhile.

In this regard, at this time when conventional warfare is being replaced by a technologically advanced military, the Ethiopian Air Force is updating itself every time. Technology serves as a force multiplier, to equip the already strong and fearless Air Force to defend national airspace as well as preserve national sovereignty.

Lately, the Air Force announced that it would hold a closing ceremony for the 88th anniversary of the Ethiopian Air Force. Ethiopian Air Force Commander Lieutenant General Yilma Merdasa said in his press briefing in connection with the celebration said the 88th anniversary of the Air Force that extensive work has been done in terms of building human resource capability, modernizing weapon capacity, getting equipped with new weapons, infrastructure and creating favorable working environment after the institutional reform in the Air Force. The anniversary has been celebrated since the end of November 2023 in various air units. Among the programs to be carried out during the closing of the anniversary will be an air show named "Black Lion" in which friendly countries of Ethiopia take part, he revealed.

"The main purpose of the celebration is to show to the public and the government about the works done by the Air Force since the reform and to prepare for future military operations."

History has proven that the country has never been defeated by any external force and has never invaded any country, and the army has never taken part in any unprovoked combat, but if attacked, the country's armies including the air force have the courage and capability to neutralize it. Yes, as the motto of the Air Force goes, yes the sky is ours!



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

A jumpstart to modernize Africa's rice farming system

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Rice is one of the most decisive global economic and staple food crops, feeding and supplying calories to more than half of the world's population. Through the introduction of high-yielding varieties and the adoption of improved agricultural production techniques, Asian countries were able to achieve self-sufficiency in rice production thanks to the Green Revolution.

Rice productivity can thus be increased through the use of improved agricultural techniques. The adoption of modern agricultural technologies (improved varieties and inorganic fertilizer) and integrated farm management systems is regarded as a critical component of agricultural productivity growth.

On July 10, 2023, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed between eight African nations and South Korea's Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs to launch a brand-new project to improve rice yields in those countries, known as the "K-Rice Belt Initiative."

The new initiative is designed to help African nations build irrigation systems and provide technical assistance and equipment to improve rice cultivation and distribution in Cameroon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea (Bissau), Kenya, Senegal, and Uganda.

The K-Belt Rice Initiative goes beyond donating food aid; it helps African countries grow crops on their own. South Korea has already budgeted 80 million USD for the new K-Belt Rice Initiative, with plans to further expand that amount as other African nations join the project.

The initial goal of the K-Belt Rice Initiative is to harvest approximately 2,000 tons of rice varieties in the eight African partner nations in the first year, rising to 10,000 tons by the year 2027, a level sufficient to feed approximately 30 million people a year.

This project will not only help with the food crisis in Africa but also help achieve the world's Sustainable Development Goals by protecting the African continent.

Rice is a staple food in African countries, but because of the shortages of rice production volumes, improvement in rice productivity is the most important policy for African countries such as Kenya, Uganda, etc.

We are expecting that cooperation with African countries through the K-rice belt project will contribute to improving the overall rice production base, such as high-yielding rice seeds and a stable supply of agricultural water, said Seung-

ho Choi, Foreign Press Spokesperson of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs, Republic of Korea, adding that if the rice production bases of African countries improve significantly through the successful implementation of the K-rice belt project, then 10,000 tons of high-yielding rice seeds can be produced and supplied stably every year, starting in 2027.

If rice cultivation is carried out and managed in the most effective way in well-organized farmland, we are expecting that rice can be supplied stably to approximately 30 million people every year, he added.

In the case of South Korea, self-supply of rice and the New Village Movement served as a driving force behind South Korea's national economic development.

The spectrum of agriculture in South Korea is wide, from traditional and conventional farming to ICT-based smart farming. Also, progress levels in agricultural technologies and techniques are different for each agricultural item. In the case of grains, including rice, a significant portion of farming practices have been mechanized.

On the other hand, the pace of mechanization of open-field vegetable production is slower than rice, but smart farming is the most common form of cultivation of fruits and vegetables such as strawberries, tomatoes, and paprika.

South Korea's experiences and technologies in agricultural development in diverse areas, from conventional farming to smart farming, can provide a good example for other countries to learn from.

In particular, for countries where agriculture is a core industry, the role of technologies is highly important in the enhancement of agricultural productivity and the growth of farm income.

In smart agriculture, there is much room for cooperation between South Korea and other countries in the fields of development and supply of new varieties suitable for local growing conditions, as well as improvement of agricultural production infrastructure. Smart agriculture is an area where other countries can achieve fast progress in the mechanization of agriculture by taking advantage of second-hand agricultural machines, etc.

Taking lessons from the best practices of Asian countries especially from south Korea is quite imperative for African countries in ensuring food self-sufficiency. If the K-belt initiative hits its target, other African countries will have a chance to learn from and modernize their rice farming systems.

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

Business & Economy

Reconsidering Policies: A means to augment investment

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

The government of Ethiopia has tried various ways to make sure that the country is on the right track regarding its economic, social and political aspects. The incumbent has also passed numerous decisions in order to scale up the economic environment by attracting investments to the country. Due to this, Ethiopia now is striving to become one of the hubs of investment in the world by opening itself to the world's economic platforms.

Recently, two policy briefs that are recommended by the European Chamber of Commerce were launched at Hyatt Regency Hotel, here in Addis with the attendance of responsible stakeholders both from private and public firms including government representatives.

The European Chamber in Ethiopia announced two policy briefs aimed at contributing to the improvement of the investment climate in Ethiopia. The research documents titled 'Solving the Crunch: Recommendations for FOREX disbursement challenges' and 'Optimizing Customs Processes: Key Issues to Tackle', delve into challenges foreign and domestic investors face in Ethiopia and present key research findings and policy recommendations to be considered by the government.

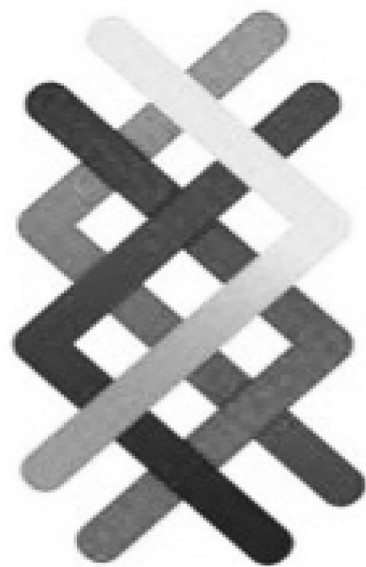
The study that was set to bring policy briefs were conducted by the European Chamber in Ethiopia in collaboration with the EU funded Technical Assistance for Business Environment and Investment Climate, including e-government (BEIC) project.

The study has pointed out some key findings on FOREX challenges and customs laws. Regarding the nation's FOREX challenges, the study has forwarded results including poor export performance that relies on limited export, lack of transparency and accountability in FOREX disbursement, FOREX shortage and the presence of parallel foreign currency exchange markets.

Providing incentives for exporters, rewarding legal remittances, diversifying export destinations, implementing import substitution plans and reviewing the effectiveness of FOREX prioritization to some sectors, are some of the solutions that the study recommended.

Regarding customs related challenges, the study identified results like frequent changes and modifications of customs laws, lack of user friendliness of online customs systems, lack of involvement from relevant government institutions and issues with the Ethiopian shipping lines for the passage of goods.

The research document proposes solutions



European Chamber in Ethiopia

that include stakeholder consultations before new directives are issued; improving the electronic single window system; improving online communication and inspections; improving the Ethiopian Shipping Lines multimodal system and enhancing customs infrastructures, among others.

"The purpose of the study is not to point out faults or to indicate that there are still things that are lacking," said Ben Depraetere, Board Chairman of the European Chamber in Ethiopia. "The whole purpose is to identify those areas that are open for further improvement. Over the past years, customs has made some steps to improve ease of clearance and different customs processes. However, we are not yet there. The policy brief is a conversation starter," he said.

The policy briefs, as to the chairman, have been brought from the data gathered through an online survey, one-to-one semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions with relevant stakeholders, including Ministries, business associations, investors, and Academics. The objective is to identify challenges faced by the private sector, in relation to accessing FOREX and Customs processes in Ethiopia, thereby creating a conducive environment for the private sector's growth and attracting foreign investment to Ethiopia.

"The study was funded by the European Union and implemented by a team of local consultants, coordinated by GIZ's BEIC project. The study was composed of multiple aspects including an online survey. The European Chamber has 180 members, European investors who are active in Ethiopia, so they participated in the online survey," Ben Depraetere said.

The research documents do not aim to exhaust all potential pathways to address the challenges researched. The recommendations formulated rather aim to provide a platform for further discussion through Public Private Dialogue, Ben added.

In a similar vein, Ambassador of the

European Union to Ethiopia, Roland Kobia, for his part discussed the bloc's relation with Ethiopia and the challenges facing the business partnership.

As to the Ambassador, "The EU has kept this preferential trade treatment, which is unilateral, which is non-reciprocal, only to the benefit of Ethiopia. When it comes to having no customs duties, 0 % of customs duties for all products of Ethiopia are exported to the EU, and also no quantitative restrictions."

"Ethiopian exports under the EBA have been growing on an average of 6%. In the last five years only, the total value of exports to the EU was at approximately 140 billion Birr. Most strikingly, the exports to the EU grew the fastest last year, by 47% increase," he said adding over the last decade, the total investment stock of European companies in Ethiopia has reached 2.5 billion Euro. That's 110 billion Birr. These investments create direct jobs for more than 115, 000 Ethiopians.

"The European Chamber of Commerce has issued a very important report where they identify a number of recommendations in order to address the difficulties with customs and FOREX. We know how important the issue of FOREX access is to foreign as well as local companies," the ambassador elucidated.

"The purpose of preparing this report is to discuss how we can together overcome and address these challenges that are a big impediment for more businesses to operate in Ethiopia. This report not only identifies the difficulties, but also proposes a number of issues as a solution. So I think we should have a dialogue between Ethiopia and the European Union on these issues, because it is not only to the benefit of companies, but it is really the benefit of Ethiopia as a country to be attractive for investments," the ambassador noted.

By the same token, Customs Commission Price Valuation Director, Mengistu Tefera

said, "It is good that the European Chamber prepared a study with the aim of contributing to improve the Customs processes. However, the points raised completely fail to reflect the practical processes we follow at the Customs commission. The points presented as policy recommendations today are activities that the Customs Commission is already implementing.

Contrary to the point raised by the study, the director elaborated, "One of the points mentioned was uploading Custom legislations on the institution's online portal, which we already do. We upload legislations, proclamations and manuals on our website. Anyone can verify this by simply visiting the website. I don't believe that the study has actually engaged with the right people to be interviewed to reflect the reality on the ground."

The event featured panel discussions with relevant stakeholders, including representatives of the private sector, on Customs and FOREX issues. One of the participants, Degesew Amanu, Chief of Corporate Affairs at Unilever Ethiopia said, "We have participated in the study as one of the companies who are working in the manufacturing industry in Ethiopia. We have presented some areas of improvement in Customs processes during the panel discussion. One of the issues we discussed in detail is the issue of price valuation, where the product prices we submit to the Customs Commission are usually rejected. We hope to address this challenge through joint discussions so that the manufacturing industry that is currently performing below par would greatly improve in the future."

During the event, the European Chamber in Ethiopia in collaboration with the BEIC project also launched an *Investors' Guide* which provides an overview of recent developments in Ethiopia's business environment, strategic investment sectors, and EU-Ethiopia trade relations, investment processes to new investors and key institutions and agencies important to investment in Ethiopia.

Since 2012, the European Chamber in Ethiopia (Euro Cham), formerly known as EUBFE, represents the European business community in Ethiopia. The European FDI business association currently counts 180 members, and is an independent association licensed by the EIC. Euro Cham envisions supporting Ethiopia becoming one of the most attractive business environments in Africa through an inclusive economy. It also plans to empower European Businesses in Ethiopia through enhancing information exchange, establishing networking platforms and a continuous dialogue with the Government Stakeholder for jointly improving the business climate.

Art & Culture

Cultural bridges between Ethiopia and Russia

BY AUTHORS:

Tatyana Jolivet, Director of Center for Public Diplomacy

Andrey Khrenkov, PhD in History, Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences

Prelude

Alexander Pushkin, the Great Russian poet with Ethiopian roots, is one of the recognized symbols of cultural and historical unity between Russia and Ethiopia. However, it is no secret that Alexander Sergeevich has never been to Ethiopia, or indeed to Africa in general, and practically did not write about Ethiopia at all. Without diminishing the importance of A.S. Pushkin in the history of our bilateral cultural and humanitarian relations, it is time to remember another Russian poet who, unlike A.S. Pushkin, visited Ethiopia repeatedly and left wonderful poems about it. Moreover, he created a whole cycle of poems dedicated to Africa, and mainly Ethiopia. We are talking about Nikolai Stepanovich Gumilyov - one

of the major Russian poets of the early 20th century.

He was the man who revealed Ethiopia to the Russian reader, praised the majestic beauty of Abyssinia (as Ethiopia was then called) in verse, poetically described the proud character of its freedom-loving and brave people, amazingly and he conveyed the true spirit and aroma of this unique African country with a rich and ancient culture, which is so close to us spiritually.

In Soviet Russia, N.S. Gumilyov is known as poet, traveller and brave warrior. The First World War was already long forgotten. In 1921, he was shot by the Bolsheviks on false charges of counter-revolutionary activities, and they tried to erase his name from

Russian literature. However, in new Russia, he was rehabilitated and is recognized as one of the literary luminaries of the Russian Silver Age.

We would like people in Ethiopia to know about this wonderful Russian poet, many of whose best poems were written in Africa or inspired by memories of his African travels. It is very possible, that personality and the poetic creativity of Nikolai Gumilyov will become another cultural and literary bridge between our countries and peoples. Nikolai Gumilyov was a contemporary of the dramatic era in history of Russia and Ethiopia, and not just a witness to grandiose historical events, but also as a direct participant in them. To descendants, he left a rich poetic heritage, which

artistically reflected his contemporary era. During his travels in Ethiopia, he collected ethnographic information about the peoples who inhabited it, objects of material and spiritual culture, recorded songs, fairy tales, as well as tales and ballads of Azmari folk singers.

Gumilyov travelled around Ethiopia without any official status. However, he was received there as a friend, as a cultural representative of a great friendly country - the Russian Empire. Considering his role from the standpoint of today and using modern expression, Gumilyov could be called one of the first public diplomats. And, moreover, a very effective one, because he did a lot to introduce real Ethiopia to the reading public in Russia.



History

The contemporary literary era of Gumilyov is usually called "Silver Age" of Russian poetry. At that time, many Russian poets were seriously fond of French poetry and French symbolists. Gumilyov didn't escape this and also had same passion. After graduating from high school in 1906, he decided to go to France to study at the Sorbonne, however, being not very persevering, left his studies soon and devoted himself to literary creativity entirely. He fanatically "fell ill" with a passion for travel, which gave him food for his poetic inspiration. As for Africa, it attracted Gumilyov from his early childhood. In 1909, he made his first trip to Africa. However, little is known about this trip. It seems that he then travelled only in Egypt, visited Alexandria and Cairo.

In 1910, he went to Africa for the second time and it was then that he managed to visit Abyssinia for the first time, get to Addis Ababa and even attend the ceremonial dinner of the young Ethiopian ruler Lij Yassu, the grandson of Emperor Menelik (Emperor Menelik II himself was seriously ill already at this time and did not take part in the public life).

Gumilyov's next trip to Abyssinia took place in 1913. It was organized with the support of the management of the St. Petersburg Museum of anthropology and ethnography and thus, was better funded. From Odessa, Gumilev went to Djibouti, from there travelled along the railway, newly built by the French, and reached Dire Dawa. From there, with great adventures, he reached Harare, where the residence of the



Ethiopian students in museum of Gumilev. 2023

governor of the region Ras Tefari Makonnin was located (who later became Emperor Haile Selassie I). He had to meet with the governor in person for getting a permission to travel in the country. To reinforce his request, the poet gave the future emperor a case of vermouth and photographed him with his wife and sister. In Gumilyov's travel notes, there was a small entry about this meeting and his impressions. Having formed a caravan, traveling with his nephew, the son of his older sister, Nikolai Sverchkov, N.S. Gumilyov, went to the south of this vast province and made a fairly long 2-month journey around lands of the Somalis and Oromo. Already in Harare, Gumilyov, on behalf of Petersburg Museum, began to collect an ethnographic collection, which can be found now in the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography in St. Petersburg.

Shortly after the outbreak of World War I, in August 1914, Gumilyov was enlisted as an ordinary volunteer in the army. He

fought bravely, got two soldier's medals of St. George's Cross and was promoted to ranks of the officer by the young governor. He ended the war in 1918 and became a lieutenant in the ranks of the Russian Expeditionary Force in France. Gumilev could have stayed abroad for good, but chose to return to Russia, where the revolution took place in October 1917. At home, he continued engaging in literary works, writing poetry, becoming more and more famous and popular in literary circles. In 1921, he was elected chairman of the Petrograd branch at already recognized as luminary poetry workshop, the All-Russian Union of Poets and, shortly before his death, managed to open branch of the union in town of Bezhetsk, Tver region. Living in Soviet Russia, Gumilyov was not involved in political activities, but clashed with the new authorities. He didn't really hide his monarchical sympathies and soon became a victim of the "Red Terror", although he had no real participation in counter-revolutionary

activities, he was accused without any evidence of his guilt. He was not saved from the execution even by the mediation of the world famous Russian proletarian writer A.M. Gorky. So, at the age of 35, the talented Russian poet, who was the first to sing about Abyssinia and essentially opened it to the Russian reader, died tragically. N.S. Gumilyov was rehabilitated only seventy years after his death in 1991. However, all these decades his name was preserved in people's memory, his poems, including those from the Ethiopian cycle, were copied manually, typed and secretly distributed between devoted fans of his work.

Present and Future

In the city of Bezhetsk, Tver region, a family estate of poet's mother Anna Ivanovna Gumileva (nee Lvova), who belonged to an old noble family, was preserved. Nikolay Gumilyov often visited this house and lived there with his first wife, a famous Russian poetess Anna Akhmatova and their son Lev, who later became famous scientist of oriental studies. In 2021, thanks to years of Gumilyov Society Chairman Olga Medvedko and Director of the Foundation development of small historical towns Yuri Shchegolkov's efforts The Gumilev House Museum appeared in Bezhetsk. An African corner is being formed in it, which is replenished mainly with Ethiopian artefacts and exhibits. In addition, for the last 17 years, Gumilyovsky festival has been held in Bezhetsk.

In 2023, Bezhetsk received the status of a literary city. This is the result of the successful cooperation between public organizations and city authorities. Also in Bezhetsk, the collection "Literary City" began to be published regularly. Local College has a new specialty - tourism. City authorities, encouraging tourism, began to train their own professional staff.

Science & Technology

Urjiin Motorcycle:

Young inventor, innovator coming-up with own motor cycles

BY DARGIE KAHSA

The inventor and innovator Shehab Suleyman is founder and CEO of Urjiin, a local electric motorcycle assembling company in Ethiopia.

Shehab is a mastermind with a lot of innovational ideas in his backpack. He started inventing things since he was 11. He is in his early 20s now. Shehab gifted with a creative knack started realizing his dream of changing his ideas in to products. Shehab has inventions in electronics, automotive, robotics, software development among others.

A couple of years back, Shehab designed and assembled a car which he named “*Taytan*”. *Taytan*, according to Shehab, was designed for public transportation with a ferrying capacity of eight people. But, to put it up for sale, *Taytan* faced financial constraints and Shehab decided to hold *Taytan*’s mass production for the time being and turned his face to other products.

Shehab has a dream of becoming one among well-known technology companies’ owners in Ethiopia and beyond. Currently, Shehab is working on three technology sectors: mobile application development, automotive industry and electronics mainly producing mobile phones. The mobile applications for different purposes and production of an electric motorcycle are atop his current works, while he has continued his efforts to realize his vision of producing a car and a mobile phone at home. As to him, within a short period may be within a year, he dreams to duplicate *Taytan* car for market consumption and also a mobile phone that he designed years ago. Shehab created a design of smart phone years back and he is currently dreaming of producing it at home.

Shehab established a company he named “I Star” in 2019 with the goal of changing his innovations in to products. After he established the company, Shehab focused on website and application development for different companies as application and website demand was high during the COVID-19 era. The income he earned from website and application developments helped him to further strengthen his efforts of realizing his vision.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, Shehab noted that ‘I Star’ Company was established without having a financial resource. At that time Shehab’s company focused on developing websites, software programs, and mobile applications for different local companies, colleges and schools. Using the finance he earned from the selling of different software applications and website development, he assembled his own designed car, *Taytan*. But, due to financial shortages as the production of car is cost intensive huge capital, he turned his face to producing motorcycles.

Now, Shehab is producing an electric motorcycle which he named it Urjiin. Urjiin motorcycle is Shehab’s invention meant for innovation with a design of suitability for Ethiopia’s weather condition. Urjiin electric



(*Taytan*, Shehab’s first car)

motorcycle is on the market and Shehab said that the product has become the choice of customers. “After years of hard work and dedication, my dream of manufacturing the electric motorcycle has become successful,” he said. As to him, the locally manufactured motorcycle is eco-friendly and eco-conscious design, which makes the product customers’ choice.

“Urjiin is emission-free with high-performance riding, stylish design, lightning-fast charging with high performance,” the innovator stated. Shehab started his business from motorcycle due to financial limitations to manufacture the car he created, *Taytan*, as manufacturing motorcycle comparably demands less cost than manufacturing a car. Considering the huge finance that car production demands, Shihab’s company turned its face in to motorcycle production that comparably demands lesser cost.

In addition, the growing demand of motorcycle in Ethiopia especially in Addis Ababa, according to Shihab, initiates his company to manufacture electric motorcycle at home. As the demand of motorcycle grows, his company aims to penetrate the market coming with suitable designs and a carbon emission-free product so as to promote green economy.

“Service delivery companies are using motorcycles and the price of gas for fuel consuming motorcycles is growing. This makes service delivery difficult for the service providers to earn profit with the payments that service seekers are paying,” Shehab stated. As to him, imported motorcycles are expensive and the growing price of gas is making the service delivery tough. Hence, the locally produced electric motorcycle comes with new solution as it is chargeable and the price of the product is cheaper than the imported ones.

Most inputs used for the manufacturing of the electric motorcycle are from local sources, while some parts of the inputs are imported. “Our product is not a simply electric motorcycle, we localized and customized the



(*Shehab Suleyman riding his product, Urjiin motorcycle*)

product so as to make it suitable for Ethiopian weather condition,” Shehab reiterated. As to him, the battery can serve for long years and it is chargeable at any place where electric is available even with limited power which makes the product preferable even in rural areas. The engine has also 1,500 cc capacity and can carry up to 250 kilogram products. In addition, anti-theft system is connected to the motorcycle.

For Shehab, the motorcycle produced at home has a lot of benefits. In the first place, it saves foreign currency as foreign currency remains a serious challenge for the country. Secondly, it saves cost for the users as it is cheaper than the imported products. “Customers can buy it at cheap price than the imported ones.” For the innovator, technology transfer and job opportunity for the youth are few among the benefits of manufacturing it at home.

Similarly, as a startup innovator struggling to change his innovational ideas in to visible products, he promotes startup businesses and

innovators to keep on changing their ideas in to products within challenging environment. He initiates innovators and youth with new technological ideas to continue working on their innovations.

Absence of land for manufacturing for startups and bureaucracies are among the challenges for startup businesses in addition to financial challenges, according to him. “In the first place, changing an idea in to a product by its self is challenging,” Shehab added that “in addition, absence of supports and other constraints like lack of land and other requirements asked by government offices to launch a company are critical challenges.” He to hack through the bureaucratic labyrinth.

According to Shehab a lot of youths have innovations and ideas that can be changed in to products. Shehab recommends youths to work in team and to think success within challenging environment instead of struggling independently and waiting “a right time” to realize their vision. Through team and collective actions, innovators can overcome the challenges that they face individually be it financially or otherwise.

“An idea passes a lot of steps to become a marketable product and it is tough for one individual to overcome all these challenges single alone. Team work would be the appropriate solution for startup businesses,” Shehab underlined adding “a company that aims to produce marketable product needs experts from diverse fields, which shows the necessity of team work of individuals instead of struggling independently.” In addition, Shehab recommends innovators to focus on ideas that can help to solve existing societal problems. “If we focus on a product that solves the existing problems of the society, we can easily penetrate the market.”

Shihab was born and raised in Dodola town and he started innovations since he was 11. Now, he is dreaming of becoming one among known technology company owners in Ethiopia and beyond. He has also a desire of initiating support to young inventors and innovators to realize their vision.

Society

Curbing HIV/AIDS transmission in Ethiopia: A comprehensive approach

BY TEWODROS KASSA

HIV/AIDS continues to be a significant global health issue, affecting millions of individuals worldwide. While progress has been made in the fight against this disease, certain regions still face significant challenges in achieving HIV/AIDS elimination. Ethiopia has been actively combating HIV/AIDS for many years, recognizing the devastating impact it has on individuals, families, and the overall development of the nation. The country has been lauded for its innovative approaches and achievements in the field of HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, care, and support. However, with a growing awareness of the importance of healthcare, increased funding, and collaborative efforts, there is hope for a future where Ethiopia is free from the burden of HIV/AIDS.

Therefore, it is crucial to implement effective strategies to combat the transmission of such devastating diseases like HIV/AIDS so as to maintain the healthiness and productivity of the youths. As of 2018, the estimated prevalence of HIV among adults aged 15-49 was 0.9%. While this may seem relatively low compared to some other African countries, it still translates to a substantial number of individuals affected by the disease.

Curbing HIV/AIDS transmission in Ethiopia requires a collaborative effort from various stakeholders, including the government, non-governmental organizations, and international partners. By fostering strong collaborations and partnerships, resources and expertise can be pooled together to deliver comprehensive and sustainable interventions. This includes strengthening the capacity of the healthcare workforce, improving laboratory infrastructure, and investing in research to inform evidence-based prevention strategies.

Ethiopia has a significant number of vulnerable groups, such as young girls and women, who are at an increased risk of HIV transmission due to gender inequalities and limited access to sexual and reproductive health services. By expanding access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning, HIV testing, and counseling, it could be possible to empower these vulnerable groups to protect themselves and make informed choices.

Recently, Health Minister Lia Tadesse (MD) has called on further collaboration of development partners to eliminate HIV/AIDS from Ethiopia. In her remarks on World AIDS Day commemorated in Addis Ababa today, Health Minister Dr. Lia said the day is observed to remember

the contributions and leadership of communities in the progress made in HIV/AIDS prevention and control globally and in Ethiopia.

“Ethiopia has had significant progress and strides in terms of reducing the incidence and reducing mortality from HIV/AIDS. This was possible because of the strong political and government commitment, but combined with our strong partnership with diverse partners.”

The prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS, which was 1.26 percent in 2010 has declined to 0.91 percent in 2022, it was learned. But it’s also a critical moment as we still have a long way to go in terms of the ambitious commitment that we have in terms of elimination of HIV/AIDS, she stated. In addition we still have the challenge of stigma discrimination which requires strong attention, the minister noted.

If we collectively work on these with strong engagement of communities, including religious leaders and the media all up to the grassroots level, we will definitely collectively achieve the goal that we have envisioned, Dr. Lia stressed.

UNAIDS in Ethiopia Country Director Françoise Ndyishimiye, said by the end of 2022, still 39 million of people were living with HIV/AIDS all over the world. In Africa, including in Ethiopia, the number of infected people is increasing, mostly young people, she disclosed, adding that we need to act to get a new

generation free of HIV.

“Ethiopia has been leading the HIV response, showing its commitment; despite the different challenges we are getting on the point of elimination to end HIV/AIDS by 2030. (Therefore) it is important to have again engagement of the highest level leadership in leading with HIV response.”

According to Ndyishimiye, UNAIDS along with other entities in Ethiopia and partners is committed to working with the government and the community to effectively address HIV/AIDS in the country.

USA Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ervin Massinga said the US government has invested over three billion USD to support the HIV and AIDS response in Ethiopia over the past 13 years.

Under the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) strategy, community leadership is at the forefront of our programming and is a key ingredient for the long-term sustainability of the HIV response here in Ethiopia and around the world.

The results we gained together over the past few decades demonstrate the possibility of tremendous goals that can be reached.

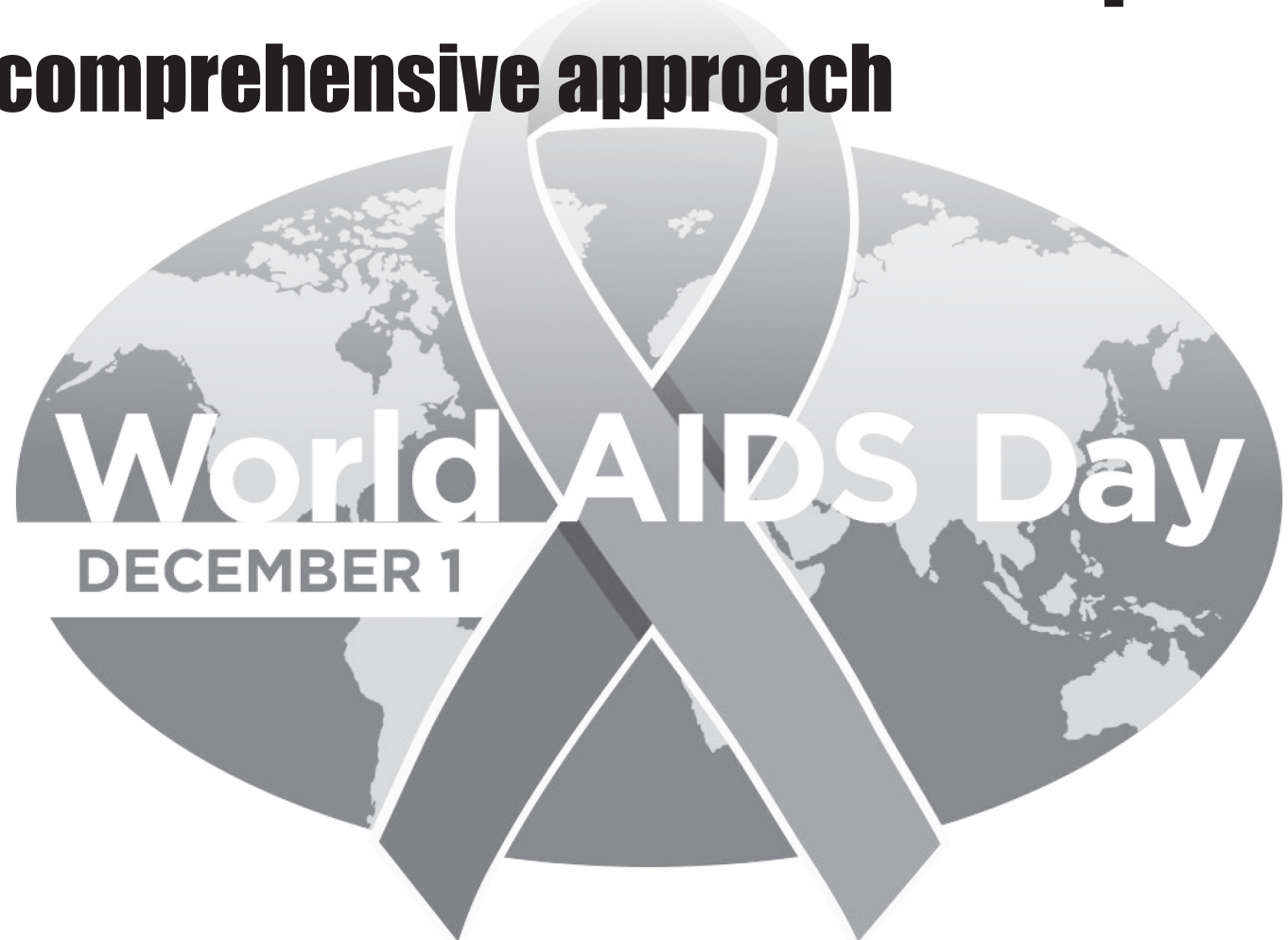
The “US government remains committed to ensuring that HIV is no longer a public health threat in Ethiopia by 2030. We remember where we were 20 years ago and

are committed to not sliding backwards. Together we can and will control HIV/AIDS epidemic and ensure that Ethiopians are able to fulfill their aspirations for healthier lives.”

The World AIDS Day, designated on 1st December every year since 1988, is an international day dedicated to raising the awareness of the AIDS pandemic caused by the spread of HIV infection and mourning those who have died of the disease.

To effectively tackle HIV/AIDS transmission in Ethiopia, it is essential to prioritize awareness and education initiatives. By providing accurate and up-to-date information about the disease, its modes of transmission, and preventive measures, individuals can make informed decisions to protect themselves and others. A comprehensive public education campaign, utilizing multiple platforms such as television, radio, and community outreach programs, can play a vital role in disseminating this crucial information, the experts reiterated.

In sum, curbing HIV/AIDS transmission in Ethiopia requires a multi-faceted approach encompassing awareness and education, accessible testing and treatment services, condom distribution, tackling stigma, targeting key populations, and providing sexual and reproductive health services to vulnerable groups. With a united front against HIV/AIDS, Ethiopia can strive towards a future free from the burden of this devastating disease.



ENDING THE HIV EPIDEMIC Equitable Access, Everyone’s Voice



This is
Ethiopia

Quality hospitality service: Key to thriving tourism industry, economic growth

BY TEWODROS KASSA

The tourism industry heavily relies on the provision of high-quality hospitality services for its success. In today's competitive global market, simply having beautiful destinations is not enough to attract and retain tourists. Exceptional hospitality services are essential in creating memorable experiences and encouraging repeat visits. This article examines different strategies and practices that can be utilized to offer quality hospitality services, in turn increasing tourist inflow. From personalized service and staff training to utilizing technology and adopting sustainable practices, it is important to prioritize the key aspects that contribute to a thriving hospitality sector and ultimately drive tourism growth.

According to tourism experts, the provision of quality hospitality services is vital in attracting tourists. The quality of these services directly impacts tourists' decision-making process and can greatly affect their overall experience. By offering exceptional hospitality services, destinations can develop a positive reputation, attract more tourists, and ultimately boost their economic growth.

Moreover, tourists have various factors to consider when selecting a destination. The quality of hospitality services often plays a significant role in their decision-making process. Nobody wants to face hassles and disappointments during their vacation. Tourists seek reassurance that they will have a comfortable stay, receive friendly and warm service, and have their needs met. By prioritizing high-quality hospitality services, destinations can differentiate themselves from others and entice tourists to choose them over alternative options. Recently, the Tourism Training Institute said it has been working tirelessly to provide a skilled labor force for hotels and contribute share for bringing competitive quality in Ethiopia's hospitality industry.

Institute Deputy Director Habtamu Kibret, told *The Ethiopia Herald* that they have been offering training and other capacity building programs to hotel professionals that would help the hotels to avail international service to their customers.

Mentioning the need to exert collaborative efforts to ensure quality in the sector, Habtamu indicated the institute is taking bold steps to meet the needs of the hotel industry. "Currently, the institute provides training up to five levels and the programs have been periodically reviewed by hotel experts.



Partial view of Addis Ababa

Previously, we offered 21 programs and the number of programs was downsized into eight in a bid to ensure quality training and to nurture qualified professionals."

He added: "Since it is not feasible to produce adequate hotel professionals by a single entity, we have been supporting regional tourism and hotel training institutes to adjust the quality of their training per the federal level. We have also offered capacity building training to their teachers and extended professional assistance," he said.

According to the deputy director, the institute's graduates have been playing a vital role in satisfying the demand for skilled professionals among star-designated hotels and in the tourism industry.

The institute is also a leading entity that has been supporting the hotel and tourism sector with researchers and innovative ideas. Equipped with a viable professional structure, the entity envisions becoming a center of excellence in the area, he remarked.

Accordingly, to provide exceptional hospitality services, it's essential to understand that each guest is unique. What makes one person happy might not work for another. By assessing individual guest needs and preferences, hotels and other hospitality establishments can better tailor their services. Whether it's

dietary restrictions, room preferences, or activity recommendations, taking the time to understand guests on a personal level can go a long way in creating memorable experiences. To maintain a high level of quality, it's crucial to implement quality control measures. Regular inspections, staff training, and guest feedback can help identify areas for improvement and ensure that the hospitality services provided meet the expected standards. By continuously striving for excellence and addressing any issues promptly, hotels can maintain a solid reputation and keep guests coming back.

What is more, in today's digital age, technology plays a crucial role in enhancing guest experiences and improving operational efficiency in the hospitality industry. From online booking platforms to smart room controls, innovative technological solutions have revolutionized the way hotels and resorts cater to their guests' needs. Hotels can now utilize state-of-the-art software systems that allow guests to easily book their accommodations, select preferred room amenities, and even personalize their stay with special requests. Technology-driven solutions like mobile check-in and keyless entry systems have simplified the arrival process, eliminating the long queues.

Moreover, chatbots and virtual assistants have become popular in providing

instant customer support and answering common queries, ensuring round-the-clock assistance for guests. These advancements not only streamline operations but also elevate guest satisfaction by providing quick and efficient service.

In sum, providing quality touristic services is essential for promoting tourists' inflow and establishing prominent and new destinations as leaders in the travel industry. In the travel industry, trust and reputation play a crucial role in attracting tourists. When visitors have confidence in the quality of services, they are more likely to choose the better over other competitors. By consistently delivering exceptional experiences, it is possible to build a strong reputation as a trustworthy and reliable provider, ensuring an ongoing flow of tourists. By focusing on enhancing tourists' experiences, building trust and reputation, and gaining a competitive edge, it is easier to attract and retain a steady flow of satisfied travelers. Through training and development programs, constant feedback and improvement, and collaboration with local partners, the hospitality sector could consistently deliver exceptional services that exceed tourists' expectations. Regarding this, the close collaboration of the public and private actors should be elevated so as to facilitate coordinated services for local and international tourists and boost the sector income.