



Photo: Gebabo Gebere



South Sudan shows green light to CFA ratification: *Amb. Nebil*

• Ethiopian Embassy pushes for adoption

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- Cognizant of the Cooperative Framework Agreement's (CFA) key role to ensure the country's socio-economic benefits, the South Sudanese government is in a good position to ratify the accord, according to a diplomat.

In an exclusive interview with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) Ethiopian Ambassador to South Sudan Nebil Mahdi said that the South Sudanese legislative organ is expected to incorporate the CFA as part of the country's law soon.

South Sudan and Kenya are the only upstream countries that have not yet adopted the CFA as their domestic laws. If either of the two countries'

See South Sudan ...page 3

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Ethio telecom net profit jumps to 11 bln. Birr

• Customer base reaches 74.6 mln

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA –Ethio telecom disclosed that it has amassed 11 billion Birr net profit in the first six months of the current fiscal year, surpassing that of last year same period by 14 %.

Presenting the company's six-

See Ethio Telecom ...page 3

Panelists make push on informed, targeted Diaspora policy

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- Panelists have called for policy formulation to interpret the contribution of Diasporas into practical economic, social and political benefits.

During the panel discussion that Ethiopian Diaspora Service held on the contribution, challenges and prospects of the Diaspora community at Science Museum recently, the panelists stressed that knowledge and experience sharing platforms need to be created to tap Diaspora's contribution.

Highlighting the role of the Diaspora community, Panelist Berhanu Gizaw (PhD), said Nationals of Ethiopian origin across the world are estimated to be 2.5 to 5 million in which their annual economic contribution hits about 40 billion USD.

He stated that they have so far contributed some 54 million USD for the construction of Abbay Dam.

Apart from supporting over three billion Birr during the COVID 19 pandemic, the Diasporas have played a great role in responding to national campaigns such as "It's my dam" and "No more," among others, Berhanu noted.



Photo: Berhun Tudele

However, he underlined that the government need to permit the representation of the Diaspora in the Parliament, provide firm investment guarantee as well as allow dual citizenship to increase their contribution.

Tewabech Bishaw, another Panelist, mentioned that despite the readiness and

desire of the Diaspora community to engage on development activities, the nation is missing the opportunity due to the absence of an organized system.

Not only a system should be formulated but the

See Panelists make ...page 3

Study insists on knowledge-based port diversification

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- The responsibility of informing the public about Ethiopia's port accession's multifaceted benefits rests upon universities and other higher education institutions, according to the study.

The above was disclosed at the panel discussion the Dire Dawa University (DDU) held recently on port accession's multifaceted benefit to the local community. The panel also aims to raise the community's awareness of the significance of sea gates for the national economy and its overall advantages.

See Study insists ...page 3

News



Photo: Dagne Abera

Lemma Yadecha

Ethiopian avails special discounts for second-generation Diasporas

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopian Airlines has announced a 15 to 20 percent discount on plane tickets and Skylight Hotel fees for second-generation Ethiopian Diasporas who are coming from abroad.

In a press briefing he held here yesterday, Ethiopian Airlines Group Chief Commercial Officer, Lemma Yadecha stated that the Airline has also prepared a tour program for guests at a discounted price through ET Holidays.

The officer further noted that special preparation is underway at Skylight Hotel to warmly welcome those members of second-generation Ethiopian Diasporas who are coming in three rounds.

“Some of them have already arrived, some are on the way and others are preparing to come. We understand that our discount packages have gotten a good response from the Diasporas and they continue arriving here in great numbers.”

The ET Holidays on the other hand offer tour packages for members of the second-generation Diaspora to visit tourist attraction sites that are under construction and have been built inside Addis Ababa at the recommended price.

Thus, the guests could get the information and register into the Ministry of Tourism’s website if they need to visit such attractions. Also, in collaboration with the Ethiopian Tour and Travel Operators, the Airliner is preparing a one-day city tour program for about 100 guests free of charge, Lemma elaborated.

According to him, the Airline’s decision to reduce the price of plane tickets and hotel accommodation is complying with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's invitation for the second-generation Ethiopian Diasporas to visit their homeland.

“Ethiopian has been contributing its share on several occasions when the PM extended similar calls for members of the Diaspora.”

Similar homecoming programs are underway for the second-generation Ethiopian Diaspora in a bid to enable the latter to explore the existing opportunities in their country of origin, the officer remarked.

Nation distributes 3,790 Tablets to digitalize education

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – Some 3,790 tablet computers have been distributed to 18,000 schools to digitalize the teaching-learning process, Ministry of Education (MoE) disclosed.

MoE Teacher Education Leadership Development and Management Desk Head Aseged Meresa said in a presser held yesterday that the ministry in collaboration with World Bank (WB) has distributed 3,790 tablet computers to primary schools in all states so as to digitalized the teaching-learning process and equip academicians with digital skills.

As to the Head, some 1,000 tablet computers have been distributed to high schools for similar purposes last year which makes the total number of distributed tablets 4,790.

The distribution of the tablet computers helps to improve digital technology skills, ensure digitized teaching and learning process and provide short term on-the-job training for teachers in primary schools, she stated.

The number of tablet computers are low



in number compared to the number of number of schools and academicians in the country, she said, adding those tablet computers will certainly digitalize the education system.

Aseged further stated that the tablet

computer should be operated only for its target and function.

It was to be recalled that the MoE has been working to realize digital literacy whilst the World Bank has been supporting Ethiopia’s various development activities.

Chinese Delegation ready to promote more trade, investment with Ethiopia

ADDIS ABABA (ENA)- Foreign Affairs State Minister for Political and Economic Diplomacy, Ambassador Mesganu Arga, earlier yesterday met with a Chinese business delegation led by the Vice Chairman of the Department of International Relations of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT), Zhang Shaogang.

During the meeting, the State Minister briefed the business delegation on the various trade and investment opportunities in Ethiopia, according to Foreign Affairs Ministry.

He said Chinese businesses should come and invest in Ethiopia in the agro-processing, chemicals and fertilizer, and steel manufacturing sectors, among others, to further cement the "All-Weather Strategic Partnership" recently announced by the two countries in the wake of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's visit in October 2023.

The State Minister said Ethiopia has become an important investment destination for China, whereas China is a major source of investment and a key trading partner for Ethiopia.

Reassuring the business delegation of the Government's continued commitment to foster more business-to-business ties between the two countries, Ambassador Mesganu told Shaogang that Ethiopia has



much to offer in terms of investment and trade opportunities as it is expanding its industrial zones and free trade economic zones.

Reiterating the fact that Ethiopia is one of the major and pioneer subscribers of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in Africa, the State Minister stressed that Ethiopia seeks to further unleash the opportunities in the areas of sustainable development,

regional connectivity, trade, investment and tourism where Chinese enterprises can play a big role.

The Vice Chairman, on his part, congratulated Ethiopia for recently joining the BRICS family. He expressed China's readiness to promote more trade and investment cooperation with Ethiopia in the future.

News

Zone set to export 10,000 tons of honey

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

JIMMA- Jimma Zone Agriculture Office said that efforts are well underway to export 10,000 tons of honey this budget year.

Office Head Mohammed Teha told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the Zone has been striving to harvest 54,000 tons of honey of which the 10,000 tons intended for foreign market.

"The productivity of honey in the zone is showing an exponential increment over the past three years and in this budget year, the zone has planned to harvest 54 thousand tons of honey in which the 10,000 ton will be exported," he added.

The Zone has signed an agreement with a

local company to facilitate exporting honey, Mohammed said, adding that the company directly receive the honey from the farmers and deliver it to the market.

The agreement benefits farmers as it eliminate manipulators for engaging only the producer and the exporter, he indicated.

The Zone has been undertaking various works to realize the 'Jima Declaration' which was launched three years ago by the Oromia Regional State aimed at exploiting the apiculture potentials and increase productivity, he recalled.

Following the declaration, Mohammed said, Jima Zone immediately started implementing the initiative through utilizing untapped resources and resolving



bottlenecks of the sector.

Accordingly, the Zone administration has contributed a lot to expand modern beekeeping equipment thereby the number

of modern beehives in the zone has reached 388,000 which is crucial to improve productivity both in volume and quality, he added.

"Over the past six months, the zone distributed 167,000 modern beehives and increased the number of modern hives from 62 thousand to 388 thousand within three years," Mohammed added.

He stated that the modern beehive helps to produce 33 kilogram of honey on average while the traditional one yields only seven kilogram per annum, the Head noted.

Jimma Zone is suitable for bee keeping having untapped resources of nice climate and huge forest coverage, according to Mohammed.



Study insists...

Speaking at the occasion, DDU President Ubah Adam (PhD) said that Ethiopia's sovereign port access would play an irreplaceable role in the ongoing growth of the nation, and those higher education institutions should do their part to educate the public about the many advantages of having a port.

Scholars in higher educational institutions should also fulfill their national duty by conducting scientific research regarding the importance of the port and its multifaceted benefits. "Such studies will provide ideas for what we should do in terms of fulfilling responsibilities as a country."

DDU Vice President for Research and Technology Transformation Tamam Awal (PhD) for his part stated that the panel discussion was designed for the entire public to understand the issue of sea gate, which has been a major concern to the government for years.

The participants are part of the community, as Dire Dawa shares cultural ties with Djibouti and Somalia, the purpose of this discussion is to make the society aware of its perspectives in a coordinated manner, the vice president emphasized.

South Sudan shows...

parliaments ratifies the framework, it will irreversibly correct the age-long unjust utilization of the Nile water, Ambassador Nebil elaborated.

Though South Sudan's ministerial council adopted the CFA some five years ago, the accord needs to be ratified by the country's parliament. While South Sudanese lawmakers heard the details of the framework once in a formal parliament session, the Ethiopian Embassy in Juba has also been organizing awareness creation programs to promote the pact's significance to various stakeholders.

"We have discussed with 160 South Sudanese parliamentarians about the possible benefits of the CFA and to make the framework clear for them. The standing committee of parliament has also discussed the accord with us twice and an understanding was created that no one will lose benefit as a result of the framework adoption. The national interest of South Sudan has been accommodated in the drafted law and the framework is also

protecting the national interest of other Nile Basin countries."

According to him, Burundi has submitted a unilateral ratification of the framework recently. Now, Kenya and South Sudan are most needed countries for the full ratification of the framework at regional level and the government of South Sudan on its part shows a green light into this.

The diplomat further highlighted that the Ethiopian Embassy has also created the link with academicians and academic institutions of South Sudan. "To almost all faculties in Juba University, we clarified the aim of the CFA and held workshops."

Ethiopia's agenda on CFA adoption is just to make 'reasonable and equitable use' as a legal framework, Ambassador Nebil emphasized.

The annual session of the South Sudanese parliament will be opened next month and the ratification of CFA is expected to have priority immediately after the opening of the session, *The Ethiopian Herald* learned.

Ethio telecom...

month performance report yesterday, Ethio telecom CEO Frehiwot Tamru said 42.9 billion Birr total revenue has also been secured in the reported period. The expansion of revenue sources and the provision of affordable and revamped products and services are tools for the operator to achieve 98 percent of the target it set for the half-year.

Compared with previous year same period, this year's income shows an 8.86 billion Birr (26%) increment. Also, the operator secured some 84.7 million USD was and achieved 109% of its target.

The CEO further noted that Telebirr has acquired 41 million customers in the half year, achieving 104 % of its target with a transaction value of 910.7 billion Birr. Since its launch, a total of 1.7 trillion Birr has been transacted in the economy.

The company has paid 18.5 billion Birr in tax, 2.46 billion Birr in loan repayment and four billion Birr in dividend in the first half year. Furthermore, it has been conducting financial audits to ensure transparency and implement regulations and guidelines issued by regulatory bodies.

According to Frehiwot, the total

subscribers reached to 74.6 million and the operator achieved 98.3 % of the subscriber base target. In terms of service types, mobile voice subscribers reached 71.7 million, fixed broadband 688,300, fixed voice 834, 000 and data and internet users reached 36.4 million. Hence, telecom density reached 68.5%.

During the half year, 41 new mobile stations that can accommodate 229,000 customers have been made on air in rural areas providing services in 10 states and 41 districts. In addition, 3 G expansion works have been carried out in 92 existing sites in rural areas.

As part of promoting financial inclusion, Ethio telecom has provided over 8.3 billion Birr loan to its 3.8 million customers. Moreover, 1447 gas stations started receiving fuel payments via telebirr as part of fuel management digitalization initiative and over 54 billion Birr fuel transactions managed in this way.

Over the last six months, the company registered an average of 1.13 million new customers per month in money transfer partnerships in utility payment services, microfinance and other new services, she remarked.

Panelists make...

diaspora policy must be revised, she stressed.

Engaging the Diaspora community requires huge resource, therefore, a huge investment requires to interpret their engagement in to economic benefit apart from creating formal structure, as to Tewabech.

She urged all Ambassadors to exert extra efforts in engaging the Diaspora organization in their tasks as well as compiling the experience of the Diaspora community.

Panelist Prof. Alemayehu Gebemariam on his part highlighted that the Diaspora community needs to be an advocate for nation building in every way possible.

"Despite differences, people from all walks of life need to stand together to maintaining peace, ensuring national interest, nation building and safeguarding the territorial

integrity of the nation," he underscored.

To this end, the Diaspora needs to bridge the people and the government while the government is expected to address the challenges at grass root level, he underlined.

For Birhanu Tafesse (PhD), who attended the discussion through virtual platform, knowledge and technology transfer is a survival issue for the country.

Applying indigenous knowledge requires abundant time, thus, he said the Diaspora needs to seize the opportunity to support its nation through knowledge and technology transfer by all means.

Ministry of Education, Ethiopian Diaspora Service and other stakeholders need to join forces to promote and support initiatives such as 'bright generation' in an organized manner, he stressed.

Opinion

Why Ethiopia's quest for accession to ports became a commodity at political market

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Ethiopia, a country that used to enjoy access to ports and used to own a naval force of 4000 boats during the Axumite civilization was denied of such service due to the political conspiracy of the previous regime that ruled the country through ethnocentric political system. This country that is only 60kms from the Red Sea has remained landlocked for several decades. Denying Ethiopia access to the sea and ports is not only a gross miscarriage of justice but also endangering and choking the country.

Although Ethiopia has continued to register better economic growth compared to many Sub Sahara African countries, the country could have been better off with additional access to ports.

The country had to grapple with congestions at Djibouti Port and had to pay exorbitant port service fee because the nation had no alternative port. On the other hand, Ethiopia had lost huge opportunities due to lack of alternative ports that could have helped the country to comfortably pay her foreign debt and become economically self-reliant through diversified export of quality commodities that are demanded at world market.

Ethiopia's request for access to the sea is the most natural demand that the country can table at the current global socio-economic and political order. However, this timely and legitimate quest for access to the sea and owning ports have now become a topical agenda for the disgruntled global mainstream media and local social media outlets.

Over the last half a century and more particularly in the last four decades Ethiopia suffered from natural and man-made disasters, bad governance, economy that failed to feed its population, sporadic ethnic conflicts and more recently a devastating war in the northern part of the country.

Moreover, the nation was subjected to local and international propaganda barrage that was aimed at converting the country into ethnic based and weak principalities that could resemble the Athenian city states of ancient times. The reform program that was introduced five years back was met with fierce opposition by those who benefited from the status quo ante and plunged the country into another round of war for two years.

Even then, Ethiopia has continued to register a reasonable economic growth amidst local conspiracies and challenges from some countries for which the reform program was not palatable. On the other hand, such growth can in no way be sustained unless it is supported with logistic facilities like ports. Although local liquidators and some international organizations and countries refuse to accept, Ethiopia has repeatedly informed all concerned that her diplomatic and foreign relations policy among other things is based on the principle of peace and peaceful coexistence, mutual and multi-lateral cooperation on joint development

of natural resources to benefit its people and peoples of the brotherly countries particularly countries in the neighborhood.

Ethiopia's request for access to the sea and ownership of ports perfectly coincides and fits into Agenda 2063 and the African Continental Free Trade Area. The country is already engaged in practically implementing the various elements of African economic integration even before any country has pledged to take any meaningful action. For instance, GERD is under completion and is expected not only to double up the hydropower demand of the country but also to meet the energy demand of the neighboring countries and those far off. Ethiopia as submitted the list of its export commodities to AfCFTA officials and has received acceptance but how anywhere can Ethiopia export these commodities if the country continue to be landlocked?

Some quack politicians and social media trumpeters attempt to falsely assert that Ethiopia took up the issue of acquiring ports as a cover for hiding the internal political situation in the country but the truth is the Ethiopian Government reached to the conclusion of signing an agreement on port ownership and acquisition of a naval base after rigorous and deeper research.

If Ethiopia develops her own port and naval base close to the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea, the nation can render immense contributions to ensuring peaceful and sustained international trade transaction on the Red Sea and this will certainly benefit all countries across the world whom conduct their commercial activities on the Red Sea. The safety of ships will be ensured, sea piracy will be minimized and terrorism on high seas will not prevail.

In addition, all nations across the world are well informed of the fact that Ethiopia contributes the second largest contingent of UN peace keeping forces in Africa. Therefore, there is no visible and authentic reason why Ethiopia is to be suspected of violating the sovereignty of any African country. Hundreds of Ethiopian sons and daughters have shed their blood for ensuring the sovereignty and territorial of the Republic of Somalia even today.

Why is it therefore necessary to shed alligator's tears on something that is not happening and will never happen? Who will benefit from the transactions at the political market except for those who wish to see weak and balkanized Ethiopia?

The self-styled "renowned politicians" and nihilist ideologues fabricate false narratives and refrain from embracing common and constructive narratives because they will be exposed before the people of Ethiopia and would rather continue with their fairy tales because they collect the money the need for their livelihood from global social media moguls.

Ethiopia has just joined BRICS and is engaged in finding multiple sets of alternatives for national economic development. The volume of economic transaction and growth

A number of countries across the world have already established economic relations with Somaliland while some have even opened consulates but why is so much dust blown up when Ethiopia agrees with Somaliland to develop her own port which will bring forth huge benefits for both?

will therefore demand more expanded access to international trade which is unthinkable without a modern and developed sea port. With a sea port at hand, Ethiopia will certainly become an economic giant in East Africa and possibly in the entire Africa.

The fact that Somaliland has inked comprehensive relations with Ethiopia brings a better future for peaceful development for the land and its people. Besides, it will strengthen people to people relations between their populations. Moreover, Somaliland could benefit from Ethiopia's potentials and experiences in science and technology, higher education, economic planning and management and other spheres of economic development.

Moreover, Ethiopia will be able to engage in modern technological innovations on marine science and weather forecasting data that could be shared with those countries in the region and far off.

Some private universities from Ethiopia are already engaged in training Somali's on various fields and this could also be utilized by public universities in Ethiopia for promoting quality education not only for Somaliland but also for the youth in East Africa.

It is interesting to note that a number of countries across the world have already established economic relations with Somaliland while some have even opened consulates but why is so much dust blown up when Ethiopia agrees with Somaliland to develop her own port which will bring forth huge benefits for both? Why are the social media outlets and western mainstream media outlets so much concerned about the political situation in the Horn of Africa? The answer is short and precise; they do not want

strong and prosperous Ethiopia as a power to reckon within the region.

Ethiopia is working on its part to ensure economically well-developed Africa and to minimize the current over dependence of the continent on western aid. In addition, as part of its diplomatic and foreign policy, Ethiopia believes and acts on mutually beneficial joint economic development among African countries and advocates for African countries to use their own resources to ensure their uninterrupted economic development. This stance is in line with the AU Charter and Agenda 2023.

Promoting destabilization, hate speech and politics, political defamation and character assassination on the leaders of the country has now become a strategy of extremists and their supporters at overseas. They deliberately discredit the ENDF and pose as the liberators of their own ethnic group while in reality they are engaged in disrupting the normal life of their own people in the most unprecedented banditry act. Their false propaganda particularly on the ENDF focuses on attempting to attack the morale and patriotic mentality of the members of the defense forces in the same vein, they talk about the sovereignty of the neighboring countries while they are working from dawn to dusk to destroy the sovereignty, unity, peace and territorial integrity of their own motherland. It is therefore not surprising if they are opposed to Ethiopia's demand for ports and access to the sea.

These extremist forces are now busy trying to ignite a religious war among the peoples of Ethiopia by attempting to use religious leaders for their own political objectives of using a rear gear propaganda seeking the restoration of Zemene Mesafint (Era of Princes). They distort history of the Battle of Adwa as if the victory was attained under the leadership of a single ethnic group while in reality all peoples of Ethiopia were represented on this historical victory.

Our home grown confused politicians are calling for a new political order that is established based on the dominance of a single ethnic group and are vigorously opposed to a multi-ethnic and democratic order in which has proved to be a pathway to peace and prosperity of the country. They are trying to bring about a regime change through empty propaganda with no grain of truth.

Whatever the case is Ethiopia will continue to pursue the path of peace and mutual development with all African countries and the irreversible multinational democratic political system in Ethiopia will set an example for the rest of Africa as the country develops her own port for the economic development of the nation and quality livelihood for her people.

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

Editorial

Opinion

Diaspora Diplomacy Consultative Forum: Key for dev't, unity

The first-of-its-kind International Ethiopian Diaspora Diplomacy Consultative Forum, that sought to help the Diaspora community be more integrated with homeland and strengthen their active participation in the overall development efforts of the country, was established last Monday.

The establishment of the Consultative Forum that comprises 300 members drawn from 25 countries is expected to enable Ethiopians and Ethiopian origins residing in different parts of the world to further strengthen support to homeland, increase their participation in each and every development activities and contribute share in nation's development plans at all means. Indeed, this is a praiseworthy step that facilitates ways for the Diaspora to contribute for their country.

Needless to say that Ethiopia is one of the countries with the largest numbers of people living in different parts of the world. According to information obtained from different sources, Ethiopians estimated to be over 2.5 million are living outside of their home country predominantly in the United States, Europe and the Middle East, among others.

Taking this largest number into consideration, the government of Ethiopia has been working to deepen ties with the Diaspora community and bolster their role in the overall undertakings of the country by creating a conducive environment.

As part of this effort, it has devised policies and strategies that give special consideration for Ethiopians residing in the four corners of the earth to create ways to play a considerable role. Noticeably, the nation's foreign relations policy document gives greater attention to citizen-centered diplomacy and highly recognizes the issue of Ethiopians and descendants of Ethiopians' residing abroad.

Not only that, Ethiopia also ratified the Diaspora Policy in 2013 in order to let Ethiopians in the Diaspora play an important part in carrying out research and investing at home. In addition, they could win friends for Ethiopia and try to influence their country of residence to cooperate with our country. Being in this framework, the country has been implementing a number of undertakings to ensure the rights and benefits of citizens living abroad in addition to boosting their involvement in the development activities of the country.

Successively, over the past few years, the engagement and contribution of the Diaspora community in each and every activity that takes place in their country of origin has improved. Be it in sending remittance, engaging in investment and tourism undertakings, knowledge and technology transfer, backing mega development projects, taking part in philanthropy works as well as building the image of the country, their involvement and participation have been growing meaningfully.

Particularly, in times that the country went to war, the role of the Diaspora community in countering the sophisticated disinformation and misinformation campaigns was beyond words.

As it is repeatedly stated, Ethiopia has the largest number of Diaspora globally. This large number of the Ethiopian Diasporas, if organized properly in a manner actively taking part in their homeland, can create a miracle not only in advancing the country's development but also fostering peace and unity and promoting the image of the nation's at the global arena.

In this regard, the establishment of the International Ethiopian Diaspora Diplomacy Consultative Forum is crucial to ensure the rights and benefits of the Ethiopians abroad and connect them for development in their country of origin.

Ethiopia's ever growing strategic alliance with multiple countries is paying off

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Promoting strategic alliance with major countries of the world and international partners is a major component of Ethiopia's foreign policy and diplomatic objectives but what does strategic alliance with this countries entail and how does this synchronize with the nation's vision of becoming a middle level developed country over the coming years? What benefits could Ethiopia expect from such expanded relations? What should Ethiopia do to ensure her national interest by promoting strategic alliance with countries of the world?

In the context of foreign relations and diplomacy, a strategic alliance implies a formal or informal agreement between two or more entities to collaborate for mutual benefit. These entities, which can be companies, organizations, or even countries, come together to achieve common objectives, share resources, and create synergies. Strategic alliances are formed for various purposes, including expanding market reach, accessing new technologies, reducing risks, and capitalizing on complementary strengths.

Strategic alliance may take various forms including joint ventures to create a new legal entity, combining resources and sharing ownership. The recent agreement between Ethiopia and Somaliland and on port development can grow to such a level that both signatories can acquire multiple benefits for their people.

Partners in strategic alliance acquire equity stakes in each other's companies in the form of equity strategic alliance or non-equity strategic alliance in which partnerships are formed without the exchange of equity, often based on contractual agreements.

On the other hand, global strategic alliances are partnerships formed between entities from different countries to access global markets. Ethiopia's quest to join the WTO over time is a good example for such alliance and partnership. Collaboration focused on developing or offering specific products or services is also another form of strategic alliance between countries.

Ethiopia's objective of pursuing strategic alliances pertains to shared vision and common goals that align with the interests of all parties involved. The major content of Ethiopia's strategic alliance with countries and international organizations involves working together, often combining their resources, expertise, and capabilities to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. How is Ethiopia working towards achieving such strategic objectives?

Ethiopia has already started to share her hydropower resources with her neighbors in a bid to promote strategic alliance with countries like Kenya, Sudan, South Sudan, Djibouti and possibly with Somalia and Eretria, Tanzania and possibly as well with Somaliland. The nation is also helping to build the defense capability of South Sudan, Somalia and other African countries to ensure peace in the Horn of Africa.

Strategic partnerships are essential for economic growth and development in Africa. Collaboration among different entities, whether public or private, can lead to the creation of new ideas, technologies, and business opportunities that can spur growth and development on the continent.

Strategic partnerships refer to collaborations among different entities, such as businesses, governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and academia, to achieve common goals. These partnerships are essential for

economic growth and development as they bring together different perspectives, resources, and expertise to solve complex problems and create new opportunities. It is also in line with SDG 17 which seeks to revitalize global partnerships for sustainable development.

Ethiopia entered into wide range of strategic agreements with countries like Russia, China, Turkiye, South Korea, India, UAE, Check Republic, USA, EU based on sharing expertise, financial supports, transfer of technology, education, cultural relations mutually beneficial economic relations, tourism development, cooperation on peace building to not only promote her wide range of national interests but also to work towards fair and equitable socio-economic relations between countries.

In strategic alliance among nations, risks and rewards are typically shared among the alliance partners, fostering a sense of collective responsibility. Entities in a strategic alliance may share various resources, including technology, knowledge, distribution channels, or production capabilities. Ethiopia is indeed following the right path in this respect and is ready to open up with countries across the world to share available resources for common development goals.

In addition, Ethiopia's strategic alliances can take various forms, including non-equity alliances (contractual agreements) or equity-based alliances (joint ventures or partnerships with shared ownership). What strategic benefits can Ethiopia gain from strategic alliances with countries?

Alliances provide opportunities for Ethiopia to enter new markets or expand existing ones through shared distribution channels. Ethiopia's geostrategic and geopolitical position on the Horn of Africa gives the country comparative advantages for such an opportunity.

Ethiopia is well positioned and rooted in Africa and possesses most of the resources required to enhance strategic alliance both with African countries and the developed countries in the world. Ethiopia's important position in the AU, the NAM, UN and other international organizations gives the country a better position to negotiate on issues of strategic alliance.

Among other things, Ethiopia can have access to resources such as technology in the areas of digital technology AI, agricultural mechanization, and other technologies which are of crucial importance for enhancing the country's defense and security capabilities.

Moreover, the country can share risks and responsibilities to reduce the financial and operational burden on individual partners by using her membership in international organizations like BRICS.

Ethiopia's strategic alliance with countries can result in cost savings through economies of scale, shared infrastructure, or joint procurement. Ethiopia can benefit from strategic alliances as this can enhance competitiveness by leveraging each partner's strengths.

Being in strategic alliance Ethiopia can learn from other countries, fostering professional development and knowledge transfer. Ethiopia can create synergies, allowing entities to achieve more together than they could separately.

Strategic alliances are dynamic and require effective communication, trust, and ongoing collaboration to succeed. While they offer numerous benefits, they also come with challenges, and managing the alliance effectively is critical for achieving long-term success.

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The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy

Micro insurance a better mechanism in reaching small scale farmers financially

BY ABEBE WOLDE GIORGIS

Agriculture is the mainstay of the nation's economy and almost 80 percent of the population earns their living from the sector. It also contributes up to 85 percent of export earnings.

However, the subsistence and traditional way of farming made the sector vulnerable to climate variation which poses drought and flood to the other extreme.

The livestock subsector also faces similar challenges. Cattle raisers move from place to place for searching forage and water and during extreme weather condition many of their animals meet their death in the wilderness.

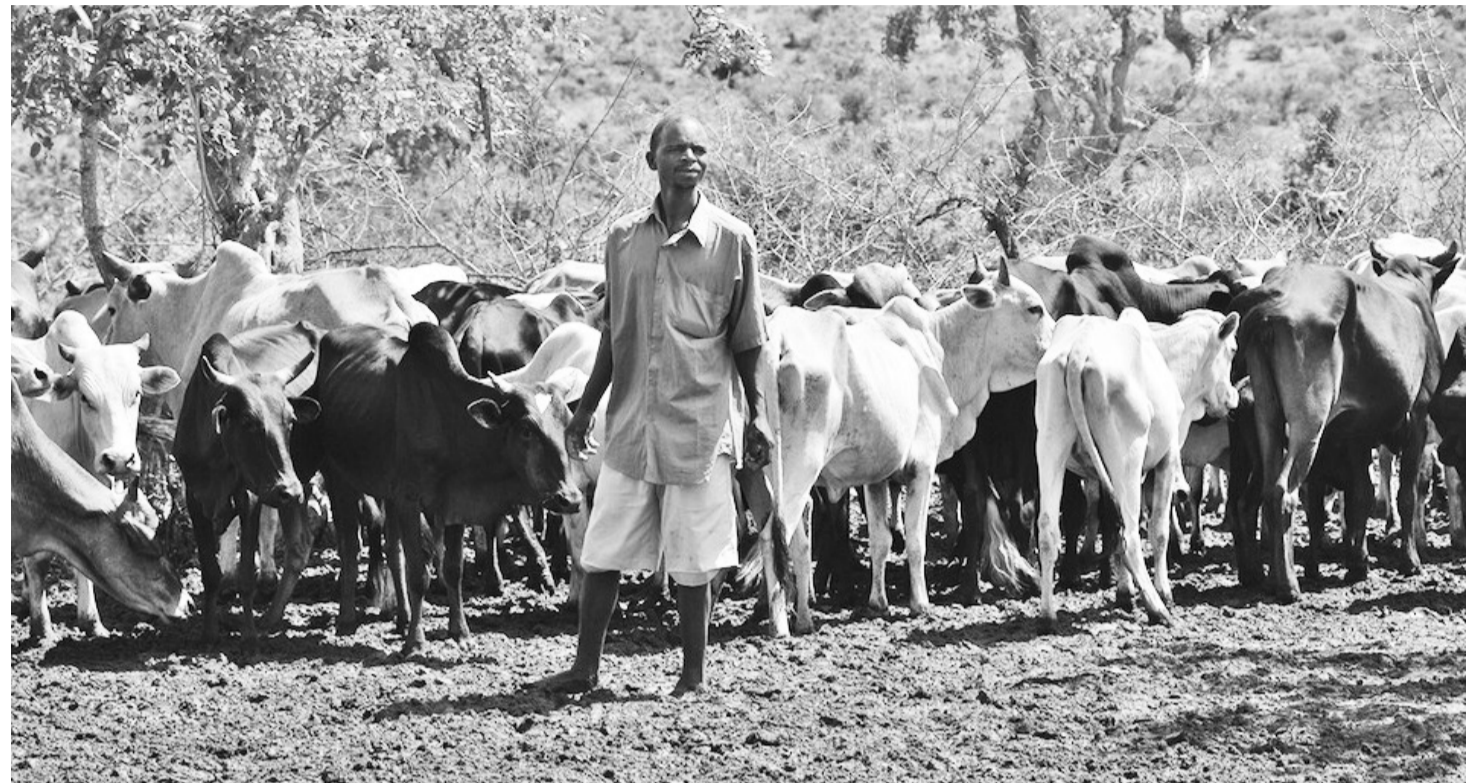
In time of hardship, farmers tried their level best to sustain their livelihood by consuming their stored grains but it is only for shorter period; as the result, they will be forced to stretch their hands to take handouts from donors. Such practice has been continued since 1950s.

Now time is changing and farmers began to develop a culture of modern saving system by their credit associations so that they could overcome the penury they may face during drought season. Such approach draws the attention of donors and private financial institutions and they show interest to provide insurance coverage in the form of weather index and so far the practice is undergoing in several parts of the countries and till now thousands of farmers have been benefiting.

Solomon Zegeye is working at the Nyala Insurance Company as a Manager of Micro Finance Department. As to him, his company has long been delivering its financial inclusion duties through the provision of various models of micro insurance with the cooperation of the government, international non-governmental organizations and the World Bank. It is also a pioneer of Agricultural micro Insurance in Ethiopian Market. The company strategically operates on three Insurance Business Areas and among others General Insurance Business, Long-term Insurance and Micro Insurance Business that is Crop, livestock and Life and health.

Poverty is more rampant in the rural part than the urban areas. In Ethiopia 60 percent of the population is living in the high land parts of the country with various agro-ecological zones engaged in sedentary farming. The rest of the population which is 40 percent is living in the low land parts of the country engaged in pastoral and agro-pastoral activities. About 13 million small holder farmers account for 90% of agricultural GDP. Nearly 55% of small holder food producers engaged in one hectare or less.

In the densely populated areas of the central and southern part of the country due to land scarcity farmers yield is declining



Cattle raiser in semiarid zone

from time to time and in time of drought, their living is critically hit. Hence, reaching them through financial inclusion scheme helps to withstand the crises.

The company has a strategy to create partnership with stakeholders engaged in rural financial service, small holder agricultural development, agricultural value chains, financial services and digital technology to low-income urban population

According to Solomon, the provision of micro insurance service is conducted by various models. Livestock insurance products are dictated or determined by agro-climatic conditions and livelihood systems. The other model known as indemnity based livestock insurance that covers risks like disease, illness, accident, calving, windstorm, smoke, electrocution, flood and the bite of a snake. It is also provided for commercial growers and small-holder farmers in highland and agro-pastoral livelihood areas. The index based livestock insurance solely practiced in low-land, arid and desert agro-ecologies Drought insurance extremely vital and it is the significant risk threatening the livelihood of the pastoralists and conducted through Satellite based Index.

For the scheme financial and technical support provided by World Food Program and Product design and pricing done by consultant from United Kingdom and International Livestock Research Institute also took part in it. National Meteorological Agency served as calculation agent regarding interpreting the information collected from satellites.

There are four local insurance companies which carry risks on pool basis with Nyala Insurance taking the technical aid to provide reinsurance protection. Farmers and to pastoralists are required to purchase premium through their saving and credit association but usually up to 100% of it subsidized by the donor-World

Food Program. The insurance coverage is provided for long and short rain periods.

If the data received from satellite indicates that there was rain failure, pastoralists or sedentary farmers would be paid costs of purchasing feed, water and drug intervention areas. So far in the regions such as in Beneshalgul Gumuz, Amhara and Southern Nation Nationalities and Peoples' State totally 6,500 small scale farmers received 50 million Birr because of the crop failure due to drought in 2022. Farmers allocated the money to purchase grain for personal consumption, seeds and agricultural inputs for the next harvest season.

As to Solomon, the areas that have been hit by recurrent drought based on the data brought from satellite in Somali Region in the places known as Adadele, Kebri Dehar and west Elimi 5001 beneficiaries received 70,014,000 Birr.

In addition, in Afar region three woredas 3200 pastoralists received 8,809,152 Birr. The money is allocated for purchasing drug to treat their infected cattle by diseases. From time to time the number of beneficiaries also increased but there are also challenges which need remedial actions and among others, lack of technical skills in product design and index based pricing. Short pilot duration of the insuring program and low level financial literacy of beneficiaries also can be mentioned.

As to Slomon, some of the forwarded solutions to address the mentioned shortcomings are scaling up and sustaining micro insurances and to that end there must be collaboration among stakeholders.

Encouraging innovative public private partnership and the major stakeholders, the government, which plays crucial role in poverty alleviation should create enabling environment by formulating legal framework and introducing proclamation

helpful for micro insurance development and supporting innovation technologies for premium collection.

In the last two years, both in Somali and Oromya Regions of Borena hundreds of thousands livestock population died due to drought. The natural disaster currently witness is very critical to the government and to the nation at large. To save the remaining cattle, government and non-governmental organizations are trying their level best. Regional governments also provided millions of Birr to the victims.

According to the National Disaster Prevention Authority, the magnitude of drought witnessed frequently is extremely difficult and in which the nation ever had experienced in the last 50 year. The disaster that hit the animal intern affects the livelihood of the pastoral communities. As it is known the pastoral communities mostly resided in the arid zones are often vulnerable to drought and natural calamities and the absence of infrastructure such as roads, piped water and health centers further complicates the matter.

Drought not only put stress on grazing resources but also it poses the outbreak of cattle diseases which are beyond their capacity to withstand the crises. As a result, many animals meet their death at the wilderness. However, due to the due attention paid by the regional and the federal governments, it was possible to save human lives. As it is known the life of the pastoral community depends on finding forage for their animals; as the result, they move place to place in search of grass and water. But when disastrous situation occur all things will be multiplied by zero. Hence, to change the situation to the better striving to bring long lasting solution through transforming their way of life is essential; this can be done by providing them with finance.

Art & Culture

Wedding extravaganzas

as if there is no tomorrow

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

The Ethiopian wedding season is upon us and many people are engaged in the tedious and often expensive process of preparing for lavish weddings that will take place in the coming two or three months. Ethiopian culture is uncompromising when it comes to throwing wedding banquets that are composed of many layers of rituals. The first step is the stage of sending elders to the groom's and bride's parents, asking for their mutual hands. The second step in the process is fixing the actual wedding day and the third one is mels which literally means 'return', that usually takes place a couple of days after the wedding day. It consists of preparing equally lavish banquets for invited guests mostly relatives and family members of the couples.

The three stages of the wedding process take place one after the other and in quick succession.

Thousands of weddings take place starting from Ethiopian Christmas day in the month of Tir (January) all through Megabit (March) until the two fasting months of Lent set on. As soon as people break the Christmas fast, they are caught in a frenzy of feasting, singing and dancing even at a time when the going has become too tough that it may not warrant spending sprees as of old. Ethiopian culture does not take into consideration the economic implications of holidays.

In many Ethiopian traditions, holidays and wedding parties are so venerated that they are observed with carefree spending, unusual generosity and moments of epiphany. The haves as well as the have-nots are equally dedicated to make the wedding time a moment of unequalled joy. They usually go to any length or spend any amount of money on those parties as if they are the best times of their lives. As the Amharic saying has it, weddings and deaths may be similar, in the emotional ways they are observed; the difference between the two being that there is no return from death while the day after weddings is generally accompanied with a great deal of depression. The high expenses become clear after all the eating and drinking is over and the following weeks are often times of repressed mourning and soul-searching reflections. This is particularly true when the costly weddings take place to accommodate 'marriages of convenience', in which money is more important than love between those who tie the knots.

It is also important to speak of the days that precede the holiday of Timket (Epiphany) that will inevitably be followed by wedding sprees.

On the eve of Ethiopian Christmas, any part of Addis Ababa is usually overcrowded. This year was no exception. The newly built road from Sarris Abo to Kaliti in the southern part of Addis was overflowing with people, vehicles, animals and what



not. The sun was beating hard at this time of the year and there was hardly any place to hide from its scorching temperature.

Traffic was at virtual standstill and the few cars that were moving did so at a snail's pace. Many of them were blowing their horns desperately as if they could persuade the cars in front of them to leave them some room for maneuver. The wind was blowing and billowing the trash, pieces of plastic and paper over the heads of unfortunate pedestrians.

Suddenly, a white limousine emerged from the far corner of the road and drove towards Kaliti at a gentle pace. A man dressed in white was emerging half of his body from the luxury car that looked like a vehicle and a yacht at the same time, and waved to the crowd in the street. Judging from the gait and confidence with which he waved both of his hands, he looked like someone running for a presidential election in a big American city or an athlete who has broken the marathon world record and snatched the honor from the Kenyan Kipchoge.

Soon other, luxury vehicles followed the limousine which looked like it was sliding on the newly-built tarmac or like a ball on an ice hockey field. The V8s that follow the limousine were taking a good distance behind it. It is as if they were ashamed of their status as compared to the limo. Maybe they were expressing their respect to the limo by acknowledging their rank and status in the competitive world of luxury cars.

Anyway, life around the street seemed to have come to a standstill and everyone's eyes were stuck on the limo and the cars that were following it. However, life soon resumed its chaotic nature as soon the wedding procession left the area. The contrast was really shocking. One the one hand a wedding procession and on the other hand a crowd of pedestrians fighting for space in the overcrowded street—those were the contradictory faces of life on the eve of Ethiopian Christmas.

As tradition has it, as soon as the holiday

health by ridding it of toxic substances that might have been accumulated before the fasting season.

While fasting may be good both for the body and mind, the fact that the period of long fasting is succeeded by a period of intense nutritional permissiveness may cancel out the gains registered during the period of relative abstinence. Many people who went through a time of deep self-denial tend to resort to over-eating and over-drinking once the temporary interdiction on daylong drinking and eating thereby putting on weight rapidly. They would also revisit any illness they might have put under control during the fasting period thereby cancelling virtually all the health benefits of fasting.

Ethiopian weddings are generally part and parcel of the tradition of lavish feasting, indulgence in too much meaty meals and buttered-drenched delicacies and specialties. Some people even go as far as ignoring their medical conditions and prohibitions to indulge in forbidden foods. Others may think that one or two days of good times at the tables might not aggravate their conditions. As many of them would say, after all death is inevitable however carefully you treat yourself.

As an Ethiopian saying has it, you cannot love both ways, or accommodate both abstinence and indulgence at the same time. Not a few people are often taken from the dinner tables to the nearby clinics as a result of sudden surge in their glucose levels or suffering from sudden spikes in the blood pressures. Some of them might endure the post-gluttony dinner parties and then go to bed somehow and then wake up next day to take a fast trip to the nearby clinic for an emergency checkup.

For most of them, a medical crisis may be something tolerable for the sake of taking full advantage of a wedding ceremony at the center of which is too much eating and drinking as if there is no tomorrow.

Ethiopians even the educated ones, are not famous for their health awareness or care. There is virtually no statistics to refer to the number of casualties and sickness that befall many of our compatriots on religious or secular holidays like weddings. Our cultures encourage to eat the best, to wear the best and to be the best version of ourselves during holidays. This attitude is encapsulated in the popular saying that, "A garment that is not used for Epiphany is better torn into pieces"

It would be unfair at this point to comment on the post-wedding period of depression which is often camouflaged with continued drinking to the point of stupor. When the post-wedding wake-up calls come, we may realize that short and long term damage may be caused both to the accounts and health of the celebrants. For many of the big time spenders however, the risk is worth taking once or twice in a lifetime, provided that there are many ways of compensating their expenses with fresh incomes, the sources of which only they must know.

In many Ethiopian traditions, holidays and wedding parties are so venerated that they are observed with carefree spending, unusual generosity and moments of epiphany

season is ushered in with the end of the fasting season and the holiday permissiveness takes its place with revenge. Addis Ababans of all classes and walks of life welcome the wedding season with renewed vigor. It is as if they want to make up for the time lost in prayer and fasting that lasted for more than a month. By the way, Ethiopians practice fasting as members of the two major religious denominations like Christianity and Islam and others in between. There were also people who adhere to traditional faiths while being members of the two major religious denominations.

Whatever the case may be, during a religious fast, the person fasting will abstain from food and or drink for a period of time. What else one does depends on the faith but prayer and meditation are common ways to pass the time while fasting, even if not required. There are many people, youngsters in particular, who use fasting for health purposes because as scientific evidence apparently suggests, depriving the body and mind of food would improve the body's

Global Affairs

The impact of climate migration on developing nations

As the world is still gearing up to welcome 2024, let us find a moment to reflect on some of the key trends of the past year and pursue now to embrace the path towards hope and promise for everyone, everywhere.

Deepening global inequalities are having enormous socio-economic implications across countries. Increasing income and social disparities are spreading around regions. Growing intensities of climate induced natural disasters, the uneven speed of post-pandemic recoveries, and cost-of-living crises from conflicts and geopolitical tensions are exacerbating inequalities and poverty traps globally.

The changing distribution of economic benefits vis-à-vis the rising prices of food and fuel are causing social unrest and protests. Citizens are voicing their frustration not only in the streets of capitals but through exponential engagement on social media platforms.

With the intensification of various external shocks, and the lack of economic opportunities for accelerating growth and productivity surges, multidimensional poverty indices are on rise. The inequality-poverty nexus is contributing to a new form of uncertainty for disadvantaged households.

Intensifying course of climate change

Intensifying hazards caused by climate change, such as floods, tropical cyclones, heat waves, droughts and earthquakes, have impacted agricultural outputs and industrial sectors, especially through decreasing productivity growth and falling real wages. The widening gap between rich and poor in rural and urban areas has also been linked to extreme weather events due to the increasing frequency of natural disasters.

These inequalities are further aggravating extreme poverty, creating the vicious nexus of climate-disaster-inequalities among vulnerable groups.

Evidence from around the world indicates that climate change is likely to impact more severely on vulnerable groups and coastal communities, because they are more exposed to the uncertainties of weather patterns. Lack of adaptive capacity is often constraining the ability of these communities to build resilience and cope with the severity of these environmental shocks.

Widespread incidence of climate migration from low- to high-latitude areas and social mobility are increasingly impacting the social fabric of small island developing states and other developing economies.

With the exodus of young and skilled labor force, transfers of income and the wealth gap will further worsen inequalities in communities, raising concerns of greater socio-economic uncertainties.



PHOTO: IOM/Muse Mohammed

From Fiji to Ethiopia, Bangladesh to Brazil, the exacerbation of inequalities due to climate change has been impacting socio-economic prosperity. Growth uncertainties are causing extreme poverty to increase, while causing hardship and hunger for households in rural areas.

Varying scales of COVID-19 pandemic

Socio-economic polarization has been on the rise since the global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to differentiated impacts of national lockdowns, pandemic restrictions and vaccination measures have had adverse impacts on the existing inequalities and multidimensional poverty indices.

As economic development stagnation persists, rural areas have seen rising impacts of extreme poverty and income divergence across households, leading to new episodes of income divergence within countries.

The post-COVID 19 recoveries are uneven. Rising levels of unemployment and stagnating real wages remain major indicators of corresponding economic growth deceleration. The differentiated policy measures to stabilize labour market distortions, social protection systems and sectoral productivity surges have not always achieved the desired outcomes in developing countries.

According to the labour force surveys in various countries, the majority of workers have been engaged in less paid work due to lack of dynamism in the labour market. Evidence suggests that the changes in work style and availability of types of jobs as well as their skills and profiles aggravate the income disparity within urban centres.

From several Latin American to African countries, the pandemic-induced policy measures have differently elevated the

Evidence from around the world indicates that climate change is likely to impact more severely on vulnerable groups and coastal communities, because they are more exposed to the uncertainties of weather patterns

risk of vulnerability for the manual labor force. Similarly, the studies have shown that young, low-income and self-employed workers including women with limited education have suffered greater job losses and earnings reductions than other groups in the workforce in the UK, USA, China and India, among others.

Changing forms of conflicts

Conflicts also go beyond borders, causing immeasurable human suffering on the global scale. With the volatility and uncertainties around supply chains, food and fuel prices spiral. Cost-of-living crisis spreads around countries as governments lose fiscal space for developmental expenditure, while debt burden mounts.

Conflicts cause people to lose hope and opportunities from East to West, North to Southern countries. With the lack of rule of law and property rights, households and communities fall into poverty traps, changing the face of socio-economic disparity.

As these conflicts are prolonged, countries often fail to overcome the existing structural constraints, maintain production streams, and improve lackluster infrastructure. A higher risk of falling into poverty traps and increasing scale of disparities is then the inevitable outcome. The polarization fears and lack of trust are now a reality.

Looking ahead

Today, as we look back at 2023, there is no doubt that in the end, common aspirations and outlooks remain our best hope to chart a new course to advance the Sustainable Development Goals. Evidence of successful policy coherence will provide valuable opportunities for policymakers to unite their priorities and lay the foundations for breakthroughs.

(SOURCE: INTER PRESS SERVICE)

Law & Politics

A foreign policy laden with internal, external significance

BY EYUEL KIFLU

Ethiopia, a country with a rich history and vibrant culture, has been actively working towards strengthening its foreign relations to foster economic growth, regional stability, and global partnerships. As the nation looks towards the future, it has identified key areas of focus for its foreign engagements, aiming to promote mutual cooperation and address pressing challenges.

Ethiopia’s foreign policy has long emphasized non-alignment, advocating for regional integration, and maintaining peaceful coexistence with neighbouring countries. However, in recent years, the country’s global engagement has expanded significantly, driven by its ambitious development agenda and the recognition of the importance of international collaboration. The green legacy initiative is one of the country’s contributions to the global boiling issue of climate change.

One of the primary areas of focus for Ethiopia’s foreign relations is economic cooperation. Recognizing the significance of trade and investment in driving economic growth, the country has been actively seeking partnerships with both established and emerging economies.

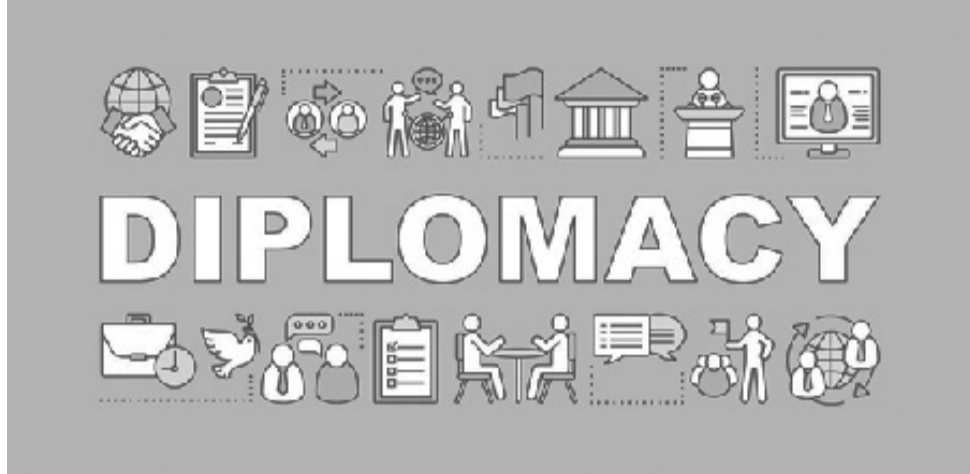
The country’s vast agricultural resources, growing manufacturing sector, and strategic location make it an attractive destination for foreign investors. The country’s proximity to the sea and geopolitical location are other blessings to the country’s economic cooperation works.

The government has implemented various policies to attract foreign direct investment, improve the business climate, and facilitate technology transfer. Especially in recent years, the government has tried to fix some investment hurdles by amending policies related to foreign investment.

Additionally, the country has been actively engaging in regional economic integration efforts, particularly within the framework of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), aiming to boost intra-African trade and enhance economic cooperation across the continent.

Another critical aspect of Ethiopia’s foreign relations is regional stability and security. The country recognizes the importance of maintaining peaceful relations with neighbouring countries to foster stability and address shared challenges. Ethiopia has played a significant role in mediating and facilitating peace processes in the Horn of Africa region. For instance, it has been actively involved in the peace negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan, striving to resolve conflicts and promote reconciliation. The country’s indispensable role for Somalia’s peace in combating Al-Shebab shows how Ethiopia is striving for regional stability.

Furthermore, Ethiopia has been working closely with other East African nations to



address regional security threats, such as terrorism and illicit arms trafficking, through collaborative initiatives and joint military operations. According to a UN report, Ethiopia is the largest troop contributor to UN peacekeeping, with over 8,300 uniformed personnel, the vast majority of whom serve in Darfur (UNAMID), Abyei (UNISFA), and South Sudan (UNMISS). However, the country has not yet gained anything from countries that gain Ethiopia’s support. So, there is a need for diplomatic negotiations and other bilateral relations with the countries to achieve the country’s future diplomatic focus areas.

In a similar vein, since Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed came to power, Ethiopia’s diplomacy has expanded to include bilateral and multilateral relations with Middle Eastern countries such as the UAE and China. The strategic partnership with Russia has also been instrumental in assisting Ethiopia during times of trouble. The new driving force behind Ethiopian foreign policy is a focus on citizen-based diplomacy, aiming to actively involve Ethiopians living abroad in the country’s activities, both politically and economically, as well as engaging the diaspora community. So, in the dynamic world of politics, Ethiopia should base its diplomatic activity on dynamic global politics. This helps the country’s ambition for technological advancement because these nations possess advanced technologies and expertise in various sectors, including infrastructure development, manufacturing, and information technology.

Also, identifying the focused area is another important thing to protect and ensure the country’s national interest.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Anteneh Getachew (Ph.D) an Asia and Pacific researcher at the Institute of Foreign Affairs, highlighted how diplomacy has evolved from religious and trade diplomacy to include new areas such as cyber diplomacy, climate diplomacy, and geo-economic and geopolitical issues. Ethiopia, as a country, has focused on protecting its national and strategic interests.

Anteneh emphasized that the future of Ethiopian diplomacy will be focused on safeguarding the country’s sovereignty, which is a crucial strategic concern. He also highlighted the importance of economic

only with countries but also with non-governmental organizations, think tanks, transnational companies, and other entities. He emphasized the need to build the country’s image and address geopolitical challenges. Adapting to the dynamics of world politics is also essential for successful diplomatic activities, he added.

Anteneh further highlighted that economic development plays a crucial role in ensuring the country’s existence, and leveraging Ethiopia’s geopolitical capacities, such as GERD and access to the sea, is vital for economic development and diplomatic achievements.

Drawing upon Ethiopia’s historical diplomatic achievements and its contributions to regional and international peacekeeping missions, Anteneh emphasized the need for the country to gain benefits from its diplomatic activities.

He highlighted several recent diplomatic achievements of the country during the past five years of reform. These include efforts in peace diplomacy, the implementation of green initiatives, regional infrastructure integration (including the Trans-Africa Road), and championing different diplomatic influences in addressing internal conflicts and the GERD (Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam) issue.

Regarding diplomatic relations with neighbouring countries, Anteneh emphasized the importance of building trust and conducting negotiations based on bilateral or multilateral agreements. He stressed the need to strengthen diplomatic relations at the head of state or government level, as well as through engagement with think tanks, diplomats, and ambassadors, to achieve cumulative positive results.

Anteneh emphasized the potential for misinformation and disinformation campaigns to proliferate with the rise of artificial intelligence, underscoring the importance of exploring the best approaches to deal with these challenges. He mentioned that the Foreign Minister, along with national-level officials, is working to adapt to these new diplomatic activities.

Ethiopia has an institute dedicated to artificial intelligence that provides training for youth and new diplomats, thereby advancing the country’s diplomacy and aligning it with global standards. The government is also committed to safeguarding national interests in the diplomatic arena through the use of advanced diplomatic strategies.

He stressed that Ethiopia will continue to collaborate with entities that protect and benefit the country’s national interests. Ethiopian diplomats must remain cautious and maintain a balanced approach in an inconsistent world order. Strengthening internal policies is essential to fortify the country’s foreign policy. By bolstering internal unity, Ethiopia can effectively navigate any diplomatic influences and employ tactical diplomacy to its advantage.

He noted that achieving the country’s strategic interests requires engaging not

Ethiopia recognizes the importance of maintaining peaceful relations with neighbouring countries to foster stability and address shared challenges

Planet Earth

How Ethiopia's agricultural initiatives are paying back in ensuring food security

BY FIKADU BELAY

In recent years, the Ethiopian government has been actively promoting and supporting urban agricultural initiatives to address various challenges and harness the potential of urban areas for food production.

Lemat turfata (Urban agriculture), which is the practice of growing crops, keeping livestock, and carrying out other agricultural operations in urban areas, is a rapidly developing sector in Ethiopia that has attracted a lot of interest. It is essential for boosting nutrition, increasing food security, generating jobs, and encouraging sustainable urban growth.

Ethiopia's Ministry of Agriculture has implemented a number of policies to support the development of *Lemat turfata* since it understands its significance. These strategies include helping urban farmers with resources and inputs, developing their capacity, assisting with policy, and providing technical support.

Behind the promotion of urban agriculture is increasing urbanization rate in the country. As more people move to cities, the demand for food in urban areas has been rising. *Lemat turfata* helps bridge the gap between food production and consumption by bringing agriculture closer to consumers. It reduces the reliance on long-distance transportation and contributes to the availability of fresh and nutritious food within urban areas.

Furthermore, *Lemat turfata* also provides potential for poverty alleviation and revenue production, especially for marginalized communities living in urban areas. This makes it possible for people to cultivate their own food, sell extra produce, and take part in value-added industries like agribusiness and food processing. Urban agriculture enhances the financial security of urban dwellers by establishing jobs and revenue-generating ventures.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture data shows that after the reform, the government began working on a number of initiatives by creating ten-year development plans in an effort to assist the community in achieving food security in a sustainable manner. The government has prioritized agriculture in its development plan, and as a result, it is making great efforts to address the issue of food scarcity by boosting productivity through the *Lemat turfata* program.

Kebede Lakew, Public Relations and Communication Executive Officer at the Ministry of Agriculture told the Ethiopian Herald that about five billion 726 liters of milk, 328 thousand tons of beef, and 96.7 thousand tons of honey were produced in the first five months of the 2016 fiscal year.

He further stated that efforts are being made to improve the productivity and production of chicken meat and eggs. In just five months, 88.8 thousand tons of chicken meat, over three billion eggs, 38.4 thousand tons of fish and 10.6 million hides were produced.



According to him, in an effort to increase honey production in five months, some 315 thousand modern beehives had been distributed across the country.

The Ethiopian government has also recognized the environmental benefits of urban agriculture. It encourage small-scale farming and gardening on vacant lots, rooftops, and balconies in urban areas. This not only maximizes the use of available land but also contributes to green spaces, biodiversity, and the overall aesthetics of cities. Additionally, urban agriculture can play a role in waste management and recycling by utilizing organic waste as compost for urban farms.

Additionally, to support urban agricultural initiatives, the government has been providing technical assistance and capacity building to urban farmers. This includes training programs on modern farming techniques, sustainable practices, pest management, and post-harvest handling. Access to quality seeds, fertilizers, and other agricultural inputs has also been facilitated to ensure productivity and the adoption of best practices.

Furthermore, the government has been working on creating an enabling policy environment for urban agriculture. It has developed guidelines and regulations to govern land use, zoning, and livestock management in urban areas. These policies aim to ensure the sustainability of urban agricultural practices, prevent conflicts with other land uses, and protect public health and safety.

He mentioned that strengthening the breed of dairy cows is another one of the *Lemat Turufat* Program's special emphasis activities; efforts are being made to produce better animal breeds and an enhanced seed supply.

He mentioned that a lot of work is being done to provide a range of vaccination services in order to safeguard the wellbeing of animals. He also stated that in this way he has prevented the spread of animal diseases across international borders, stopped the

resurgence of Tsetse fly sickness and other infestations, and cleared newly contaminated areas of these diseases.

The integration of technology and innovation has also been a focus in urban

agriculture in Ethiopia. The government has been exploring the use of modern technologies, such as hydroponics and vertical farming, to maximize productivity in limited urban spaces. These technologies allow for year-round production, efficient use of water and nutrients, and higher crop yields.

He emphasized that the primary goals of *Lemat's turfata* are to boost the nation's productivity and output of livestock, guarantee food security for urban citizen as well as the entire nation, boost export revenue, replace imported goods, and generate employment opportunities, all of which have a big impact on the expansion of the economy of the country. Moreover, *Lemat turfata* has established a history as a link between farmers and consumers, as well as farming by itself; they have reported positive outcomes across the country.

Besides, the Ethiopian government, through the Ministry of Agriculture, has been actively supporting and promoting urban agricultural initiatives through policy support, capacity building, and resource provision and through harnessing the potential of urban areas for food production, Ethiopia aims to address the challenges of urbanization, improve nutrition, and create inclusive and resilient cities.

By encourage social networking between researchers, practitioners, and urban dwellers to share best practices, ideas, and experiences about urban agriculture. Examine the potential for offering financial incentives, such grants, subsidies, or tax deductions, to people or groups who can assist in increasing the number of participants in this sector. Offer aspiring urban dwellers resources, training program access, and technical support even more. Through promote the development of community gardens as well, so that people can join together to grow crops together.

These areas encourage social contact, awareness exchange, and community involvement. Assist in obtaining land, setting up the garden, and making supplies like water, tools, and seeds accessible.

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