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Premier applauds Somali State's irrigation practices

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA - Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) has lauded the successful

irrigation practices in Somali state.

The premier has underscored his government's commitment to infrastructural

expansion and overall development of Somali state while visiting various development projects in

See Premier applauds...page 3

Improving production, taxation vital to curb economic imbalance: Economist

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA—Ethiopia has to work on improving production and taxation in order to curb the economic imbalance, so said Zemedeneh Negatu.

Speaking to EBC, Global Chairman of the Fairfax Africa Fund Zemedeneh Negatu pointed out that the country must take measures that improve productivity and taxation so as to build a stable economy.

The economist suggested the promotion of various projects that increase productivity like the 'Let Ethiopia Produce' campaigns to

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German remains Ethiopia's strategic partner: MP

• Ethiopia, German MPs seek ways to elevate ties

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- The House of Peoples' Representatives (HoPR) revealed Ethiopia's desire to extend its investment

See German remains ... page 3

Sugarcoated political campaign

• 'Meddling in Ethio-Somalia affairs insincere, counterproductive'

News Analysis

BY EYUEL KIFLU

The ongoing attempts by some entities to portray the Ethio-Somaliland access to sea deal as a threat to Somalia's sovereignty is a political intrigue and insincere campaign to deliberately tarnish Ethiopia's unrequited contributions to Somalia's causes, people familiar with the matter told *The Ethiopian Herald*.

Since the Ethio-Somaliland deal unveiled, there have been string of statements from some nations and groups casting doubts on the rationales of the accords and pointing that Somalia's unity is violated, move Ethiopia see as a desperate attempt to besmirch the country's years of genuine

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Strengthening Pan-African solidarity for a brighter future

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Enhancing Agricultural Productivity: A Path to Sustainable Development

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Afrobeat becomes part of pop music genre at the Grammy Awards 2024

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News

Ministry hands over 160 vehicles, 400 laptops to health institutions

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- The Ministry of Health handed over 160 office and laboratory vehicles and 450 laptop computers to federal health institutions, all state and city administration health institutions with the financial support that was garnered from World Bank.

Health State Minister Dereje Dguma (MD) said at the event that 160 pick-up vehicles and 450 laptop computers have been delivered to federal health institutions, state and city government health institutions from the financial support that is secured from the World Bank. The assistance will help increase health service delivery to communities.

Among the vehicles, some 31 meant for federal health institutions and the remaining 29 will be distributed to state health bureaus. Transport and logistics are important for health institutions to move various medical resources and to take patients from one place to another in the relay system. Also, the computer supply is essential for better management of the health care system, he added.

The state minister further highlighted that the vehicles will be used for all states and city administrations in addition to the war and drought-affected Amhara, Tigray, Oromia, Afar and Benshangul Gumz.

“With a view to supporting implementation



of mid-term health development programs for the next three years, the ministry has completed extensive work to hand over the vehicles.”

Dereje (MD) also urged the institutions to use the support properly and reminded that it is everyone’s responsibility to ensure the support is used for the intended purpose.

On the other hand, the Ethiopia Public Health Institute obtained eight laboratory vehicles that are meant to transport laboratory samples.



Ethiopia to partake in 60th Int’l art festivals

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – The Ministry of Tourism (MoT) announced that it has finalized preparations to participate in the 60th international art festivals that will be held in Venice Biennale, Italy, marking the first involvement for the country.

Briefing journalists yesterday, Tourism State Minister Seleshi Girma said that Ethiopia’s art, architecture, cinema, food, dance, music, and theater will be displayed in the festival that is scheduled from April 20/2024 to November 24, 2024.

Ethiopia, Benin, and Tanzania are the three countries which are set to take part in the 60th international art festivals for the first time in their history. In this regard, Ethiopia is at the forefront to fight for freedom and human dignity in history. Therefore, the art festival will help showcase Ethiopia’s historical places, cultural values, natural resources, and endemic animals and plants.

Seleshi also stated that the ministry is working hard to promote domestic tourism to generate adequate revenue from the sector and encourage local tourists to visit attraction sites across the

country.

Supporting the above idea, Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage (ARCC) Director General Abebaw Ayalew said that the festival will play a constructive role in promoting Ethiopia’s art potential whilst crucial for art experts to develop their skills. The Ethiopian Embassy at Rome has been playing a pivotal role in facilitating the art gallery in the above stated period. “Tough the reform government has given due attention to the promotion of art, a lot remains to be done.”

According to him, Ethiopia should promote abstract and modern paintings in the exhibition, starting with cave paintings especially in the sideline event.

An Ethiopian-born German Artist Tesfaye Urgessa who prepared an Ethiopian picture gallery and to present the works to the art lovers at Venice Biennale said, “I will show the pictures that depict the violence against refugees to the international community exploiting a platform -Foreigner Everywhere.”

Starting from in 1895 the Venice Biennale show has been held biennial to show arts and contemporary arts for visitors.

Union seeks metropolitan’s warehouses to supply agricultural products

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - Sikomando Farmers’ Cooperative Union announced that it seeks warehouses in Addis Ababa to enhance supplying agricultural products for local community and overseas market.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, the Union’s Marketing Coordinator, Jemal Umour expressed that the union requires warehouses in the capital city to advance its agricultural product delivery to local consumers and the international community.

He stated that the Farmers’ Union that based in Bale zone of Oromia state has been providing markets with wheat, coffee, *Teff*, barely and other products.

The union also distributes these products to government offices, factories and other cooperatives, he added.

The Coordinator stressed that union has demanded warehouse premises here in Addis Ababa to store and distribute adequate products to the community and organizations.

He further stated that the cooperative union has also planned to plant flour factory to deliver value added products to the market.

In addition to supplying local market, the



union is also exporting products to importers in which it has exported about 240,000 quintals of crop products to the international market last year alone, according to the coordinator.

However, he said, the drought that has impacted many parts of the country has decreased agricultural production thereby halting the union from exporting this year.

The Sikomando Farmers’ Cooperative Union was established 20 years ago by 9 primary cooperatives with an initial capital of 175,000 Birr. Today, the union reached 150 million Birr capital and 99 primary cooperatives having 35,000 members, according to Jemal.

News

Premier...

the state together with First Lady Zinash Tayachew.

The visit highlighted the ongoing efforts to foster sustainable development and enhance the quality of life for the residents of the state.

Along with high level regional and federal officials, PM Abiy visited the land being irrigated in the Berano district of the Shebele zone in the Somali state.

He lauded the successful irrigation practices as exemplary in the ongoing efforts to transform the agriculture sector. "This thriving environment is a testament to the success of our efforts to rejuvenate the agricultural sector."

According to the Office of the Prime Minister, Abiy also conducted a site visit to the Shabelley Resort which has been under construction along with other 'Dine for Generations' initiative projects.

It is also a critical component of the tourism pillar, aimed at transforming Jijiga City and its surrounding areas into a leading tourism destination. It highlights Ethiopia's dedication to promoting sustainable tourism and economic development, the Office stated.

Furthermore, Abiy inaugurated the Ugaz Mirad Airport in Gode, a significant project undertaken by Ethiopian Airlines, with its capacity to accommodate four Boeing 737 aircraft simultaneously, the Office noted.

The visit also encompassed the new regional parliament building of the state, an inspection of the Jijiga Sheik Hassen Yabare Referral Hospital, evaluation of the completion of 16 kilometers of newly constructed asphalt roads, a site visit to the Shabelle Resort, an inauguration of the Ugaz Mirad Airport in Gode and the inauguration of the Jijiga Flour and Bread Factory, it was learnt.

Sugarcoated political...

gesture and positive deeds to Somalia.

And, on the wake of the signing of the agreement, Egypt, the Arab League and others issued statement against the deal which experts say is political meddling directed at harming Ethiopia's national interest.

Politically-motivated and emotionally-loaded statements by some countries Ethiopia say are plots of its enemies to sow grudge in its relation with neighboring Somalia.

According to some pundits in the area some foreign and interest groups are trying to instigate proxy war between Ethiopia and Somalia, a claim Ethiopian Prime Minister corroborated recently. Certain entities are using Somalia as a proxy to undermine Ethiopia, Abiy told the country's highest legislation body.

Over the years, Ethiopia has been sending thousands of troops to help Somalia restore peace and stability and its soldiers are credited with backing Somalia towards stability. Although official figures have not been released thus far, Ethiopia paid life sacrifices.

The country has been spearheading antiterrorism efforts contribution largely seen by Ethiopians and Somalis as a testimony of comradeship between Addis Ababa and Mogadishu.

The premier took his recent meeting with lawmakers to signal his country's decades of supports to Somalia. "No country has paid as much as Ethiopia for peace of Somalia. This is because the peace of Somalia is the peace of Ethiopia." Ethiopia has troops in Somalia under the African Union Transitional Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) as well as a bilateral agreement," the Premier added.

"We have worked tirelessly to unite Somalia and Somaliland, and if they agree in the future, Ethiopia will be the first to celebrate," said Prime Minister Abiy.

Some entities are now disseminating false narratives and positioning themselves as Somalia's partner something disputed by Ethiopia.

The current meddling in Somalia by some countries is driven by their own hidden political agendas rather than genuine concern for the country's well-being, said Samuel Tefera (Ph.D.) a researcher at Addis Ababa University's Center for Asian and African Studies while emphasizing the need for Mogadishu to engage in discussions with Addis regarding the deal between Ethiopia and Somaliland.

The statements undermining Ethiopia's contributions to Somalia's stability only serve to create divisions and fuel instability, Samuel noted.

"If the MoU is wrongly perceived as a threat by Mogadishu, it is crucial to consider Ethiopia's contributions to Somalia's stability," Samuel further highlighted that Ethiopia's efforts in Somalia have been driven by a genuine desire for peace, rather than seeking any gains. However, the recent reaction by some in Somalia and other corners of the world fail to acknowledge Ethiopia's significant contributions to Somalia's stability.

Over the past 15 years, Ethiopian troops have made sacrifices and suffered casualties while trying to help pacify Somalia and make the administration in Villa Somalia strong, Samuel pointed out.

Samuel recalled that after President Siyad Bare's rule, Somalia became a fragmented country without a central government, with the political system divided among clan leaders and sub-clans. In response to the peak of Somali piracy in 2008, regional countries, including Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti, formed the Djibouti Code of Conduct to counter this menace. Subsequently, Ethiopia and other countries entered Somalia after several conferences held in Addis, leading to the establishment of a transitional government and the subsequent entry of AMISOM, which greatly improved the country's stability.

In an interview with The Ethiopian Herald, Ethiopia's ambassador to Somalia, Muktar Mohamed, highlighted Ethiopia's extensive efforts in maintaining peace and security in Somalia since

1991. Through numerous negotiations with Somali warlords, Ethiopia has played an indispensable role in the establishment of Somalia's central government.

Ethiopia also supported the internationally recognized transitional government led by Abdullahi Yusuf in Mogadishu. Ambassador Muktar underscored Ethiopia's involvement in supporting international peacekeeping missions in Somalia, which has enabled the legitimate government of Somalia to assume control of Villa Somalia. Without a legitimate central government, Somalia could have become a hub for various terrorist groups, including Al-Qaeda.

Following the establishment of the legitimate transitional government, Ethiopia became among the first countries to open an embassy in Mogadishu, paving the way for other countries to establish their embassies in Somalia, the ambassador said.

Ambassador Muktar emphasized that many Somalis migrated to Ethiopia, seeking refuge after President Siyad Bare's invasion of Ethiopia and the subsequent civil war in Somalia. Ethiopia has hosted these refugees in accordance with Ethiopian hospitality and international refugee law. Even now, due to Al-Shabaab attacks, many Somalis continue to migrate to Ethiopia.

Samuel also reiterated that Ethiopia has not only sent troops to Somalia but has also hosted dozens of Somalis during the civil war adding that Somaliland has entered into a naval agreement with the United Arab Emirates and is preparing to establish a similar agreement with the United States. Despite the presence of military bases of certain countries in Somaliland, Mogadishu has remained silent.

The interviewee called for a more balanced and fair assessment of Ethiopia's role in Somalia, taking into account the sacrifices made by Ethiopian troops and the country's efforts to promote peace and security.

German remains Ethiopia's strategic..

and trade relations with Germany, Europe's economic powerhouse.

Members of the Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs Standing Committee of the HoPR held a bilateral discussion with German National Foreign Affairs Committee members yesterday on various issues of mutual interest.

Speaking at the discussion, the Standing Committee Vice Chairperson Fathe Mahdi (PhD) said that Ethiopia remains Germany's key economic partner in Africa. "The diplomatic tie between the two countries dates back to over 100 years ago and the relationship is still alive and active. Germany remains one of the strategic partners of Ethiopia in Europe. Also, the government of Ethiopia is willing to enhance the cooperation and diplomatic exchanges as per already signed agreements."

Ethiopia and Germany have signed over 85 bilateral memorandums of understanding, letters of exchange, and various agreements so far. They are also implementing several accords including the import-export, humanitarian and cultural exchange.

Germany is one of the major importers of Ethiopian coffee and its businesses have also been showing a growing demand to explore the latter's market. In turn, Ethiopia is an

importer of German-manufactured vehicles and machinery. So, all this trade relation deserves more cooperation, he highlighted.

Fathe also briefed the German delegation about the Ethio-Somalia port deal, saying it is a legal and justified accord and does not violate any country's sovereignty that Germany should support its implementation. Ethiopia also required Germany's financial and political support for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of war-ravaged communities and infrastructure and ex-combatants.

Delegation leader and a member of the German National Foreign Affairs Committee Prof. Monika Grütters also said that her government will continue its diplomatic engagement with Ethiopia and lauded the progress that has been witnessed in the two countries' cooperation.

Clarifying Germany's stance on the Ethio-Somaliland port deal, Prof. Grütters noted that the German government supports Ethiopia's quest for sea access as long as no party would be harmed in the process.

The German government supports an integrative approach that aligns with international norms and it believes bilateral agreements could help Ethiopia to realize its aspiration to sea access, she remarked.

Improving production, taxation vital ...

ensure food security and boost export incomes.

Apart from safeguarding food self-sufficiency, Zemedeneh believed that Ethiopia has the potential to feed Middle East countries if it properly utilize its resources.

However, he said the country is currently struggling with the rising inflation which requires a structural modification.

The inflation in Ethiopia has remained 15% on average for the past 15 years, he noted, adding that such rampant inflation is a root cause of macro-instability.

He said that the central bank has set targets to reduce inflation to below 20 percent by June 2024 and 10 percent by June 2025.

This has been designed to be achieved through tightening the monetary policy, limiting direct advances to the government to one-

third of the previous year's amount and restricting the growth of bank credits to 14 percent, he elaborated.

For Zemedeneh, although Ethiopia has a resilient economy which has seen consistent growth despite internal and external challenges, it did not bring structural transformation.

Among the hindering factors, he mentioned that Ethiopia is among lowest tax collecting African nations where revenue from tax covers only 10 percent of the national GDP, he stated.

However, he expressed that even neighboring countries such as Kenya collect 15% of their GDP from tax.

The economist indicated that Ethiopia's tax collection system should be revised to fulfill the infrastructural, health, education and other public demands. Thus, he urged modernizing the taxation system as well as sensitizing the public should be given priority.

Opinion

Some causes of inflation in Ethiopia, remedial actions

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Inflation in Ethiopia has been caused by a mixture of domestic and external elements. These elements may change and influence economic situations through time. The major factor is macroeconomic in its nature and affects all sectors. Rapid growth in money supply which is not matched by a rise in production of goods and services contributes to inflationary strain. If the rate of growth in agriculture, for example, is not rising to meet the needs of the population it causes a rise in the domestic price of food grain.

In Ethiopia, demand for agricultural produces continues to rise with the growth of its population. Shortage is created when demand is greater than the supply in the domestic market, causing inflation to rise faster. This situation is worse where there is war, battle, combat, skirmish, strife and conflict in different parts of the country. These factors force people to flee their place of origin, thereby disrupting agricultural practices. The rural people who are forced to depart their residence and migrate to the unknown destination would suffer from shortage of food. This situation leads to hunger and starvation.

Supply chain disruptions lead to shortages of goods and services in the market causing high prices. Currently, these interruptions and distractions are mainly caused by conflict and instability in some regions of Ethiopia. Regional conflicts are mainly caused by disagreements among political forces that aspire for power and authority in their respective areas of influence. Minor differences and divergences which could be settled peacefully grow out of control. In some cases, elders could have settled them in time before they become deadly forcing people to leave their place of residence.

Adding fuel to the fire, making the conflict intensified through provocative acts, the political factions go to fights, clashes and battles that end in wars. These situations demand for imported war machineries that exhaust the meager resource of the country. Economic resources are diverted to the war fronts that cause death, physical damage, and humanitarian crises. At the end the only loser is Ethiopia that is weakened by losses of its economic and social infrastructure, including health, educational, industrial and other facilities.

A good indicator of inflation is the rise in food prices due to drought and agricultural shortages. Ethiopia has been susceptible to drought and disruptions in agricultural production. These conditions have led to food shortages. At the same time demand

for food is on the rise due to the rise and distribution of population in the country. More people are migrating from the rural to the urban areas leading to increased demand for food in towns. This causes a continuous rise in food prices that would contribute to overall inflation in Ethiopia.

On the other side, a fall in the production of food in the war trodden parts of the country may weaken the purchasing power of the Ethiopian Birr. Urban consumers have to pay higher prices per quintal of food grain in the market. This depreciates the value of the currency in the domestic markets. This may probably lead to exchange rate fluctuations, causing the depreciation of the Birr.

The depreciation of the national currency against major currencies may lead to higher import costs. Ethiopia imports basic goods and services paying in hard currencies, leading to the depreciation of the Birr. This may contribute to inflation in the country as imported commodities are purchased in the depreciated local currency. Moreover, increased global commodity prices including oil prices lead to high cost of transportation. This has a multiplier effect causing a chain of higher prices that impact on inflation. This situation may be exacerbated by high government spending due to fiscal and monetary policies.

The fiscal policy may cause high levels of government spending which is not matched by revenue generated. When its spending is higher than its revenue it may lead to higher inflationary pressures. Similarly, the monetary policy of the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE), including decisions on interest rates, may lead to inflation. Lower interest rates may stimulate borrowing and spending but can also contribute to inflationary pressures.

Infrastructure challenges are also causes for inflation in Ethiopia. Where there is a lack of infrastructure, the cost of moving goods and people from rural and urban areas and back, lead to high costs of transportation. The cost varies from season to season, with high prices during the rainy period. Also, low quality of roads leads to higher cost of transportation. Added to these factors are logistics issues that may result in higher costs for moving goods and people within the country.

Other factors such as electricity and water shortages have the potential to increase prices. Electric power supply problem may negatively affect industrial production. It leads to lower output in the manufacturing and other sectors of the economy. The supply of manufactured goods becomes low because of downtime

due to power shortage. This may cause increases in prices of industrial goods. When the pressure of low supply is combined with that of high demand, it definitely introduces high inflation.

Rising consumer demand is caused by high growth of population and higher income. When demand increases without a corresponding increase on the supply side, it opens the door for high market prices. Lower production of goods and services in the face of rising demand can contribute to inflation. The main issue here is structural. The structure of the economy, with a focus on some sectors, may lead to inflation.

The government may introduce diversification of goods and services for addressing structural issues. Correcting structural imbalances may lead to a more stable and balanced economic environment. However, external economic situations may affect the local economy through shocks. External shocks are caused by global economic conditions, such as recessions. In particular, the economic slump, recessions and depressions, in major trading partners, may negatively affect the Ethiopian economy. These factors are known to contribute to inflation in the country.

Remedial action has to be taken against inflation in Ethiopia in time before it creates havoc to the economy. Addressing inflation involves a multi-pronged approach that includes monetary, fiscal, and structural measures. The precise actions to be taken may vary due to the fundamental causes of inflation in a particular situation. The monetary measures include adjustment in interest rate. The National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) may adopt interest rate policies to partially control inflation. Raising interest rates may reduce borrowing and spending. This reduces demand for goods and services within the economy. The NBE may conduct open market operations to influence the money supply. This implies selling government securities that would absorb excess liquidity and reduce inflationary tendencies. Also, fiscal policy of the government may control spending by adopting measures that may help curb inflation. This requires measures for reducing non-essential expenditures that ensure the alignment of fiscal policies with the goal of price stability.

It is imperative to adjust tax policies to measures that increase revenue. These measures should also be accompanied by strategies that encourage savings. Such measures may have an impact on

overall demand that curbs inflation. Also, productivity enhancement measures can increase the supply of goods and services that help to meet demand without causing inflationary tendencies. This measure should be supported by exchange rate management that stabilizes the currency. The stability of the national currency leads to control of import costs. This definitely reduces externally induced inflationary tendencies. However, this would involve interventions in the foreign exchange market to support the currency.

In line with this, selective price control mechanisms have to be in place. In some cases, the government would have to implement selective price controls on essential goods and services. This helps to avoid excessive price increases. However, caution is needed to avoid unintended consequences. Experts think that ensuring the stability of the financial sector would contribute to macroeconomic stability. This has to be buttressed with proper regulation to maintain public confidence in the financial system.

One of the negative effects of inflation is making the poor people more food insecure. It is, therefore, necessary to introduce policies that enhance food security in Ethiopia. Implementing realistic policies that contribute to agricultural productivity and food security may help control inflation. Such measures are critical in the country where food prices have significant impact on the lives of the people.

Those agencies that are responsible for managing expectations on the effectiveness of their policy should clearly inform the public about it. Transparency helps to manage expectations. This measure builds confidence of the Ethiopians in the effectiveness of measures to fight inflation.

Where inflation is influenced by global factors, there is a need to seek international assistance. This approach may include involving international organizations. Trade partners and investors also play significant role in managing external push factors that raise inflation. Also, addressing structural issues in the economy, including promotion of economic diversification and supply side restraints, may contribute to stability and reduced inflationary pressures in Ethiopia.

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

Editorial

Making National Dialogue a success

The Ethiopia's National Dialogue Commission (ENDC), which was established to deal with major fault lines and address long-standing social, political and good governance grievances that led to recurrent conflicts, has undertaken a series of activities and made important strides in its phases.

It has been conducting meetings with selected sections of the society, including key political actors, religious fathers, elders, women, youths and people with disabilities among others to address the issues, build common understanding and consensus; and at the end to bring sustainable solutions.

These days, holding National Dialogue has become a sensible mechanism among a number of nations and several a number of National Dialogue activities have taken place in a number of countries to resolve the underlying drivers of conflicts, curtail profound political apathies, resolve grievances and facilitate peaceful political transformation and ensuring long-lasting peace.

Countries including, Afghanistan, Sudan, Yemen, Iraq, South Africa and Tunisia among others held National Dialogues to foster dialogue, build up agreements, and bring about sustainable peace.

Subsequently, some can support agreements, and maintain sustainable peace. Just to name a few, countries such as South Africa, Rwanda and Tunisia meaningfully benefited from their efforts - they uprooted hostilities and grudges from the hearts of their peoples and plant a culture of forgiveness and peace; and become role models around the world for carrying out successful national dialogue.

However, this does not mean that all the national dialogue processes held by different countries have yielded the desired outcome for the reason some ended up not producing any good for various reasons which includes interference of some external actors, lacks inclusiveness and credibility. Nevertheless, Ethiopia's National Dialogue has produced the desired results.

It is obvious that implementing effective and successful national dialogue demands a number of requirements. It needs to be conducted in a manner incorporating the principles of inclusivity, transparency, credibility, and the participation of a wide range of stakeholders, aside from stronger political determination and will. The other way round, if it is done just to do it without real intention behind it, it will not produce the sought after outcomes.

Ethiopia is on the verge of taking on an inclusive, broad, and participatory National Dialogue which can resolve age-old grievances and pave the way for successful political transition and ensure lasting peace.

As part of this move, recently, the Commission has introduced new services- a hotline and a website- with the aim to get closer to a broad range of peoples, make the national dialogue process more inclusive, participatory and transparent and so as to address Ethiopia's age-long inconveniences and reach consensus which is incontrovertible to ward off future possible risks and achieve lasting peace.

According to the Commission, the two services, the '8112' hotline service and 'http://ethiondc.org.et' website, allow the society to present an agenda as well as suggestions for the Commission while accessing ample background information regarding its activities.

Ethiopia, as it is novice to hold National Dialogue, believes that learning from the experiences of countries that went through national dialogues have tremendous benefits to identify challenging factors and make its own process a success.

It also needs the support and cooperation of development partners and international actors in terms of providing expertise, political support and logistical or financial support. All actors who aspire to see a peaceful Ethiopia should back the Commission's effort in every possible way.

Opinion

Strengthening Pan-African solidarity for a brighter future

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

It is undeniable that the notion of Pan-Africanism plays a paramount role in expediting the growth of Africa in addition to promoting the Pan-African vision in the length and breadth of the continent of Africa. Even though Pan-Africanism is the solution in which countries can combine forces to get to the bottom of any predicaments, the desired destination has not been accomplished yet.

Some groups have been behind all mysteries that have been shackling the hands and feet of the continent of Africa at various points in time. To create encouraging prospects and overcome stockpiles of predicaments unfolding in the continent, Africans in the spirit of Pan-Africanism should see inward to see outward before the entire situation goes from the frying pan into the fire.

Though African nations are free from colonization, they are still to emancipate themselves from the economic and political dependencies of the west. These days, Africa is going through mixed trajectories of ample opportunities and challenges that behoove collective and coordinated approaches. While good news is in short supply, the continent has also the prerequisites for socioeconomic growth including a youthful population and untapped national resources.

Pan Africanism represents the historical, cultural, spiritual, scientific, and philosophical legacies of Africans from past times to the present. It as a system that traces its history from ancient period, and promotes values that are the product of the African civilization, foreign policies, and the struggles against slavery, racism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism. It aimed at encouraging and strengthening bonds of solidarity and unity between all people of African descent and thus has numerous impacts in the African continent, according to sources.

In actual fact, pan-Africanism necessitates a shift in attitude and a readiness to encompass change among current African leaders. Coming away from traditional restraints and societal standards have delayed the progress of Pan-Africanism in the past. By inspiring frontrunners to take bold steps towards collective dreams for Africa, the continent should work hand-in-glove for renewed commitment to the concept of unity and cooperation.

It is certain that it is possible to take Africa to the next level of accomplishment by putting a further commitment to the ideas of cooperation more than ever before. Embracing new ideas and strategies will be crucial in reshaping Pan-Africanism with the intention of meeting the sprouting desires and encounters facing African nations.

The accomplishment of revitalizing Pan-Africanism depends on the readiness of African leaders to challenge the present state of Affairs and incorporate a forward looking

with the purpose of achieving the intended target at the earliest possible time. By nurturing the practice of harmony, leaders can smooth the path of all-encompassing and maintainable future for the continent of Africa no matter what the cost may be.

Through active contribution and pledge to growth, they can lay the basis for a strengthened Pan-African movement that prioritizes the well-being and progression of all African peoples. It is also a pivotal concept that encapsulates the ideas of collaborative integration, global competitiveness and peaceful coexistence across the continent of Africa. Pan-Africanism is a fundamental notion that captures the epitomes of cooperative incorporation, competitiveness at the global level, and harmonious co-existence across the continent of Africa.

In consideration of the existing worldwide leadership catastrophe, it turns out to be progressively vital for Africans to gather together as a shared force, rising above the limitations necessitated by own interest or national borders. The historic implication of the establishment of the Organization of African Unity underlines the long-lasting expedition for unity and cooperation among African nations.

Pan-Africanism plays a huge role in safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the continent of Africa besides promoting solidarity among all African member states. As things stand at the moment, Africans have been sparing no effort to make a stronger Pan-Africanist vision, embolden integration, and other things of a similar kind in the continent of Africa under the leadership of the continental bloc.

It is common knowledge that since time immemorial, some entities have been going to the ends of the earth to twist Africa's arm in the form of aid, development, compensation, and other related aspects concealing the latter's adorable facial features to the world.

Reinvigorating and recalibrating Pan-Africanism requires the current African leaders to disrupt the status quo and leap into the future, so said Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (Ph.D.) in the recent past in the first pan-Africanism forum organized by the African Leadership Excellence Academy (AFLEX) in the presence of African heads of state and government.

He further stressed in his speech that Pan-Africanism needs to flourish as an idea of cooperative integration, global competitiveness, and peaceful coexistence across the continent. "The crisis in global leadership calls for Africans to step up collectively and think beyond their confines." He added: "As we reflect on our past journey of many achievements and setbacks, and as we navigate a changing world, it is imperative we also dream and define the decades that lie ahead of us. Hence, reinvigorating Pan-Africanism for a changing world is a critical assignment we must take up in our aspiration to articulate and elevate our AU."

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The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy

Enhancing Agricultural Productivity: A Path to Sustainable Development

BY LAKACHEW ATINAFU

Ethiopia, renowned for its rich agricultural heritage and diverse agro-ecological zones, recognizes the crucial role of enhancing productivity and output in achieving sustainable development. With a growing population and increasing demand for food, Ethiopia has undertaken significant efforts to improve productivity across various sectors, particularly in agriculture. These initiatives aim to improve yields, streamline production processes, and empower farmers to ensure food security, economic growth, and poverty reduction.

Investing in Agricultural Research and Technology:

Ethiopia acknowledges the importance of research and technology in boosting productivity. The country has made substantial investments in agricultural research institutions, such as the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR), to develop innovative farming techniques, crop varieties, and technologies. Through research and development, Ethiopia aims to address challenges related to pests, diseases, drought, and soil fertility, ultimately enhancing productivity and resilience in the agricultural sector.

Sustainable Farming Practices:

Ethiopia has embraced sustainable farming practices as a means to enhance productivity while preserving the environment. The government has implemented programs to promote agroforestry, conservation agriculture, and organic farming methods. These practices help improve soil health, water management, and ecosystem resilience, leading to higher yields and long-term sustainability. By providing training, resources, and incentives, Ethiopia encourages farmers to adopt these practices, leading to improved productivity and reduced environmental impact.

Water Management:

Ethiopia recognizes the critical role of water in agricultural productivity. The country has invested in irrigation infrastructure, including dams and reservoirs, to expand access to water for irrigation purposes through the construction of large-scale irrigation schemes. Ethiopia aims to effectively and efficiently harness its water resources. Improved water management practices, including drip irrigation and water-saving technologies, are also being promoted to optimize water usage and increase crop yields.

Access to Finance and Agricultural Inputs:

To enhance productivity, Ethiopia has focused on improving farmers' access to finance and agricultural inputs.

The government has implemented programs to provide credit facilities, subsidies, and agricultural insurance to smallholder farmers. This support enables farmers to invest in high-quality seeds, fertilizers, machinery, and modern farming techniques, thereby increasing productivity and reducing post-harvest losses. Additionally, efforts are underway to strengthen agricultural cooperatives and farmer organizations to facilitate access to inputs and markets.

Extension Services and Farmer Training:

Ethiopia places great emphasis on extension services and farmer training to disseminate knowledge and best practices. Agricultural extension workers play a vital role in providing technical assistance, training, and advisory services to farmers. These services cover various aspects, including improved crop management, pest and disease control, post-harvest handling, and marketing strategies. By equipping farmers with up-to-date information and skills, Ethiopia aims to enhance productivity, improve product quality, and foster innovation in the agricultural sector.

Public-Private Partnerships and Value Chain Development:

Ethiopia recognizes the importance of public-private partnerships and value chain development in boosting productivity and market access. The government collaborates with private sector actors, including agribusinesses, processors, and exporters, to strengthen value chains, improve market linkages, and promote agro-industrial development. These partnerships create opportunities for smallholder farmers to access better markets, receive fair prices for their product, and benefit from value addition activities, ultimately contributing to increased productivity and income generation.

Food Security and Industrialization Efforts in Jimma Zone:

Food security is a critical concern for nations worldwide, and Ethiopia recognizes the importance of agriculture in achieving this goal, as well as providing industrial inputs and generating employment opportunities. The Ethiopian government has made significant efforts to modernize the agricultural sector, particularly in regions like Jimma Zone in the Oromia region, which have been actively involved in cultivating various crops such as rice and coffee.

During a recent visit by a group of journalists from the Ethiopian Press Agency, the activities of the agricultural sector in Jimma Zone were surveyed, and discussions were held with Mr. Mohammad

Taha Abafita, the head of the agricultural office in the zone. In the interview, Mr. Mohammad highlighted the core activities being carried out in the agricultural sector of the zone.

Mr. Mohammad emphasized that the primary objective is to ensure food security by increasing production and productivity. This begins with supporting farmers at the household level and extends to the district, zone, and national levels. The zone is dedicated to achieving self-sufficiency in food production and reducing dependence on imports. Additionally, efforts are being made to promote agricultural exports and create employment opportunities across all agricultural sectors.

Jimma Zone is renowned as the birthplace of coffee, with coffee Arabica discovered there in the 10th century. The zone covers a vast land area of approximately 1.8 million hectares, demonstrating its potential for producing various agricultural products. In recent years, the zone has witnessed remarkable progress in implementing agricultural initiatives aimed at achieving the set goals.

To overcome the challenges and modernize agriculture, a study was conducted, which identified nine critical areas requiring special attention. These areas include marketing development, which involves ten specific initiatives that focus on strengthening market linkages, improving value chain integration, and enhancing market information systems. Efforts are being made to establish market centers, organize agricultural fairs, and promote contract farming to facilitate direct market access for farmers.

Furthermore, the study identified the need to improve irrigation infrastructure and water management practices. The expansion of irrigation schemes, rehabilitation of existing systems, and the adoption of water-saving technologies are prioritized to ensure reliable access to water for agricultural purposes.

In terms of mechanization, the zone aims to increase the availability and accessibility of farm machinery and equipment. This includes the establishment of machinery rental services, training programs on machinery operation and maintenance, and the promotion of small-scale mechanization suitable for smallholder farmers.

Mr. Mohammad also highlighted the importance of research and technology in driving agricultural development. Collaborations with research institutions and universities are being fostered to develop and disseminate improved varieties, innovative farming techniques, and pest and disease management strategies. Information and communication technologies are also being leveraged to provide farmers with updated information

on weather patterns, market prices, and best agronomic practices.

To address the issue of post-harvest losses, the zone is focusing on improving storage and processing facilities. Infrastructure development, such as warehouses and cold storage, is being prioritized to reduce losses and maintain product quality. Additionally, training programs on post-harvest handling and processing techniques are being provided to farmers and entrepreneurs.

The zone is also actively promoting youth engagement in agriculture. Initiatives are being implemented to attract and retain young people in the sector by providing training, access to finance, and mentorship programs. The aim is to create a vibrant and sustainable agricultural sector that appeals to the younger generation and contributes to job creation and economic growth.

In conclusion, Ethiopia recognizes the importance of enhancing agricultural productivity for sustainable development. The country is the second most populous country in Africa next to Nigeria and agriculture is the main stay of the nation economy. It is a means of the lively hood of 80 percent of the population residing in the rural part. It contributes to the 78 percent of the nation foreign currency earning, supply inputs to the domestic agro industries, supply food to the population at least at the subsistence level.

Yet it is characterized by rain fed, vulnerable to the extreme climate variability, less input utilization with less output which is more of subsistence. Though agriculture is a century old practice it's mode of production is archaic and according to the Ministry of Agriculture recent report, almost half of the farmers land holding areas is less than a hectare not only that according to the existing land tenure system land is monopolized by the government and has lost its transaction value.

Hence to transform the sector stepping up to the introduction of new land policy which enhance the land transaction value is essential. Recently the Council Representatives introduced rules which allow farmers to rent their land so that they can secure money which enable them to improve their lands productivity.

The utilization of agricultural inputs such as fertilizer, herb and pesticides, selected seeds played pivotal role in increasing the production of crops per hectare. However, the utilization of inputs per hectare as compared to the average Sub Saharan African countries is negligible therefore; increasing the volume of inputs is must be vital.

The government tried its level best to improve the sector but importing inputs which requires huge amount of hard currency put transforming the sector in snail pace. Hence further attention is needed.

Art & Culture

Afrobeat becomes part of pop music genre at the Grammy Awards 2024

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

The big deal was not who won and who lost at this year's Grammys. Forget the winners and losers at this year's Grammy Awards. Forget what the media called the rivalry between the Nigerian and South Africa for the Grammy Awards. Forget about the surprise winner at the Awards by South African artist called Tiya who was little known by the music industry who became a kind of surprise winner that surprised insiders of the African entertainment industry.

Modern African music is dominated by the Nigerians, the Congolese, the South Africans and what not. The big winner at this year's Grammy Awards was not however a singer but a continent. True there were many singers who won the prestigious Award in previous years but more than Tiya, more than Davido and more than Burna boy and other elite vocalists, what was important was the fact that Afrobeat, a music genre born and raised in Africa has been recognized and became part of the Pop music genre at the global level. By the way what kind of music is Afrobeat?

Afrobeat, also known as Afro funk, is a Nigerian music genre that involves the combination of West African musical styles from mainly Nigeria such as the traditional Yoruba and Igbo music and highlife with American funk, jazz and soul influences. With a focus with chanted vocals complex intersecting rhythms, and percussions. Afrobeat is a kind of music you may not know unless you listen to it because it is a relatively less known genre although the style was pioneered in the 1960s by the Nigerian Fela Kuti.

Fela Kuti is considered the one who is most known for popularizing the style both within and outside Nigeria. according to sources, "music historians have traced origin sounds of Afrobeat in Ghana and Nigeria as early as the 1920 but most people would mark the birth of the genre to the 1960s."

What are the characteristics of Afrobeat? According to Fela Kuti, "the characteristics of Afrobeat include big bands, long instrumental solos, and complex jazzy rhythms." This is also a beat confusing and weird by way of explanation unless you listen to the music itself to know what they talk about.

What is pop music so that we can see why it is now accepted as part of the pop music tradition? "Pop music is an abbreviation of the word 'Popular'. It is a contemporary form of music that appeals to a wide audience. it often includes a danceable tempo, easy to remember lyrics, and simple notation." Again, this description hardly

Although the Ethiopian music industry may not produce musicians equal to the calibers of singers like Davido or any other on the continent, there is currently a lone shining star in Ethiopia's music firmament and that is Rophnan

gives you the taste of pop music.

Yet we recognize Pop and other genres by listening to them simply because music as a fine art that appeals to the ears rather than to the eyes. Like an attempt to evaluate the similarities between Afrobeat and Pop can only be attempted by listening to both. Unfortunately we have a few if no music critics who could tell us the difference between the various music genres and that is seriously felt in this country where the taste of modern music is not sometimes palatable even to the musicians themselves.

anyway, the big deal is that Afrobeat is now considered part and parcel of the Pop music tradition at the international level and this is a big stride for African music that has long become a global competitor against Western music genres thanks to contributions by the likes of Fela Kuti, and Mulatu Astatke to name only two of them.

Ethiopia is never represented at the Grammy because of the kind of African music played in west, north or south Africa are not popular in this country. African musicians in general

do not know other African musicians and their works. They rather play western genres such as hip hop or blues or any other type or style.

The second reason is Ethiopian musicians are not only well-acquainted or well informed about African music, but they are not also working hard to bring their own traditional music to the forefront, modernize it, popularize and make it competitive in the global arena. This if of course something that requires hard work, continued devotion more to Ethiopian music than to Western music.

No Ethiopian musician worthy of the name has come forward to claim the mantle to represent Ethiopia at major international festivals and awards. Ethiopian artists in every field compete among themselves or imitate one another instead of coming up with groundbreaking works that could rank them among the best in Africa. They look like the proverbial whale who thinks that the world is confined to the visible part of the sky that can be seen when he opens his wide mouth. Ethiopian musicians are good at admiring one another or copying from one another rather than inventing new types of music by using their rich traditional and cultural resources. When Ethiopian music was at its best in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, the Nigerians or Senegalese or south African or Congolese musicians who have now assumed leadership in Africa were not even born or known.

As Ethiopian music rose to the highest picks and then rolled down into mediocrity, it lost all momentum and left the place to the late comers in Africa. How many years have been counted since a major Ethiopian artist shined at a major festival? Aster Aweke at the Kora Awards before the new millennium dawned singing her old tunes to accompaniments of African dancers! That is a long time ago although there were minor events in between.

The only exception to this rule might be Mulatu Astatke, dubbed the father of African jazz or Afro-jazz. Although Mulatu who is well-established in the global music arena and has already won many international awards, he has not yet found the opportunity to catch the limelight at global music awards like the Grammy. Mulatu is the pioneer of the music genre known as "Afro Jazz" but this genre has not so far made it to the Grammys. In the absence of other competitors in the Afro jazz genre, it is unlikely that Mulatu would win a Grammy any time soon.

Mulatu should have organized his own orchestra complete with musicians and vocalists as well as dancers whom he could make global tours as ambassador of African music in general. That could

have made him and his music more known and appreciated globally. Other African musicians, particularly the young ones could have emulated his style and come up with something of a modern version of Afro jazz by combining traditional songs and dances from every part of Africa.

In this way, a genuine competition could have been launched for the best Afro Jazz style and awarding ceremonies could have been used as instruments to bring out the best out of Mulatu's music. This way Afro jazz could have spread widely by now and become one of the major global music styles. The more alarming fact however is that there is no heir apparently to Mulatu's music style, someone who is completely devoted to it and determined to bring out to the attention of the global audience. Thus the survival of Afro Jazz itself seems to be at stake as no one has emerged from the horizon of serious Ethiopian modern music to claim his mantle. Afro jazz is not even widely known among most African music lovers. There are also other African styles that are little known to the wider public. For instance we have a style known as Afro Pop that has not been widely known within the continent. Even the organizers of this year's Grammy might not be aware of its existence. Otherwise, they could have changed their minds. They could have said for instance that, "since African has already Afro Pop as a distinctive music style, why should we worry about whether Afro Beat should be recognized as part of the Pop style since it is already there."

Anyway, the good news at this year's Grammy was that African musicians have shined and demonstrated their potentials to produce some of the best music on the continent. They have whetted the appetite of major producers who will certainly flock to Africa in order to lure the best and brightest to sign fresh contracts with them. Although the Ethiopian music industry may not produce musicians equal to the calibers of singers like Davido or any other on the continent, there is currently a lone shining star in Ethiopia's music firmament and that is Rophnan.

One day, he may suddenly emerge at one of the global awards with his inventions and astound the world with his style of music and his talent that has an edge over the other African singers. Rophnan may not be a vocalist per se as we know him here in Africa although he has the talent to be one. The major musicians in Africa at present may be talented in other areas as producers or lyricists but Rophnan who started as a DJ is now everything: composer, vocalist, percussionist, producer, mixer and lyricist to name a few of his talents. Can we expect him to pop up at the next Grammy as the first Ethiopian winner of the award? Why not?

Global Affairs

State of the world's migratory species

Report 'alarming' threats, global action urged

The United Nations inaugural assessment of the state of global migratory species states that 1 in 5 faces extinction and warns that the world cannot afford to miss this chance to act on recommendations to protect, connect, and restore habitats.

A groundbreaking State of the World's Migratory Species report is calling for accelerated global conservation measures to counter the threat of extinction faced by 1 in 5 of all migratory species.

The report was launched at the opening press conference of the 14th Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP14) in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, on Feb. 12.

It is the first comprehensive assessment of migratory animals—species that travel to different parts of the world every year. They include ocean species like sharks and sea turtles, terrestrial animals such as elephants, as well as those undertaking airborne journeys like birds and butterflies. The report's authors say migratory species' remarkable journeys not only connect the world; they offer a unique angle to research and understand the magnitude of planetary changes.

The report has concluded that the conservation status of migratory species overall is deteriorating. Its results have been described as "startling" by the Executive Secretary of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), Amy Fraenkel.

"Overexploitation emerges as the greatest threat for many migratory species, surpassing habitat loss and fragmentation," she stated in the report. "This includes the taking of species from the wild through intentional removal, such as through hunting and fishing, as well as the incidental capture of non-target species. Bycatch of non-target species in fisheries is a leading cause of mortality of many CMS-listed marine species."

State of the World's Migratory Species, Credit: CMS

Some of the troubling findings include population declines for almost half of CMS migratory species, extinction threats for almost all (97%) of CMS-listed fish, and a growing extinction risk for migratory species globally, including those not listed under the CMS.

"Migratory species are of ecological, economic, and cultural importance. Within ecosystems, they perform a variety of crucial functions, ranging from the large-scale transfer of nutrients between environments to the positive impacts of grazing animals on grassland biodiversity," the report states.

It adds that these species' habitats and movements are at risk, with half experiencing unsustainable levels of human-induced



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pressure.

"The urgency for action to protect and conserve these species becomes even greater when we consider the integral but undervalued role they play in maintaining the complex ecosystems that support a healthy planet—by, for example, transferring nutrients between environments, performing migratory grazing

that supports the maintenance of carbon-storing habitats, and pollination and seed dispersal services," said Inger Andersen, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UN Environment Programme.

The present reality for migratory species and the cost of inaction or inadequate action are concerning, but the report is heavy on both hope and concrete recommendations for global action.

It contains a section dedicated to proposed policy actions. Among the most crucial are the need to address the unsustainable and illegal harvesting of migratory species at the national level, measures to reduce bycatch and other incidental captures, and the identification and recognition of all significant sites for migratory species.

The recommendations are to "protect, connect, and restore" habitats, tackle overexploitation, reduce the damaging impacts of environmental pollution, address the root causes and cross-cutting impacts of climate change, and ensure the CMS Appendices protect all migratory species in need of further conservation action. They also call for 'follow-through' on global commitments to ecosystem restoration.

"This includes those linked to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and Target 2 of

the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework to ensure that at least 30% of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine ecosystems are under effective restoration by 2030. To support these efforts, develop and implement national restoration plans focused on restoring and maintaining important habitats for migratory species," it states.

UNEP's Inger Andersen says the report is an important milestone in the establishment of a roadmap for the conservation of migratory species.

"Given the precarious situation of many of these animals and their critical role for healthy and well-functioning ecosystems, we must not miss this chance to act—starting now by urgently implementing the recommendations set out in this report," she stated.

For the CMS' Amy Fraenkel, conservation of migratory species is a shared responsibility among the world's nations.

"Migratory species are a shared natural treasure. This landmark report will help underpin much-needed policy actions to ensure that they continue to traverse the world's skies, lands, oceans, lakes, and rivers." (SOURCE: INTER PRESS SERVICE)

Law & Politics

Adwa

Revisited at the new Adwa Victory Memorial

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

Sunday 11th February 2024 will be remembered as the rebirth of Adwa in modern times. Finally, the Victory of Adwa that was recorded in 1896 some 128 years ago will have a place in day to day life of Ethiopians and even foreigners with the now inaugurated huge museum at the Adwa Victory Memorial that depicts in great detail all of the untold stories behind and during the battle that was to be a landmark not only for Ethiopia but also for Africa and the entire people of African descent and in fact to all people who reject subjugation of one state by another or injustices of any type. Because Adwa was all of that in the context of the fight Ethiopia had to stage in defense of its sovereignty and dignity.

For years, the Victory of Adwa was observed with the glory and honor that was not commensurate to its significance, especially at the international level. The day was observed with a brief laying of a wreath at the Menelik II Monument in central Piassa in Addis and there would be some gathering of a crowd particularly the heroic patriots group represented by their leaders and many times either the Mayor of Addis Ababa or the Head of State would be present at a brief ceremony in which the victory is outlined and messages would be conveyed to the current generation on the significance of the victory and how it resulted to be a new turn around in the history of Ethiopia, in that of Africa and more broadly in the history of all people of black origin. Residents of Addis would surround the Menelik II Square and a few war chants would be heard and the entire press would report that 'the one hundred twenty something anniversary of the Victory of Adwa was celebrated today in the presence of a huge crowd and the president or mayor delivered a speech encouraging the new generation to emulate the courage and achievement of their forefathers rejecting any form of colonialism and in defense of their mother land'. Similar messages would also be transmitted by the President of the Ancient Patriots Association and that was more or less the entire celebration and for the rest of the year little would be said or told of Adwa.

And yet Adwa was much more than that and would have deserved a much better treatment by Ethiopians and all those who fell for the freedom of our country should have been glorified deservedly and their stories told in greater detail

The movement had worldwide resonance and influence and the victory of Adwa was quoted as a turning point in the relations between people of African origin and the West in general

so that we know what exactly happened not only at the day of the battle but also way before that fatal day and what was involved in the process. Historians may have written about the Battle of Adwa under many perspectives but not all the stories were told with due research by Ethiopian historians and there are lots of gaps in our knowledge of the battle.

Many European and even American historians and war reporters have written about Adwa from their perspective

many times wondering how on earth an unknown land in distant Africa without any modern army and ammunitions was capable of inflicting a decisive victory against the army of one of Europe's great armies. They were forced to admit the reality even if they had their own reservations about how that was possible. On the other hand people of African heritage were full of pride and admiration that such an event could ever take place in Africa and that was the moment that every oppressed people began to think of something that they probably never imagined. Their conclusion was that if a 'primitive' African army could beat a well-organized, well trained and well-armed modern 'white army', it means that they too could do it as long as they have belief in their capabilities and potential. Adwa in this sense became a symbol of resistance and the hope of all oppressed people of the world to reconquer their freedom. Since the news of Adwa got disseminated in the entire world, Africans began to dream the day that they too will live in the future.

Adwa was then attached to the beginning of the Pan African movement because it was after the defeat of colonial forces by Ethiopian patriots and their guarantee of freedom and sovereignty that all black people began to think of independence and freedom as possible defeating colonialists and freeing their countries from subjugation. The movement had worldwide resonance and influence and the victory of Adwa was quoted as a turning point in the relations between people of African origin and the West in general.

The issue was that up to now the battle of Adwa was seen by many as an event of a day and that is all. Every year we celebrate the day and that was it. However, the grave error committed or the oversight if you want was that such a monumental history as the Victory of Adwa was not the work of a day nor did it involve only the main actors of the battle. Of course leaders such as Emperor Menelik who of course takes the huge and deserved credit for organizing and leading the more than one hundred twenty thousand patriots to the battle, Empress Taitu who stood all the way by the side of her husband and took active part in the dynamics of the battle, the main war leaders at the various fronts such as Dejazmatch Balcha, Ras Mekonnen, Ras Alula, Fitawrari Habtegiorgis, Fitawrari Gebeyehu and several others who led the actual battle on the ground leading their troops do deserve the headlines in the event. But without the thousands of fighters who actually took active part in

the real battle, the thousands of women who were actively involved in the provision of food to the troops including water, and providing first aid and other medical care to the injured, all those who were involved in the logistics because the voyage to the battle field from all corners of Ethiopia took months involving horses and donkeys etc and taking care of all these actors, providing them with enough shelter and anything else they needed at the moment was an arduous task in which thousands took part, and the victory could not have been conceived let alone realized.

Adwa was hence more than a mere battlefield affair but a long and complex one that needed to be organized meticulously. Even the roles of a group of traditional artists who motivated and incited the troops to bravery were key in the process and they deserve their share of recognition. Adwa was not a casual event but one that took a lot of time to organize and prepare, assemble people from all corners of the country without any distinction of ethnic origin, creed, language or cultural background as well as political belief. It was a call to safeguard the sovereignty and independence of the country and that was how Emperor Menelik portrayed the event in his call towards his citizens. His urgent call was that the country came first and above all and the internal differences had their own time to be settled. Unity was the key concept and only in unison was it possible to beat a formidable alien force that came to subdue Ethiopia. And that was all this story that was not depicted and put in one place so that every citizen and foreigners as well could come to the Adwa Victory Memorial and come to have a comprehensive view of the history in one go taking all the time it would take to visit the huge complex.

On February 11, 2024 President Sahlework Zewde, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (Ph D) and other high level officials inaugurated the Adwa Victory Memorial in a solemn and imperious manner in the presence of all important personalities of the nation including a wide foreign representation of dignitaries at the very center of Addis Ababa. Besides the event was transmitted live on Ethiopian Television and people of all walks of life had the occasion to follow every step of the wonderful inauguration of the complex and a huge gap has now been filled and people can now have a tangible and wonderful and easy reference at their doorsteps if they want to know more about Adwa. Meanwhile, Addis has also acquired a new gem adding to its collection of tourist attractions.

INTERNATIONAL News

US museum returns Ghana's Looted Artifacts after 150 years

Seven royal artifacts looted 150 years ago by British colonial forces from Ghana's ancient Asante kingdom and kept by a United States museum have been returned and presented to the kingdom on Thursday, the latest of a series of stolen treasured items being repatriated to several African countries.

Looted from British-colonized Ghana in the 19th century before being transferred to Fowler Museum at the University of California, Los Angeles, in the 1960s, the artifacts included an elephant tail whisk, an ornamental chair made of wood, leather and iron, two gold stool ornaments, a gold necklace and two bracelets.

"We are here ... (because) the white man came into Asanteman to loot and destroy it," Otumfuo Osei Tutu, the king of the Assante kingdom in Ghana's largest city of Kumasi, said at a presentation ceremony that brought joy and relief to the kingdom.

After decades of resistance from European and Western governments and museums, the efforts of African countries to repatriate stolen artifacts are paying off with the increasing return of treasured pieces. Activists, though, say thousands more are still out of reach.

The royal items were first received by the kingdom on Monday, which marked the 150th anniversary of when British colonial forces sacked the Asante city in

1874. That was when four of the items were looted while the other three were part of an indemnity payment made by the Asante kingdom to the British, the museum said.

The repatriation of the artifacts to Ghana "signifies the return of our souls," said Kwasi Ampene, a lecturer who helped negotiate their return.

All seven items are being returned unconditionally and permanently though the kingdom allowed their replicas to be made, the museum added.

"We are globally shifting away from the idea of museums as unquestionable repositories of art, as collecting institutions entitled to own and interpret art based primarily on scholarly expertise, to the idea of museums as custodians with ethical responsibility," said Silvia Forni, director of the Fowler Museum.

The items are seen as symbols of prestige and reverence for the Asante ruler and having them back is a dream come true, according to Samuel Opoku Acheampong, a staff of the Asante palace.

"Our forefathers and our fathers told us about the artifacts," Acheampong said. "And ever since, as a kid, I had the vision that one day we shall have all these artifacts back to our Asante nation."

Source: Africa news

OPEC Secretary General believes long-term demand outlook is robust

Saudi Arabia's decision to postpone oil capacity expansion plans should not be interpreted as an assessment that demand for crude is falling, OPEC's Secretary General said on Tuesday.

"First of all I want to be clear I cannot comment on a Saudi decision ... but this is in no way to be misconstrued as a view that demand is falling," Haitham Al Ghais told Reuters in Dubai on the sidelines of the World Governments Summit.

The Saudi government on Jan. 30 ordered state oil company Aramco (2222.SE), opens new tab to lower its target for maximum sustained production capacity to 12 million barrels per day (bpd), 1 million bpd below a target announced in 2020 and set to be reached in 2027.

Sources have told Reuters the kingdom's surprise reversal of its oil expansion plan was at least six months in the making and based on an assessment that much of Saudi Arabia's excess capacity was not being monetised.

Saudi Arabia is the world's largest oil exporter and de-facto leader of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

OPEC raised its world oil demand forecasts for the medium and long term in its annual outlook published in October.

Its World Oil Outlook said it expects world oil demand to reach 116 million barrels a day (bpd) by 2045, around 6 million bpd higher than the previous year's report, with growth led by China, India, other Asian nations, and Africa and the Middle East.

"We stand by what was published in our latest outlook we firmly believe that it is robust," Al Ghais said.

OPEC is due to release the 2024 edition of the outlook later this year and Al Ghais said we

would have to "wait and see" until September or October when it is due if numbers vary.

"But we believe now our numbers stand and are very solid numbers," he said.

"If anything, changing narratives we are seeing now ... a lot of countries in the world turning back and slowing down and rethinking their net zero goals ... that will create further long-term demand for oil."

ANGOLA'S EXIT

Al Ghais also said he was not concerned about Angola's exit from the group, announced in December.

"It is not the first time a member exits the organization for its own considerations," he said.

We have had members leave and members join and we have had some that leave and rejoin so I'm not too concerned about that."

Angola said on Dec. 21 that it would leave OPEC, a decision that prompted a drop in oil prices at the time and that some analysts said raised questions about the unity of both OPEC and the wider OPEC+ alliance.

Al Ghais the country was welcome to rejoin if it wished to do so in the future.

The nature of production cuts being implemented by OPEC+, which brings together OPEC and its allies including Russia, being voluntary is a reflection of the group's flexibility, Al Ghais said.

"For now it's probably the most suitable way," he said.

"A voluntary cut is a sovereign decision by a country to adjust its production. It shows the inherent flexibility in our approach and that we have several means and ways to attend to market stability."

Source: Reuters

UK's Rwanda bill 'incompatible with human rights obligations'

Damning report by MPs warns policy places UK's reputation for rule of law and human rights 'in jeopardy'

The UK government's controversial Rwanda legislation that deems the African country as a safe place to deport people to is fundamentally incompatible with Britain's human rights obligations and places it in breach of international law, according to a damning parliamentary report.

MPs and peers from the cross-party joint committee on human rights have delivered a critical analysis of the safety of Rwanda bill, which is progressing at speed through parliament.

The aim of the bill is to counter the judgment of the supreme court last November that found Rwanda was not a safe country to which UK asylum seekers could be forcibly removed.

The bill states Rwanda is in fact a safe country and that anyone sent there by the UK government will not be forcibly removed to an unsafe country. The report finds it is unclear whether this can be

guaranteed in practice.

The report is the latest of many from legal and human rights experts condemning the UK government's Rwanda plan and raising questions about whether the policy is safe, viable and compliant with national and international law.

Following line by line scrutiny of the bill, which reaches its committee stage in the House of Lords on Monday the report finds that the bill is fundamentally incompatible with the UK's human rights obligations, erodes the protections laid down in the Human Rights Act, contravenes parts of the European convention on human rights and falls short of the UK's commitment to comply with international treaties.

It goes beyond concerns about the Rwanda policy and warns that the actions the government is taking to disapply certain laws places the UK's hard-won reputation for the rule of law and human rights "in jeopardy".

"The bill's near total exclusion of judicial scrutiny seeks to undermine the

constitutional role of the domestic courts in holding the executive to account," it states.

The human rights organisation Liberty gave evidence saying that even if a court heard evidence that Rwanda is unsafe it would have to 'stick its fingers into its ears and pretend it was.'

The committee took evidence from legal experts, academics and NGOs. The overwhelming majority said that the bill was not compatible with human rights laws.

The committee asked whether Rwanda was now a safe country to send asylum seekers to simply because the bill says it was, and the majority of its witnesses concluded that the answer was no.

The committee observed that, for the second time in the space of a year, when introducing a bill ministers were unable to confirm that it was more likely than not that the bill would comply with the UK's international obligations under the European convention on human rights.

The committee's chair, Joanna Cherry MP,

said: "This bill is designed to remove vital safeguards against persecution and human rights abuses, including the fundamental right to access a court. Hostility to human rights is at its heart and no amendments can salvage it.

"This isn't just about the rights and wrongs of the Rwanda policy itself. By taking this approach, the bill risks untold damage to the UK's reputation as a proponent of human rights internationally."

A Home Office spokesperson said: "We are committed to tackling this major global challenge with bold and innovative solutions, and the Rwanda scheme is doing just that. The bill we have introduced, and the treaty alongside it, are the best way of getting flights off to Rwanda as soon as possible.

"Rwanda is clearly a safe country that cares deeply about supporting refugees. It hosts more than 135,000 asylum seekers and stands ready to relocate people and help them rebuild their lives."

Source: The Guardian

Planet Earth

How will EUDR law affect coffee export from Ethiopia?

BY FIKADU BELAY

Europe is the largest importer of Coffee from Ethiopia and some African countries. As it moves to discourage the clearing of forest for the plantation of coffee and other cash crops it has issued a new law governing the growing of coffee that is exported to its territory.

The law states that coffee growing should not involve the clearing of forest, among others. For this to take effect the Union has given a grace period that ends at end of this year, 2024. Considering the short time available to tailor the coffee production as per the new regulation it is important to ask how prepared are countries like Ethiopia to comply with it.

“The new Regulation (EUDR) is not that a trouble for Ethiopia’s timber and coffee industries to do so. However, it requires significant dedication and coordination,” some officials said.

The European Union’s new initiative, the EU Deforestation-Free Regulation (EUDR), aims to combat deforestation caused by forestry and agricultural activities on a global scale and mitigate its negative consequences.

Europe is one of the largest importers of commodities linked to deforestation, including 50% of the world’s coffee and 60% of all cocoa. The regulation aims to address the impact of commodities like coffee and cocoa, which alone accounted for over 25% of global tree cover losses between 2001 and 2015. Also, this regulation targets promoting sustainable development by avoiding environmentally harmful practices.

Kabtamu Girma, Chief Executive Officer, Natural Forestry at Ethiopian Forestry Development, have stay with The Ethiopian Herald on the argument that the EUDR regulation is right and that Europe will be implementing it at the end of this year. According to him, Ethiopia has actively worked to reduce carbon emissions in line with the several climate change accords it has already signed. It has also worked to restore droughts, floods, and deforested land.

Kabtamu stated that Ethiopia will face minimal challenges in implementing the new EUDR legislation, he also remarked on the green legacy program, particularly REDD and other initiatives, which have been the primary focus for the past five years. However, he emphasized the importance of evaluating and improving the country’s existing green economy policies and strategies.

According to Gizat Worku, General Manager of the Ethiopian Coffee

Association, the product should be free from any sort of illegal activity, such as child labor. The government should provide evidence and document scrutiny for all things, which is not that much harder. Even EUDR itself would not be such a difficult task, especially for Ethiopia, as we do not plant coffee on deforested farmland.

For instance, in Sidama State, the planting of firewood trees for fuel is an annual practice. However, this activity often encroaches on land borders, posing challenges for coffee farming. Ensuring that the coffee produced in such areas is deforestation-free becomes crucial, particularly when satellite imagery is employed, Gizat said.

Adugna Debela, director of the Ethiopian Tea and Coffee Authority (ETCA), told the Ethiopian Herald that Ethiopia is primarily known for its forest coffee, and we are producing coffee in an area where there are shade trees.

He stated that the replacement of old coffee trees does not contribute to deforestation. Instead, farmers cultivate rapidly developing coffee trees and replace them gradually rather than removing them all at once. Additionally, they plant shade trees to mitigate the impact of climate change. The ETCA aligns with the European regulation in its commitment to a sustainable and environmentally friendly approach, including the prohibition of child labor and deforestation in the coffee sector.

Kabitamu emphasized the fact that the legislation will present challenges when it is put into operation, and because it speeds up sustainable development, the government should force the relevant organizations must work together.

With limited time available, Kabtamu emphasized the need for Ethiopia to assess and enhance its current approaches. By doing so, the country can align its efforts with the goals of the new legislation and ensure effective implementation.

He further stated that the media should be used to assist in informing the necessary parties about the regulations and to encourage them to participate in national awareness and movement campaigns.

According to ETCA data, the ETCA’s training programs, partnerships with researchers, and distribution of improved seeds and seedlings aim to address challenges posed by climate change. By replacing old coffee trees with new ones, Ethiopia strengthens local communities and promotes economic prosperity. However, the lack of infrastructure and support remains a

hindrance for smallholder farmers in proving compliance with and adapting to the new regulations.

However, the new EUDR has an effect on coffee production in Ethiopia; we will continue to strengthen the process of producing coffee under forest and shade trees by teaching the farmer, Adugna added.

It is known that Ethiopia is engaged in a variety of initiatives aimed at preventing climate change-related issues in order to maintain sustainable development. A particular program that has been described is referred to as the green economy, and it incorporates the entire community.

According to ETCA’s data, the Green Legacy campaign focuses on the coffee sector, leading to the annual planting of 1.251.39 billion coffee seedlings. This initiative plays a crucial role in preventing climate change and protecting the environment. Furthermore, the presence of forests in the western and southern parts of Ethiopia owes much to coffee cultivation. The Green Legacy campaign contributes to the preservation of forests while supporting the growth of the coffee industry.

Adugna further stated that the new EUDR system is a legal requirement that links the coffee grower and the buyer directly, freeing farmers and consumers who have been harmed by brokers and empowering brokers to exercise more control.

Kabtamu remarked that with the establishment of a law enforcement organization, the community would gain the ability to produce coffee autonomously, right in their own gardens. This initiative would empower individuals to engage in the process of coffee manufacturing, allowing them to cultivate coffee plants and ultimately contribute to local coffee production. Such a self-sustaining approach would foster community resilience and promote economic independence, he added.

According to officials, the EUDR legislation is more about opportunities than challenges for Ethiopia’s coffee industry. Also, overcoming the challenges posed by limited infrastructure and support is crucial for these farmers to prove compliance and benefit from the opportunities the EUDR presents.

By embracing innovation, sustainability, and green economy strategies, Ethiopia can strengthen its position in the global coffee market, protect its forests, and support local communities while meeting the requirements of the new regulation.



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