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AU renews commitment to addressing imperative challenges: Chairperson

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - The 37th African Union (AU) Ordinary Summit has concluded by renewing efforts to address continent's pressing challenges, said AU Chairperson.

Speaking at the closing session, Mauritanian President and the new AU Chairperson Mohamed Ould Ghazouani said that the 37th African Union (AU) Ordinary Summit of Heads of States and Governments ended with a strong commitment to address the continent's challenges, prioritize key areas and solidify international diplomacy.

The summit was concluded with action plans, renewed calls for unity to tackle challenges, he said, adding that education, with a focus on high-quality, 21st century training was a top priority under the year's theme.

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Ethio-Kenya joint ministerial commission to elevate ties

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA-The 36th Ethio-Kenya Joint Ministerial Commission Meeting (JMC), which is happening after seven years of interruptions, is expected to take bold steps to elevate the multifaceted relations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) disclosed.

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Ethiopia resolute to adopt robust education system

•Forum draws importance of decolonizing education

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AU ensures zero tolerance for unconstitutional government changes

•Suspends six countries from membership

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA-The Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union has consistently expressed zero tolerance for unconstitutional changes of governments that have posed a serious security threat, a commissioner said.

Briefing the media on Sunday, AU Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) Commissioner Ambassador Bankole Adeoye stated that Africa's peace and security situation and political governance are alarming. Hence, the continent has been ravaged by terrorism, violent extremism, radicalism, transnational organized crimes, rebellion, insurrection, and political instability.

African leaders have continuously expressed their concern towards this trend of unconstitutional government changes in the continent and six countries have been currently suspended from AU membership



for their failure to take the democratic path to power, the commissioner added.

"It needs to support the political transition agenda of these countries to restore

constitutionalism, rule of law and respect of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms. The PAPS observed 13 elections in 2023

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News

Africa-CDC set to cover 60% of vaccine demand

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - The African Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa-CDC) expressed readiness to cover 60% of Africa's vaccine demand by 2040.

Briefing media, Africa-CDC Director General Jean Kaseya (MD) said that with a focus on vaccine production, the Africa-CDC has initiated a program to achieve at least 60 percent of vaccine self-sufficiency by 2040.

While the effort is still in the preparatory phase, the program has already achieved notable successes, he added.

The center has been working focusing on three main areas to support the agenda of equity, self reliance and public health security, he mentioned.

He highlighted the impact of communicable and non-communicable diseases controlling mechanism efforts on Africa's healthcare system including



HIV/AIDS, Malaria, Cholera, Ebola, and others.

These diseases exert a considerable burden on the continent's productive population, the Director General stated.

The Africa-CDC is actively involved in promoting local vaccine production, enhancing testing capacities, and improving access to healthcare services to strengthen

Africa's health system, he added.

The ultimate objective is to ensure a more robust and self-sufficient health infrastructure for Africans, he said, adding that the agency also strives for persistent progress in vaccine production to pave the way for Africa's self-reliance in pharmaceutical supplies.

Kaseya urged African countries to support local pharmaceutical companies, irrespective of social, economic, and political considerations.

Achieving the goals set by the Africa-CDC depends on providing necessary support to drug manufacturing companies across the continent. Furthermore, Africa can ensure its own sustainable supply of essential drugs and vaccines, he noted.

The Africa-CDC is a public health agency of the African Union to support the public health initiatives of member states and strengthen the capacity of their health institutions to deal with disease threats.



Adwa museum African pride, glory: Chad Prime Minister

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA- Adwa Victory Memorial is a living African pride, independence and glory, so said Prime Minister of Chad, Succès Masra.

After paying a visit to the recently inaugurated Adwa Victory Memorial Museum, Prime Minister Succès Masra told to local media that the grand memorial is an asset for all Africans.

"As an African I really feel honored and proud to come here and see that there is this Africa that we don't talk a lot of. I think this is a time for all Africans to remember that here in Ethiopia, here in Africa some from day one were free in their mindset, in their battle and they remain free," the PM underscored.

He went on saying: "As prime minister of Chad, I think I would like to thank the Prime Minister of Ethiopia and people of the country for making sure that this Ethiopian and African spirit for freedom is alive so that every African can come here and go back with a lot of pride and knowing it would be possible to be free and should remain free so that we will be able to handle our future."

Commending Ethiopia for its principle of humanity that its people had demonstrated during the battle of Adwa, which is a great lesson to humanity, the Premier also urged all Africans to further strengthen their unity to ensure their freedom in all aspects.

"Ethiopia has shown us not only hospitality but the humanity. Because as we can see from the pictures in the memorial museum, Ethiopians had returned Italian soldiers captured during the battle which demonstrates the fact that the intention of Ethiopians was not just to kill but to make sure that their country is protected. This is a great lesson of humanity."

It is to be recalled that leaders and ministers of various countries visited the Adwa Victory Memorial at the sideline of the 37th AU Ordinary Summit held in the Capital.

Brazil provides refugees with 18 tons food donation, water purifiers

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA—The Government of Brazil announced that it is donating 18 tones of food and 65 water purifiers to UNHCR for supporting refugees and host communities residing in Gambella State.

In a press release sent to *The Ethiopian Herald*, the state is the largest refugee home to 385,000 refugees mainly from South Sudan. The donation of 65 water purifiers with a capacity to purify 5,600 liters per day, together with 18 tons of food supplies was made during an inaugural visit to Ethiopia by Brazil's First Lady Janja Lula da Silva.

At the donation ceremony, Janja Lula da Silva said, "For Brazil, it is a priority to fight against hunger and poverty in Africa. Millions of lives in shelters and camps all over the world including Brazil and Ethiopia have faced extreme situations like hunger. We can only solve these challenges by working together on solutions based on cooperation and solidarity to eradicate hunger and poverty in the world."

Jose Solla, General Coordinator of Humanitarian Cooperation at the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), said, "It is our hope that these items and other future actions, the first of many, can contribute to the wellbeing of the refugees while they are in Ethiopia and the communities that embrace them."

The contribution will provide women and girls with much needed nutritional support as well as clean water including pregnant and lactating women at-risk, children and refugees living with chronic illnesses in the Pinyudo, Jewi, Nguenyiel, Tierkidi,



and Kule refugee camps in Gambella. The assistance will also benefit those who recently arrived from Sudan and South Sudan because of ongoing conflict and inter-community violence.

Ethiopia's Refugees and Returnees Service Director General Teyiba Hassen on her part said, "Given that people fleeing natural and man-made catastrophes are entitled to 'a better everyday life' like any human being on planet earth, we welcome such supporting hands to better respond to the needs of our persons of concern. Hence, it is our firm belief that such initiatives might be replicated on a larger scale in the years to come."

As to Teyiba, Ethiopia hosts one of the largest refugees and internally displaced populations globally. As the third largest refugee-hosting country in Africa, it is currently home to nearly 1 million refugees – mainly from South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, and Sudan – while an estimated 3.5 million Ethiopians are internally displaced.

UNHCR's Representative in Ethiopia

Andrew Mbogori said, "We are grateful to First Lady Lula da Silva and the Government of Brazil for their generous donation and kindness towards refugees in Ethiopia. This will provide lifesaving support to thousands of refugees who have been suffering from malnutrition and the effects of food insecurity. We hope that this will mark the beginning of a fruitful cooperation with Brazil to advance solutions for refugees and forcibly displaced people in Ethiopia," he added.

The Representative noted that this donation by the Government of Brazil comes at a crucial moment to support UNHCR and partners, in addressing refugees' and host communities most critical needs as the climate crisis is affecting the production and distribution of food worldwide. Across the country high malnutrition levels have been observed amid food insecurity, together with outbreaks of communicable diseases attributable to unsafe water supply, unhygienic and unsanitary waste disposal.

News

Ethiopia resolute to adopt robust education system

•Forum draws importance of decolonizing education

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

SULULTA— Ethiopia stands firm to adopt a robust education system as it is an indispensable tool for breaking the cycle of poverty, building resilient communities and shaping a better future, the Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA) Minister said.

The Minister Ergogie Tesfaye (PhD) made the above remark yesterday at the conclusion of an African youth colloquium that the MoWSA organized in collaboration with the Pan-African Youth for the past three days.

Speaking at the occasion, Ergogie stated that Pan-Africanism is a tool to mobilize the spirit of all African narratives and youth by developing the roadmap of a future that honors the resilience, originality, and aspirations of the continent.

“Contextualizing the transformative journey through adopting a robust education system serves as a gateway to opportunity, equality, and progress of the entire people. Education is not merely about imparting knowledge but also it is all about unlocking potential, nurturing talent, and fostering innovation.”

She added, “This colloquium, which is organized on the sidelines of the Heads of State Assembly, would also be a testament to our collective determination to empower the current and the next generation of leaders, innovators, and change-makers.”

According to the minister, the event also serves as a container of innovation, dialogue, and solidarity, where the voices of African youth resonate with passion and purpose that help create the continent its people wish for.

Fostering a culture of engagement, dialogue, and collaboration, amongst youth could harness their transformative power as catalysts for change and realize the aspirations of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals, Ergogie emphasized.

The Ethiopian Youth Council Vice President Yesuf Mahamad said that the event is a call to action to build an education system that unlocks opportunity, fosters equality and drives progress for the entire people in the continent.

The path to transformation demands contextually relevant education as

transformation cannot take root without unity, solidarity and collaboration and it is crucial to translate the spirit of Pan-Africanism.

Yesuf also emphasized a shift in mindsets, not just systems; cultivating generations equipped to not only navigate the 21st century, but to shape its contours with African ingenuity and purpose.

For Pan-African Youth Union President Moumouni Dialla, it is high time for Africans to decolonize the education system to put the continent in a prosperity track with women, children and youth.

“We Africans need to have to drive our own education system that is copied from elsewhere that puts in value its culture,” he noted, urging the youth not to engage in any conflict rather preserve peace for development and push the initiative to other respective countries.”

The event was held for the last three consecutive days under the theme: “Educate for an African fit for the 21st Century: Building a resilient education system for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning in Africa.”

AU ensures

and to observe 15 elections in 2024.

According to him, addressing Africa’s peace and security challenges requires operationalizing the continental standby force. Democracy and good governance remain critical for Africa to achieve sustainable peace and stability as well as

sustainable development.

“On the other hand, Africa continues to abide by its commitments in the Charter on democracy, elections and governance. We have to continue to work to promote peace and stability in the Horn of Africa, in the Great Lakes region, Libya, in the Sahel,

Mozambique, and these are the issues that the assembly has been seized with.”

Adeoye urged warring parties to come to a round-table discussion, pledging AU’s continued support and commitment to further strengthen its efforts to bring lasting peace and security to the African continent.

Ethiopia resolute...

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Ethio-Kenya joint

Speaking at the opening of the meeting yesterday, MoFA African Affairs Director General Ambassador Fiseha Shawel said that the JMC is expected to adopt a new comprehensive memorandum of understandings. Moreover, the involvement of over 35 institutions of the two countries is demonstrating the session’s importance.

“Ethiopia and Kenya are intertwined by geographic, cultural, historical, and economic and many more bonds. “The joint ministerial commission is a foundation helping to deepen the cooperation... terrorism, migration, human trafficking, illegal trade and climate change are still problem of the region to be resolved through robust partnership.”

Though it had been delayed because of several reasons including the COVID-19, the ministerial meeting has been an instrumental in enhancing the two countries social, economic and political interaction. Now, Ethiopia is expecting more agreements which could support for the acceleration of already signed agreements on security, economic, and social issues, Ambassador Fiseha elaborated.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, Ethiopian Ambassador to Kenya Bacha Debele (General) also said that bilateral agreements will be signed tomorrow at the closing of the session.

According to him, the discussion is being underway under three clusters; foreign relations and security cluster, economic cluster and social cluster. “Then all clusters are expected to reach common cooperation agreement or memorandum of understandings.”

Ambassador to Kenya Bacha further highlighted that Kenya is expected to improve the Visa ad immigration processes to Ethiopian nationals. “It is one agenda of the meeting, so we are optimistic that Kenya will agree on the proposal.”

Kenyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Political and Diplomatic Affairs Director General Ambassador MoiL emoshira for his part said that the participation of high-level officials in the meeting is a testimony to the shared desire of advancing that two countries multifaceted relations. “Kenya has the highest level of commitment to strengthen the historical ties with Ethiopia.”

He further pointed out senior officials of both sides have evaluated the implementation of MoUs and the level of bilateral cooperation and consensus was reached to have a shared path of development in all areas.

Ethiopia and Kenya agreed to reactivate the Joint Ministerial Commission last July in Nairobi.

AU renews...

The Chairperson highlighted the importance of a stronger African presence on the international stage, advocating for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council to ensure reformed and equitable global peace architecture.

The summit, according to OuldGhazouani, also emphasized peace and security as well as pledges to renew efforts to resolve conflicts across the continent.

The leaders have discussed a range of continental topics, such as peace and

security, AU’s reform initiatives, quality and accessibility of education, and the implementation of Agenda 2063’s first phase ten-year plan, he mentioned.

The second phase of the ten-year Agenda 2063 plan is also adopted by the summit while the participants discussed on the need for united action to navigate pressing issues and secure a brighter future for Africa, he stressed.

“Africa’s problems and multiple challenges that have been facing countries require

joint action through our organization and our union.” The key priorities were peace, stability, human rights, good governance, and sustainable development among others, he stated.

As to the Chairperson, the continent requires crucial role of strong and resilient institutions to drive designed program in order to achieving tangible successes.

He called for fostering complementarity and integration to maximize resources and impact.

“An Africa that takes hold of its own destiny in a strong dynamic on the international scene is not merely an option, but an existing necessity. We have no other choice,” he underlined.

Leaders of AU member countries, representatives of international organizations, and invited guests attended the 37th African Union summit that was took place for two day at the AU’s headquarter in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, it was learnt.

Opinion

Martyr's Day and lessons for the Ethiopian youth

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Every year on February 19 (20 every leap year), Ethiopians commemorate Martyrs' Day on which more than 30,000 Ethiopians were massacred by the troops of Fascist Italy 81 years ago following the attempted assassination on Marshal Rodolfo Graziani. That is why February is also marked as a month of martyrdom. The Italians conducted the most atrocious massacre that could have been considered as genocide of the highest proportions.

After 40 years of preparation following its defeat at The Battle of Adwa in Ethiopia, Italy began its second attempt to colonize Ethiopia in 1934. Despite of a letter submitted by the late emperor to the former League of Nations, on May 14, 1934, Italy deployed a massive army ready to annex the entire territory of Ethiopia.

Italy deployed 685,000 soldiers another 4,000 from Eritrea and more than 285,000 soldiers from its colony in the former Italian Somaliland. Italy had 6,000 machine guns, 2000 artillery and 599 tanks as well as 390 aircrafts. Italy later ordered and acquired 3,300 machine guns, 275 artillery pieces, 200 tanks and 205 aircrafts. This was no match to the Ethiopian Army which was comprised of 350,000-760,000 trained and untrained peasant soldiers with ammunition of 400,000 mainly old rifles; 234 antiquated artillery and 75 anti-tank guns; 4 tanks and 13 outmoded aircrafts with four pilots.

As an independent country and a member of the League of Nations, Ethiopia should have been provided with the League's fullest solidarity and support against the unprovoked and aggressive invasion by another member of the League, Italy. However, what actually transpired was the League's half hearted and ineffective measures which in fact facilitated Fascist Italy's perpetration of devastating war crimes in and occupation of Ethiopia for five year.

According to Grip, Lina and Hart John in their book "The use of Chemical Weapons in the 1935 Italo-Ethiopian War, the Fascist forces used mustard gas bombs on at least ten localities in Ethiopia including Tekeze area, Ambalage, Borena (Wollo), Sekota, Mekelle, Megalo, Wadla Delanta, Korem, Yirgalem and, Endamehoni.

According to Alberto Sbachi, (Ethiopia Under Mussolini", pp 47-63) during the Italian occupation, one million Ethiopians including patriots, women and children were massacred of whom 30,000 were killed, under Graziani's orders, within only three days (February 19-21, 1937) in Addis Ababa as well as over 2,000 monks and parishioners at Debre Libanos Monastery. 2,000 churches and 525,000 homes were destroyed; Destruction



Ethiopia commemorates Martyrs' Day, Yekatit 12

of 14 million animals as a result of the environmental destruction caused by the mustard poison gas sprayed in many parts of Ethiopia.

The Hague Convention of 1899 to which Italy was also a signatory was the first instrument that forbade the use of chemical weapons. That was followed by the Geneva Protocol of 1925 forbidding the use of poison gases. Therefore, the Italian Fascist Government used chemical weapons in its war crimes in Ethiopia in utter disregard of the 1925 Geneva Protocol.

On February 19, 1937, two years after the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, Italy conducted a mass massacre on innocent Ethiopians also known as Addis Ababa Massacre among historians and the international media Fascist Italy conducted a three days rampage of an indiscriminate killing of 30,000 Ethiopians mostly composed of the elderly, lactating and pregnant mothers and their children.

Marshal Rodolfo Graziani, Marchese di Neghelli, Viceroy of Italian East Africa, organized a public event at the Genete Leul Palace (now a building that housed the Institute of Ethiopian Studies at Addis Ababa University) in Addis Ababa to provide alms to the poor to celebrate the birth of the baby Prince of Naples. Crowd from all walks of life were gathered in an out of the palace with the expectation of receiving gifts without the slightest hint of what will befall them.

On the morning of Friday of February 19, 1937 two young Ethiopians Abraha Deboch and Moges Asgedom resolved to assassinate Marshal Rodolfo Graziani and Marchese di Neghelli. Another young person of their own age cooperated with their plot. According to Richard Pankhurst, a taxi driver named Simon Adefres drove them out of the city. Pankhurst also credits him with providing the grenades that Abraha and Moges threw on Graziani.

In the aftermath of the assassination attempt, the Italian response was immediate. According to Mockler, "Italian carabinieri had fired into the crowds of beggars and poor assembled

for the distribution of alms and it is said that the Federal Secretary, Guido Cortese, even fired his revolver into the group of Ethiopian dignitaries standing around him." Hours later, Cortese gave the fatal order which read:

According to Bahiru Zewdie, an Ethiopian historian and author, the attempted murder provided the Italians with the reason to implement Mussolini's order, issued as early as 3 May 1936, to summarily execute "The Young Ethiopians", the small group of intellectuals who had received college education from American and European colleges.

February 1974 is also marked a revolutionary upsurge by the peoples of Ethiopia against feudal oppression and repression. The immediate causes of the upheaval included the skyrocketing of fuel prices triggered by an economic strategy used by Arab countries to wage an economic war on Israel and the western world. The grave consequences of famine in northern Ethiopia, particularly Wollo, strikes by taxi drivers, labor unions, teachers and demonstrations by Muslims in Addis Ababa culminated in the down fall of the imperial regime and subsequent usurpation of political power by a committee drawn from the armed forces.

Over the previous several decades and more particularly in February 1975, Ethiopian students advocated for "land to the tiller," and the military government otherwise known as the Derg declared a rural land proclamation of 1975 that was to shape the socio-economic and political profile of the country over some four decades. The land proclamation did recognize the legal rights of the peasantry to use their lands which are in fact a public property. However, despite the proclamations the peasants remained in poverty and utter destitution as they lacked all the necessary requirements to ascertain their livelihood.

Despite the unprecedented valor exhibited by Ethiopians in defending their territory against all foreign encroachments and aggression, prior to 1991, the peoples of Ethiopia were forced to sustain

unfathomable repression and oppression in the hands of the imperial regime and the totalitarian regime of the Derg. Under such oppressive conditions, the peoples of Ethiopia did not choose to be indifferent. The youth in different parts of the country were therefore forced to flee to the bushes to take up arms. One of such armed groups, later named Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) was established on February 19, 1975 to wage a protracted struggle against the military junta of the Derg.

The events that took place in February in Ethiopia undoubtedly transcend the timeline of both Ethiopian and African history.

February is also a month of a popular quest for democracy, good governance, tolerance and smooth transition of power. Feb 15, 2018 Ethiopia's late Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn had submitted a letter of resignation to the House of Peoples Representatives in a surprise move that came amid protracted anti-government protests.

The government has attempted to address popular demands of the public. The Prime Minister filed a resignation letter after his request was endorsed by his own party, South Ethiopia Peoples Democratic Front where upon his request has also been endorsed by the secretariat of the EPRDF. The HPR has to soon made a final decision on his request.

Such formal request for resignation is the first of its kind in the political history of the country and depicts a new stage in the expansion of inclusive and pluralistic democratic process in the country and effectively shows a stance in a democratic transition of political power in Ethiopia.

What lessons can be drawn from these events? Valor, magnetic democratic unity, steadfastness, gender sensitivity solid national commitment and professionalism in implementing the development programs of this nation, perseverance in promoting peace and stability in Ethiopia and Africa, visionary mentality are all there to tap from the historic advents of February.

The youth in Ethiopia naturally shoulder a historic mission of safeguarding the unity and territorial integrity of this country. The war front has shifted from a battle field into nationwide battle against poverty. Close to 20% of the population of the country is still living below international designated poverty line. As poverty is no vice, the Ethiopian youth need to pay sacrifices in pulling the country out of poverty.

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

Editorial

AU Summit where actions spoke louder than words!

Bravo! Addis, the diplomatic hub of Africa and the seat of numerous reputable international organizations, has attested its capacity and competence to be a diplomatic hub of the African continent.

Attended by leaders of AU member countries, representatives of international organizations, and numerous other invited guests, the 37th African Union (AU) Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Governments was peacefully and resolutely concluded.

The grand Summit, in which influential utterances on which the future of Africa highly relies are deliberately cited and methodically elucidated, has peacefully been completed. Hadn't it been capital's well organized, streamlined and systematically amalgamated efforts of security forces, the Summit wouldn't have been accomplished as grippingly and serenely as possible.

The capital clearly told leaders as it is home to peaceful citizenry respecting one another, guests and nation's leaders' counterparts. That is why they felt at home.

Yes, Addis Ababa successfully wrapped up the Summit and did see its guest off as appealingly and amicably as possible. This vividly portrays that Ethiopia is a great nation that can host such a colossal gathering quietly and efficiently. True, taking the role strong and resilient institutions play in driving change and prosperity wheel well into account, Africa has to embark on having independent, viable and sturdy institutions thereby becoming continent of its vision.

Owning nonviolent and determined cities like Addis Ababa and a capable nation like Ethiopia, but not limited to, the continent is expected to work more to confidently enlist itself to the category of the developed world as it lacks nothing except coordination and unity.

Being wrapped up with a strong commitment and firm determination of leaders so as to address the continent's abundant challenges, the Summit prioritized key areas and solidified international diplomacy.

The leaders discussed a range of continental topics, such as peace and security, AU's reform initiatives, quality and accessibility of education, and the implementation of Agenda 2063's first phase ten-year plan. In so doing, leaders have clearly sketched the fate of the continent, indeed. What is left hereafter is developing firm commitment to properly translated promises and stage pleadings into practical actions.

Without a shadow of doubt, a stronger African presence on the international arena is of paramount importance in helping the continent advocate for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council with a view to ensuring reformed and equitable global peace architecture and attainable trek forward.

Needless to state, finding solutions to a range of problems and the multiple challenges from which the continent has been suffering would undeniably help the African continent declare economic and even political independence, and such a bold move requires joint action through viable organizations like AU.

Interestingly, the African leaders identified peace, stability, human rights, good governance, and sustainable development as thematic fronts and discussed them peacefully and thoroughly seated at their second home, Addis Ababa.

Of course, having a continent that takes hold of its own destiny in a strong dynamic on the international scene is not merely an option, but it has to be a compulsory move since Africa highly demands committed, visionary and hardworking leaders.

It is also well recognized that Addis is the third diplomatic city and seat of many international organizations, embassies, unions and other presumed entities that make international and continental leaders stay an ever-remembered one.

In sum, the AU Summit ended with action plans, renewed calls for unity and fraternity thereby helping the continent tackle myriads of challenges to be a well-to-do continent in the years to come. Truly speaking, Ethiopia once again deserves a wholehearted gratitude for its capacity and determination to peacefully and gracefully conclude the 37th leaders' Summit through which ideas that can be drivers of change are intensely hoisted.

Opinion

Ethiopia keen to reverse the collusion course with Somalia to economic cooperation

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Ethiopia and Somalia have a historical, cultural, social and economic relation that dates back to antiquities. Despite a complex and often strained relationship, marked by periods of cooperation and conflict, the peoples of the two countries maintained long standing relations that is also explained through extensive border areas between them.

The history of both countries is closely interlinked and both countries have faced periodic attempts by the colonial forces that tried their best to balkanize Ethiopia and Somalia during the era of the Scramble

In his recent response to the questions raised by members of the HPR, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed remarked that Somalis live in three countries of the Horn of Africa including Kenya, Djibouti and the majority of those who live outside of their country live in Ethiopia.

Ethiopia has been a key player in the fight against the Islamist militant group Al-Shabaab in Somalia. Ethiopian troops have been part of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) since 2007, working alongside other African countries to stabilize the country and combat terrorism.

In 2012, the Federal Government of Somalia was reinstated by full backing from the government of Ethiopia and troops from other African countries under the auspices of the AU.

Ever since those days, Ethiopia was doing everything at her disposal to ascertain peace and stability in the country and to ensure the sovereignty of the nation. The peoples of Ethiopia and Somalia share common border and have lived together for ages.

In terms of cultural relations, Ethiopia has been providing scholarships to Somali citizens to help boost the skilled manpower needs of the country. Somali refugees in Ethiopia are living in freedom just like all citizens in the country. Some are even doing business to earn their lives.

Ethiopia has been a forerunner in terms of ensuring the stability of the country by deploying her defense forces against the terrorist group Al-Shabab that was destroying the statehood of the country. Prime Minister Abiy has noted that thousands of members of the defense forces have shed their blood and flesh to ensure the sovereignty, peace and territorial integrity of the country. The nation should not be accused of violating the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Somalia while in fact the country remains as a major advocate for peace and stability of Somalia.

Ethiopia has recently secured strategic access to the Red Sea's coasts through an agreement with Somaliland. Leasing a 20-kilometer stretch of coastline, this move is pivotal for Ethiopia, allowing diversification beyond Djibouti. Currently reliant on a single corridor for 95% of its imports and exports, this development raises crucial questions about its potential impact on global maritime trade.

The Prime Minister of Ethiopia has repeatedly stressed that the fact that Ethiopia has entered into agreement with Somaliland to secure access to the sea and port has nothing to do with any level of violation of the sovereignty of the country as several media outlets and international organizations had tried to wrongly interpret a genuine and legal quest to access outlet to the sea and secure ports.

In ordinary level of thinking, accessing to any port is purely an economic undertaking and has nothing to do with politics. The aim of those who oppose the positive and internationally recognized rights of Ethiopia to have access to ports is to see economically and politically weak Ethiopia which will be forced to live only by the donations from other countries. They conduct protracted propaganda war on their own country through social media outlets and in cooperation with international commercial media conglomerates. They try to benefit from total misinformation on the real intents of the people and government of Ethiopia in their battle against poverty and underdevelopment.

As both countries are among the less developed nations of the world, it is incumbent upon them to reverse the collusion course into mutually beneficial coalition to roll back poverty from their respective countries.

Several cross border perennial rivers connect Ethiopia and Somalia including Genale Dawa and Juba. The Shebelle River has its headwaters in the Ethiopian Highlands and transports water and sediment 1,000 kilometers (621 miles) to the southeast across Ethiopia, before continuing an additional 130 kilometers (80 miles) into Somalia. These rivers have huge potentials for joint ventures on irrigation based commercial agriculture and agro-industrial development from which the two countries can benefit. Such potential areas of cooperation including port and energy development could set the bases for peaceful economic development between the two countries.

Despite the lack of effective national governance, Somalia maintains an informal economy largely based on livestock, remittance/money transfer companies, and telecommunications. Somalia's government lacks the ability to collect domestic revenue and external debt – mostly in arrears – was estimated at about 77% of GDP in 2017.

Agriculture is the most important sector, with livestock normally accounting for about 40% of GDP and more than 50% of export earnings. Nomads and semi-pastoralists, who are dependent upon livestock for their livelihood, make up a large portion of the population. Economic activity is estimated to have increased by 2.4% in 2017 because of growth in the agriculture, construction and telecommunications sector. Somalia's small industrial sector, based on the processing of agricultural products, has largely been looted and the machinery sold as scrap metal.

Cooperation on peace and security that was started earlier need to continue as both countries are already facing threats and disruptions from coalition of international terrorist organizations and sea pirates. As Prime Minister Abiy has noted, the disruption of peace in any one of the two countries has a greater bearing on stability and security in the Horn of Africa.

Both countries need to realize the importance of resolving African problems by Africans themselves, a credo which has already been recognized by the UN on its position regarding the appeal made by the Somali Federal Government.

Ethiopia has been training Somali police and military personnel to ensure that the country can keep peace and stability for its own people. There are no tangible reason or evidence that Ethiopia could violate the unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of a sisterly country.

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



The Ethiopian Herald

Established in 1943
Published daily except Mondays
By The Ethiopian Press Agency

Office of the CEO
Tel. 011-126-42-22
Fax. 251-011-156-98-62
email- epa@press.et

Advertisement and Dist.
Department

email: etpresspromotion@gmail.com
Tel. 011-156-98-73/011-811-13-15
Telegram :- 0976084707 - press

Editor-in-Chief: Worku Belachew
email- workubelachew@press.et
Address- Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-city
Woreda - 05, House No----
Tel- +251 111 26 41 98

Managing Editor: Wakuman Kudama
Email: wakuma220@gmail.com

Deputy Editors-in-Chief:
Alem Hailu
Elizabeth Mengistu
Zekarias Woldemariam
Desta Geberehiwot
Daniel Beyene

Website: www.press.et
email: ethiopianherald@press.et
Fb/ /Ethiopian Press Agency/
The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy

Adding new imputes to economic growth

BY MENGESHA AMARE

It is crystal clear that Ethiopia does have a range of approaches and opportunists to back its journey towards economic sovereignty and lasting development. Of the myriads of means towards this end, the expansion of micro, small and medium enterprises can be prettily cited as a very good example.

Taking this solid fact into account, *The Ethiopian Herald* had a stay with Lemma Birru, an economist graduated from Dilla University, to have professional opinion regarding the role micro, small and medium enterprises have been playing in promoting national economy and job creation scheme at national level.

He said, "Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises are instrumental in shaping the economic landscape of emerging markets like what is happening in developing nations like ours. These enterprises ability to innovate, generate employment, and contribute to national economic development makes them quite indispensable. The growth potential of these enterprises is undeniable in spite of a range of challenges."

In the dynamic landscape of national, regional, continental and even global economics, emerging markets have really played pivotal role in shaping the future of the business world. These enterprises play a crucial role in fostering innovation, generating employment opportunities and driving economic development, Lemma added.

According to him, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises are businesses that operate on a relatively smaller scale compared to large corporations. These enterprises encompass a wide array of sectors, from manufacturing and agriculture to technology and services. Their distinguishing features include limited manpower, lower capital investment, and localized operations. They often function as the catalysts for economic inclusive nature, as they provide jobs to a significant portion of the population.

These enterprises are of significantly useful in boosting innovation, employment generation, market diversification, inclusive growth via providing citizens with opportunities for economic participation and entrepreneurship.

However, he said these sectors are not devoid of challenges. To mention but a few, they have faced with several obstacles hindering their progress like lack of access to finance, infrastructural constraints, regulatory burdens, limited technical expertise and knowledge as well as market challenges.

As to Lemma, understanding the

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises: Know the Differences



nuances of private sector development in emerging economies in Ethiopia is pivotal for sustainable growth. Governments, international organizations, and the private sector itself need to collaborate to create an enabling environment for the enterprises to thrive.

As far as the viable means employed to help the sectors address the challenges are concerned, the Ethiopian government needs to create wider access to finance, expand capacity building which means providing training and technical support to entrepreneurs to enable them to enhance their skills and capabilities, enabling them to compete effectively, he added. Besides, policy reforms need to be injected towards simplifying regulations and reducing bureaucratic red tape thereby creating a friendlier business environment for the enterprises would be easy.

As to him, the two other most important ways need to be well embarked on, too. These are infrastructure investment and market access since facilitating enterprises access to domestic and international markets can expand their reach and potential.

Given the importance of private sector development in Ethiopia to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth, Lemma stated that the country has to well invest in these developing partners.

Having better understanding of how the private sector in the country can be developed, the government has been attaching due emphasis to them and widely open local avenues for them like adjusting micro-finance access, expand investments and business development services, he added.

Undoubtedly, said Lemma, the aforesaid enterprises are significantly useful in fueling sustainable development goals of Ethiopia through creating employment, alleviating poverty, and improving citizens' living standards if the well identified challenges such as lack access

to finance, problems in relation to access to electricity, and tumultuous trade regulation are the major constraints for the development of the sector.

Expanding enterprises and entrepreneurship can be a cure for Ethiopia's problems such as unemployment, inequality, low productivity, disconnect from global value chains, etc., he said.

Adding he said, "Hence, investment in entrepreneurial ventures can contribute immensely to economic growth and job creation and jobs in turn provide income, which improves living standards and consumption possibilities. Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises are a major source of growth, innovation and jobs and their potential impact on achieving many of the sustainable development goals is much greater than their size. Therefore, there is a great interest of young people to start a business and many of them are willing to undertake risks and challenges of entrepreneurship."

According to Lemma, these enterprises provide a substantial collective contribution to the national economy, contribute a lot to employment, employ the vast majority of any local labor force and have an integral role in any sustainable growth trajectory and it is 'the missing link' for inclusive growth.

No doubt, said Lemma, financial stability in Ethiopia enhances entrepreneurial development which improves economic growth.

In sum, the existence of favorable working environment would play a key role in the growth and development of enterprises. As their access to sufficient premises in proper location increases enterprises' financial performance, poor infrastructure and power outages which have affected productivity should be addressed. In addition, strong intervention to infrastructure development, particularly electricity supply, working premise that increase

ease of doing business and sustainable development of the country have to be seriously capitalized.

He said, "The presence of market linkage enables enterprises to supply their produce and acquire inputs in the commercial value chain, which create jobs and improve their efficiency. These enterprises have been a key area of intervention to sustainable development specifically in growing youth population of the country."

He further stated that, employment in enterprises leveled as high in terms of its extent of importance to poverty reduction, empowered women socially, economically, and contributing to local economy and communities through income tax payment in Ethiopia.

The agility and responsiveness of micro and small-enterprises lets them play a key role when it comes to innovation economic growth and national income generation.

These companies produce a smaller environmental footprint in comparison to large corporations, making them the key players for promoting responsible business practices and reducing their negative impact, he opined.

In due course of promoting enterprises and helping they get grown well, the role of the government, line ministries, states business companies and even international cooperators have to move in unison to help all the enterprises make a difference.

Besides, financial institutions, the government, and corporations, be they are micro, small, medium or large ones would be of meaningful partners and they would play invaluable role in getting the business grow and in supporting these businesses, through the creation of funding and training programs.

The very point that needs to be understood in this regard is collaboration between/ among large and small companies can also be mutually beneficial, since micro-enterprises and other business operators can usually bring agility and a breath of fresh air that larger companies can use for their own transformation and innovation.

It is quite important that the government, companies, enterprises themselves and even the general public have to recognize the important role these companies play, both in the economy, in terms of creating job opportunities and even protecting the environment from pollution if the companies are working carefully and well valuing the significance of having neat and appealing ecology. Truly, all sorts of enterprises are driving forces behind the economy, prime movers of innovation, and key players in building a sustainable future by backing the economy and curbing unemployment.

In the Sphere of Diplomacy

Linguistic diplomacy: Towards multilingual world

BY DESTA GEBREHIWOT

Over the years, languages have emerged to be more than just a means of communication; they have also become recipes for seizing diplomatic opportunities. Countries like China have literarily and widely used their languages to export their culture, and knowledge and foster diplomatic activities. Either in presser or official statements, leaders of countries albeit multilingual usually use their indigenous languages in a show of pride. Linguistic diplomacy has also increasingly gained traction over the last years with countries teaching and learning respective languages as it becomes a show of amiability and comradely. Multilingual diplomats are also deployed to do extensive and specific diplomatic undertakings.

As the world moves towards increasing multilingualism, countries have been resorting to using languages in international diplomacy. Multilingual communication is changing international relations, global politics, and how states interact—from social media to international treaties.

From mainstream to social media, multilingual communication is reshaping how nations interact, influencing global politics, and shaping international relations.

In a globalized world, countries have been using cultural values, dishes, and languages to forge strong diplomatic relations with the rest of the world. With a greater awareness of cultural quirks, multilingual diplomats can manage these changes by promoting deeper connections, improving communication, and possibly averting confrontations. For instance, Ethiopia's working language Amharic has been taught in China and Russia as per of bolstering cultural ties with Ethiopia. Yet, Africa has yet to adopt its indigenous languages in its continental bloc.

Although the continent has successfully emerged from colonialism; yet, political, economic, and cultural imperialisms still hold Africa back. The effects of colonialism are still felt today and can be seen in many areas. Over time, appeals to embrace African identity have grown louder and more intense. African politicians, commentators, and advocates of pan-Africanism have made the idea that Africa should conquer linguistic colonialism.

While it may seem difficult to live up to the ideal, progress has been made in applying continental wisdom to solve its problems. Achieving economic and



political objectives will depend on the adoption of languages and cultural values of African roots.

Africanizing African institutions requires work at the top. Africa is still living under linguistic colonialism with colonial languages still being the working languages of the Union. The move from Eurocentric to Afrocentric values starts with embracing African languages as the working languages of the continental bloc.

Rethinking the neglected yet precious indigenous knowledge and challenging the imposed Western values is vital to utterly emancipate the continent from all forms of colonialism. The African Union also set Vision 2063 to expedite the economic integration unity of the 1.4 billion continents. Depending on Eurocentric values almost annihilates the African indigenous knowledge production system.

In what could be said a leapfrog step towards strengthening African values, the Union has adopted Kiswahili as its working language. Including African languages in the lists of its working languages will foster integration among states and enrich African indigenous assets. This week, Ethiopia proposes Amharic to be the working language of the bloc, a timely and must-do task. Ethiopia has been the linchpin of Africa as an ardent supporter of the anti-colonial movement and headquarters of the African Union. It is proper to consider the country's proposal. These days, with Ethiopia's influence growing worldwide, non-African nations are also teaching Amharic in their universities. So, including Amharic as the working language of the continental bloc will be the right decision that would pave the way for others to follow.

The newly-appointed Ethiopian Foreign Minister proposed the inclusion of Amharic

as the official language of the African Union. This is in accordance with the AU Agenda 2063 and the goal for empowering indigenous African languages to contribute to the continent's progress, said Taye Atskeselassie in his remarks at the 44th session of the AU Executive Council Foreign Ministers held on Wednesday at the African Union headquarters.

It is worth noting that the OAU Charter was initially signed in four languages, including Amharic. Adopting Amharic as one of the official languages of the Union would honor Africa's linguistic diversity and strengthen our collective identity as Africans, Taye underscored.

Most of the AU's official languages are not indigenous to Africa. If the AU makes Amharic the official language, it would promote indigenous African languages and improve their role in continental development, Bahir Dar University Linguistics Assistant Professor Gashaw Arutie said.

Applying Amharic as AU's official language would help to promote the notion of African solutions for African problems, he mentioned.

For him, making Amharic among the official languages of the AU promotes Ethiopia's diplomatic contribution and increases its influence in continental and international arenas.

The Amharic language is widely spoken in Ethiopia and other African countries including Eritrea, Djibouti, and Northern Kenya, he said, adding that the quest for the inclusion of the language amongst AU's official languages is an appropriate proposal.

Amharic was among the first languages used to sign the establishing charter of the then Organization of African Unity (OAU),

the current AU in 1963, so that it should continue serving the Union as an official language, according to the Asst. Professor.

By doing so, he said, the AU could strengthen Ethiopia's contribution to the Union and other continental affairs.

As to the Scholar, the development of a language can be manifested via the expansion of its service as the significance of a Language is mainly to shape culture, identity, and communication.

Asst. Professor Gashaw expressed that, the Amharic language would get international recognition if the AU accepted Ethiopia's quest for the adoption of the language as the union's official language.

In the sphere of international diplomacy, the impact of language is profound. Diplomatic relations are no longer confined to bilateral talks in stuffy boardrooms but are increasingly nuanced dialogues that occur across various platforms.

Geopolitical changes add another layer of complexity. As power dynamics shift and new alliances form, the demand for linguistic agility in diplomacy increases. Multilingual diplomats can navigate these changes with an enhanced understanding of cultural nuances, facilitating better communication, fostering deeper relationships, and potentially preventing conflicts.

Embracing more indigenous languages in the Union will help free and empower the Africans. And, it contributes to mental decolonization. Amharic which is an indigenous language to Africa with millions of speakers and easy to learn ticks the entire box to be the working language of the Union. It requires the continental bloc to go back to the drawing board to integrate African values into its institutions.

Law & Politics

Peace and security: A must-address predicament to all Africans, AU

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

African nations have been struggling with a number of challenges that need very quick solutions. The continent has been facing a hard time in ensuring peace and security matters. In every direction of the continent, internal conflicts and coups have turned the tables on the continent. There are a lot of textbook examples of unrest that are causing a dire humanitarian crisis. Unable to resolve those conflicts and disruptions, the African nations are exposed to unprecedented challenges.

On top of that, the continent is wallowing under the quagmire of human-impacting challenges such as the increasing rate of unemployment, migration, and the inability to address education. As two-thirds of its population is youth, the African continent has many responsibilities to achieve in order to bring a better life to its young citizens and meet the 2063 objective of realizing the Africa we want. Ensuring the peace and security threats of the continent and creating a more favorable platform for education could be the major steps taken to fight back those problems.

Lately, the African Union has held its 44th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council and its 37th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union from February 14-18, 2024 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. During the five-day event, the above-mentioned problems were the key matters that leaders reflected their concerns on. The here-and-there emergence of conflicts and the inability to ensure the peace and tranquility of the continent were some of the major issues entertained by the leaders who delivered a speech.

Mousa Faki Mahamat, the African Union Commission (AUC) Chairperson, remarked that Africa is experiencing the worst conditions including political instability and poverty.

“African nationalism is dangerous unless guided by Pan-Africanism. Africans should look into their own institutional shortcomings. Institutional reform is the first means to address the challenge in institutional development so the education sector also deserves reform as other sectors deserve,” the chairman voiced.

Listing the dire situations in Africa, the AUC chairman stated, “Libya remains divided and open to all manner of outside interference to satisfy their insatiable appetites. The battered, torn Sudan,



Mousa Faki Mahamat, the African Union Commission (AUC) Chairperson

deeply trampled by its elites, into chaos, while its people’s calls for peace and justice remain justice is being ignored. How, then, can we fail to condemn in the strongest terms the stubbornness of the perpetrators of this senseless adventure, and urgently promote a consensual political solution such as IGAD and the AU, supported by whole sections of the international community called for when the war broke out.”

The Chairman also raised his concerns about the situation in the Horn of Africa saying, “The Horn of Africa continues to generate the most worrying trends for all those who love peace and justice. The imperative of total respect for the sovereignty, integrity, security and fundamental interests of all countries in the region has never been as crucial as it is today.”

Delivering a speech on his acceptance to the position, the newly elected Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC) and President of the Arab Republic of Mauritania, Mohamed Ould Ghazouani said, “What we built together in terms of Agenda 2063, it reflects our plan to develop and to create the Africa we want; an integrated and prosperous Africa where peace reveals and citizens are leaders of the continent and in the world arena, the chairman elucidated.”

Talking about peace and security, AU chairperson Mohamed Ould Ghazouani, underlined the need to permanently resolve the lack of peace and conflicts that are a threat to the continent. “Africans should sit down, talk, and follow a strategy that allows them to solve problems through diplomacy.”

The new Chairman noted, “The success of our plans and strategies to achieve the noble goal depends on an effective use of

human resources to have an effective quality educational system that is open to new technologies.”

The adoption of an educational program in Africa, as to the chairman, to achieve a continued quality education this year means this is the right way forward. Adding, “Education is the starting point for sustainable development. It is a major support for peace and security based on promoting skills and opens up new job opportunities and reduces unemployment, poverty, and marginalization.”

It is youth to focus on this time, as to the Chairmen, youth covers 62% of the African population. The loss of our youth is the loss of our continent. An uneducated youth means that Africa remains uneducated. African youth are lacking the basic skills. They are unemployed in their countries and are taking up the boats of death through illegal immigration.

“We need a revolution in our educational system our continent is lagging behind when it comes to the achievement of the fourth objective of the development,” Mohamed Ould Ghazouani stated.

By the same token, Lula Da Silva, President of Brazil, said “Brazilians and Africans need to build our own way to the international system. We need to create new global governance. “In the world, over 250 million students are out of school. We are willing to develop education programs with Africa to promote intense exchange of professors and researchers between the two.”

Africa has a tremendous future and Brazil wants to get together with Africa. We collaborate with Africa so that the continent could become independent in food production and provide clean energy from renewable sources, said the President.

“To move forward, to advance post of cooperation with the AU in sectors such as agricultural research, health care, education, environment, and science and technology,” Da Silva added.

To wrap up, all stakeholders must work in unison in order to ensure the peace and security of the continent before addressing any other objectives. The culture of sitting around the table and discussing differences should also be the habits of leaders.

Africans should sit down, talk, and follow a strategy that allows them to solve problems through diplomacy

Society

Paving ways to provide quality education for Africans

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Everyone is clear about the incalculable returns of ensuring quality education in countries' overall development. Nations which are able to provide quality education to their citizens are able to produce productive human capital that could contribute meaningfully, transform the social and economic landscape of the nations and foster sustainable development.

In the case of Africa, though there have been unceasing attempts to access quality education, there is still a long way to go to achieve the objectives.

According to reports, the continent is facing critical educational challenges with catastrophic results across secondary, tertiary and TVET, significantly restricting future employment opportunities. The poor provision lead to hampering the achievement of at least some of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa leading to worse health outcomes, greater youth unemployment and deeper levels of poverty.

It also impacts the future prospects of Africa's private sector by restricting the availability of a skilled workforce. Prevent the achievement of the African Union's Vision which is going to be realized by 2063, the report added.

To end this and advance the educational sector, numerous organizations working on education are advocating for quality education these days.

Lately, the African youth voices, along with the Human Capital Africa and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa have urged and issued a call to action for African Heads of State and government to commit and champion foundational learning ahead of the African Union Year of Education.

The call urged leaders to recognize the scale of the learning crisis confronting the continent, commit to a continental strategy to address it and invest in the data and evidence to guide effective policy and interventions. Smartly, allocating existing resources to proven tools to accelerate progress and ensure that every child in Africa has access to quality foundational education.

Speaking on the occasion President Sahlework Zewde, said that ensuring quality education is a game changer. The Heads of State and government should prioritize it through the declaration of 2024 as the African Year of Education.

CEO of Human Capital Africa Dr. Oby Ezekwesili, emphasized the fundamental requirement for better use of data, and expanded collection of data and evidence to ensure that the interventions implemented by government are targeted and effective: "If there is a



Delegates participating at the Summit along with President Sahlework Zewde and Dr. Oby Ezekwesili, CEO of Human Capital Africa, here in Addis Ababa

proper evidence-based approach then the incremental cost of doing the right things at foundational levels will be negligible compared to the outcomes that it will achieve throughout the education system. The integrity of the foundation of education is something that we must embrace as a continent. Our leaders must become chief learning officers to demonstrate the leadership required to overcome this challenge. This group today is focused on ensuring that the most influential voices on our continent say that this crisis must be fixed."

The Executive Secretary of Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), Albert Nsengiyumva stressed: "We have all understood the challenge we face, we must now ensure that our concerns are shared as widely as possible and that Heads of State hear our message in the context of all the challenges facing the continent. They must consider the impact that failing to address the learning crisis will have on all of our other continental priorities. We know what is required - now we have to drive implementation systemically, not on a project basis, and at scale."

The messages from African leaders and influential voices were supported by African youth, who were strongly represented at the summit and stressed the urgency for action by launching an online campaign to raise awareness of the challenge.

Human Capital Africa Advisor Board member and former Deputy Chair of the African Union Erastus Mwencha, who spoke on behalf of President Joyce Banda, Chair of the Human Capital Africa (HCA) Advisory Board, said: "It is crucial to acknowledge the gravity of the situation that lies before us. Despite our

The integrity of the foundation of education is something that we must embrace as a continent. Our leaders must become chief learning officers to demonstrate the leadership required to overcome this challenge

concerted efforts and progress over the years, a staggering 9 out of 10 children in Africa are unable to read and understand a simple text by the age of ten. This is not just a statistic; it represents millions of dreams deferred, countless potential unfulfilled, and a future that is being compromised."

The event was attended by representatives from the African Foundational Learning Ministerial Coalition, which was formed to enable collaboration, knowledge sharing and collective advocacy for African countries that are leading the fight against the learning crisis. Speaking

on behalf of the Coalition, Malawi Education Minister and Chair of the Coalition Madalitso Wirima said: "We stand united in our mission to ensure that every boy and every girl can read and perform mathematics. This is not just an educational goal, it is a catalyst for change across our continent. Our resolve is clear, to lead the response at the national level and develop innovative solutions, and that is why we have all committed to the Ministerial communiqué issued in Zambia in 2023, at the ADEA convened High Level Policy dialogue on foundational learning. As we stand together at this pivotal moment, let us acknowledge the power of education and the key role it plays in unlocking the potential of our continent."

Education Adviser of UNICEF, Lieke Van de Wiel also said that, children who were out of school failed to learn what they were supposed to; and that means investments in education have not been generating the right return. "African leaders must feel a sense of urgency to solve the problem," she added.

It was learnt that the two-day summit was co-convened by UNICEF and the Aliko Dangote Foundation. It was also attended by representatives of the private sector, civil society and implementing organizations. They played a significant role in rallying other organizations to address the future skills gap in the workforce by addressing the learning needs of children now. They called for increased investment in technology to enhance foundational learning such as access to digital resources, implementing e-learning platforms, and ensuring that both teachers and students have the necessary skills to use technology effectively.

Planet Earth

Africa should...

Africa points out that the environment is deteriorating faster than previously thought, emphasizing that governments must act faster to reverse the worst trends. The report recognizes Africa's natural capital and observes that the economic growth of Africa hinges on the sustainable management of its natural capital. However, unsustainable exploitation of Africa's natural resources by its burgeoning population, and the tardiness by authorities to effect sound and regulations to tame abuse and over exploitation of these resources is brewing trouble. Nature is issuing red alerts, as evidenced by the many catastrophes we are experiencing which if left unchecked, will keep aggravating food shortages, water scarcity, diseases,

conflicts, migration and poverty, all of which could culminate in the destabilization of economies.

In order for Africa to reap the economic and social benefits inherent in this natural wealth, it is necessary to urgently address such issues as the management and the economic and environmental impacts of, their sustainable use.

The UNEP Africa Office supports African governments to translate decisions and statements made on natural resources into practical actions and innovative solutions at regional, national and local levels for the benefit of their populations. This will lead to wealth and job creation, revenue generation, food security, social equity

and a healthy environment.

Zerocarbon-analytics.org stipulates that governments in Africa are already recognizing the transformative potential of their mineral reserves by taking steps to develop the sector. Some African countries have started to restrict exports of minerals in their raw states to promote local processing, such as the DRC. Ghana has approved a policy to manage the production and extraction of lithium, which "demands that not a single volume of lithium produced in this country will be allowed to be exported in its raw state", according to Lands and Natural Resources Minister Samuel Jinapor. However, to reap the benefits of such policies, countries

will need to expand their processing capabilities to produce intermediate goods or final products of higher value.

African governments have also tried to increase the benefits of mining for local communities by introducing local content policies, for example by requiring mining companies to employ a certain level of local workers. However, miners sometimes decide to open up operations elsewhere when these requirements are too stringent or constantly changing. Pan-African cooperation could prevent a potential 'race to the bottom' where countries try to attract investors by offering the least stringent requirements.



Africa targets to produce 60 percent of vaccines by 2040

Nairobi -The African Union has resolved that by 2040, 60 percent of vaccines used in Africa will be produced locally.

While attending a meeting on vaccine manufacturing in Africa organized by the International Vaccine Institute (IVI) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, President William Ruto highlighted the need for African countries to manufacture vaccines to help stop various disease pandemics.

President Ruto revealed that most African countries got badly affected particularly during the Covid 19 pandemic witnessed globally where the Covid vaccines were on higher demand.

"The Covid-19 pandemic exposed the dire state of Africa's pharmaceutical manufacturing, including that of vaccines. We were the last continent to access Covid-19 vaccines, and suffered

greatly from 'vaccine nationalism'," He said.

The head of state noted that the African continent has the research capacity to manufacture vaccines.

"This is underpinned by our solid research capacity in vaccines. Kenya, for instance, participated in the Covid-19 vaccine trials," revealed Ruto.

The meeting on vaccine manufacturing in Africa with the International Vaccine Institute (IVI) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia was also attended by various heads of states including President Mohamed al-Menfi (Libya) and Brahim Ghali (Sahrawi).

Others were Ahmed Hachani, Tunisia Prime Minister, IVI Director general Jerome Kim and Jean Kaseya, Director general of Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa-CDC).

Source:Capital FM

Senegal: Constitutional council rejects postponement of Senegal's Presidential election

Senegal's Constitutional Council late Thursday overturned the controversial law recently passed by parliament postponing the country's presidential election scheduled for 25 February.

In a statement, the Council, whose decisions cannot be appealed against also voided a presidential decree on the postponed presidential vote.

The Council described as unconstitutional the decree and the law passed after opposition MPs were ejected from the floor of the parliamentary Chambers.

A new date for the presidential election is expected to be agreed, but there appears to be a desire to respect the constitutional provision which stipulates that sitting President Macky Sall must vacate power by the 2nd of April at the end of his two mandates.

The postponement of the vote had been greeted by street protests, resulting in at least three deaths.

There was no immediate reaction from the parliament or the presidency to the Constitutional Council's decision, which followed government's announcement on Thursday of the release of some political detainees including relatives of opposition leader Ousmane Sonko, jailed for forming insurrection.

The appeasement move by the embattled government of President Sall, could also see the release of Sonko himself and his anointed candidate for the presidential election Bassirou Diomaye Faye, who is also detained and awaiting trial on charges of contempt of court, defamation and intention to cause public disorder.

ECOWAS, the regional bloc has launched diplomatic initiatives to douse the political



President of Senegal Macky Sall

tension in Senegal, which until recently was considered an anchor of stability in a politically restive region.

On Wednesday, the current Chairman of the ECOWAS Authority and Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu cancelled his planned visit to Senegal, considered part of the preventive diplomacy.

No official reason was given for the cancellation, but diplomatic sources said that Senegalese government views the political crisis as an internal matter.

The Senegalese ministerial delegation was able to prevent the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council from discussing the country's crisis at an extraordinary meeting held last Thursday in Abuja, the Nigerian capital.

These unprecedented developments in Senegal could not have come at a worst time for ECOWAS. Four of the bloc's 15 member States - Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger - are under military rule, and the last three have served notice of their intention to quit the organisation, set up in May 1975, to foster regional integration

Source: FrontPageAfrica

Planet Earth

Africa should work on mineral value addition, taxation to maximize economic benefit

BY ZEKARIAS WOLDEMARIAM

Despite having abundant natural mineral resources, Africa still struggles to build an economy that ensures the benefit of its citizens. It still depends on aid and loan from outside as it fails to properly harness its abundant mineral resources. One thing that is suggested in this regard is that the continent needs to appraise the exploration, and utilization of its resources in such a way that it can boost the benefit for its citizens.

For instance, Zimbabwe has taken a stance that some of its mineral products like Lithium should not be exported raw as they have to add value, create jobs and maximize the national revenue. "The value addition, taxation ... etc are the way forward for the utilization of our natural resources." Says Mthuli Ncube, Finance Minister of Zimbabwe who briefed journalists last week in Addis Ababa.

This can be one of the examples set to rethink about the utilization of the precious natural resources that have not yet uplifted the continent's economy to a certain extent.



According to United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), Africa is home to some 30 percent of the world's mineral reserves, eight per cent of the world's natural Gas and 12 per cent of the world's oil reserves. The continent has 40 percent of the world's gold and up to 90 percent of its chromium and platinum. The largest reserves of cobalt, diamonds, platinum and uranium in the world are in Africa. It holds 65 per cent of the world's arable land and ten percent of the planet's internal renewable fresh water source.

In most African countries, natural capital accounts for between 30 percent and 50 percent of total wealth. Over 70 per cent of people living in sub-Saharan Africa depend on forests and woodlands for their livelihoods. Land is an economic development asset as well as a socio-cultural resource. A significant share of these resources is, however, used unsustainably while others are lost through illegal activities, meaning that the stream of benefits generated from these resources is being reduced over time. For instance, Africa loses an estimated USD 195 billion annually of its natural capital through illicit financial flows, illegal mining, illegal logging, the illegal trade in wildlife, unregulated fishing and environmental degradation and loss.

Collectively, the continent has a lot to gain in pulling together and harnessing its vast natural resources to finance the development agenda towards greater prosperity; and it must also ensure that future growth and exploitation of natural resources is results-oriented, climate resilient and sustainable.

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