



# The Ethiopian Herald

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FM Taye-Atske Selassie

## Ethiopia's sea quest gathering momentum : FM Taye

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- The international community is now clued-up about Ethiopia's aspiration to access the sea following the extensive diplomatic engagement in the subject, the Foreign Minister said.

Speaking to local media, Foreign Minister Taye-Atske Selassie stated that Ethiopia has been informing the international community about its

See Ethiopia's sea .. page 3

## Ethiopia attracting Southern African tourists: Ambassador

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia is alluring more tourists from Southern Africa nations through promoting attractions including the newly built Adwa Museum, Ethiopian Embassy in Zimbabwe said.

Ethiopian Ambassador and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of Zimbabwe, Rashid Mohammed

told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the Embassy is participating in a joint tourism promotion activity that benefit Ethiopia and Zimbabwe.

He said the joint tourism promotion campaign is being undertaken in Harare highlighting the diverse attractions, showcasing the rich cultural heritages, natural landscapes, and unique experiences in both countries.

See Ethiopia attracting .. page 3



Rashid Mohammed



Late Eyob Gidey

## EPA to bid farewell to veteran journalist

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA-The funeral of a veteran journalist Eyob Gidey, who served the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) - affiliated Al-Alem Arabic weekly newspaper for 34 years is set to take place today at Abune Habitemariam Church.

See EPA to bid .. page 3

## Ethiopian registers incredible feat: MoTL

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopian Airlines (Ethiopian) has registered a remarkable achievement, the Ministry of Transport and Logistics (MoTL) said, reaffirming commitment to support the sector.

In an interview with local media, MoTL Minister Alemu Sime (PhD) said that Ethiopia's aviation industry has been registering an auspicious improvement through its consistent endeavors thereby becoming an iconic continental pride.

He further remarked that the aviation industry has also building nation's image

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# News

## Ethiopia, WBG discuss ways to enhance agricultural collaboration

**ADDIS ABABA (ENA)** - Agriculture Minister Girma Amente held discussion with the World Bank Group (WBG) Executive Director Floribert Ngaruko on ways to enhancing collaboration in the development of the agricultural sector.

Various activities are being carried out in Ethiopia with a view to ensuring food security by increasing the productivity of the agricultural sector, producing quality export products on a large scale and enhance import substitution. Ministry of Agriculture has also been implementing agricultural development programs and projects with a budget support obtained from the WBG by engaging the community.

Agriculture Minister Girma Amente and the WBG Executive Director Floribert Ngaruko exchanged views about the Bank's comprehensive support to the agricultural sector.

On the occasion, the minister stated that during the last 5 years, the government has been paying great attention to the agricultural sector.

He thanked the WBG for its support in the process of modernizing the agricultural sector.

The minister went on to say that the bank need to support Ethiopia's initiatives being implemented to ensuring food security by boosting productivity and relieving the agriculture sector of its reliance on rainfall through the use of alternative water sources.

For his part, the WBG Executive Director Floribert Ngaruko gave a thorough explanation of the ways in which the bank can work with the Ministry of Agriculture to support development initiatives and programs intended to modernize Ethiopia's agricultural sector and ensure food security.



## Embassy working on attracting Russian Investors to Ethiopia

**ADDIS ABABA (ENA)** - Russian embassy in Ethiopia is working eagerly to enable Russian investors to invest in Industrial Parks and free trade zones managed by Industrial Parks Development Corporation (IPDC).

IPDC, CEO Aklilu Tadesse held discussion with Russian ambassador to Ethiopia, Evgeny Terekhin yesterday.

Aklilu remarked during the discussion that it is necessary to work for an investment relationship that suits the long and strong friendship between Ethiopia and Russia confirming the readiness of the corporation to exert efforts to realizing this. Russian ambassador to Ethiopia, Evgeny Terekhin reminded that his embassy

is working to encourage new Russian investors to invest in the industrial parks. The ambassador further pointed out that there will be Russian investors coming to Ethiopia soon.

Stating that he has visited the Hawassa Industrial Park, the ambassador said the standard infrastructure provided in the park is convenient for the investors. Along with the investment-oriented discussion yesterday, the two sides have also exchanged views on ways in which short and long term education and training programs can be arranged to increase the overall capacity of the corporation's leaders and employees.

## Metropolitan kicks off inclusive climate action program

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** - Inclusive Climate Action (ICA) program indispensable to deal with climate change through promoting combined efforts, Addis Ababa City Administration said.

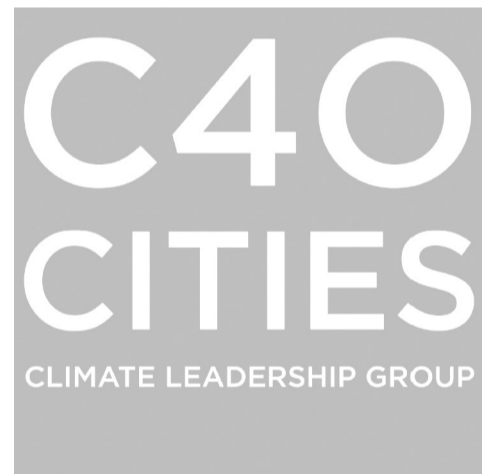
The City Administration on Monday launched the program that focused on ICA Communications Training and ICA Master Class of C40 cities in which the metropolitan co-host a joint peer-to-peer learning activities on building and communicating urban resilience and protecting frontline communities from the impacts of climate-induced loss and damage.

Opening the event, Addis Ababa C40 Cities' Deputy Director, Gifti Nadi said that C40 cities is the means of increasing climate action program and ensure cities equity towards combating climate change impact and realize conducive living environment for residents.

African cities have faced poor sanitation and infrastructure, pollutions, and the likes over the past several years, she mentioned.

As to Gifti, practicing effective communication is the main focus area of the program so as to share experience, skills, and knowledge among the C40 Cities participants, and this help to bring fruitful outcome in withstanding climate change through cooperative efforts.

She further added that commitment and effective leadership are among the pivotal activities in which Addis Ababa is receiving a warm applause for the best practices in various fields such as transportation and waste management.



Addis Ababa Public and International Relation Director, Meti Tamerat on her part said that the city administration is striving to tackle climate change impact through inclusive climate action and communication works.

"Specifically, Abuja, Accra, Cape Town, Dakar, Dar es Salaam, Freetown, and Et kunai are attended the program here. Addis Ababa is excited to share its best practices to others and learn from the regional great players in building common understanding of the urban dimension of combating climate change," Meti added.

Meti further said "Our city (Addis Ababa) can deliver local inclusive climate action that build resilience for the frontline of the residents. In this regard, the city has benefited 3,000 residents in accessing potable water supply and infrastructure in the past year merely."

It is to be recalled that C40 is a network of nearly 100 mayors of the world's leading cities working to deliver the urgent action needed right now to confront the climate crises and create a future where everyone can thrive everywhere.

# News

## Envoy affirms Ethiopia's readiness to enhance ties with Saudi Arabia

**ADDIS ABABA (FBC)** – Undersecretary of Riyadh Region, Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al-Sudairi and representative of the Saudi Foreign Ministry, Abdulmajeed Aldialij, attended the 128<sup>th</sup> Adwa Victory Day celebration organized by the Ethiopian Embassy in Riyadh.

Ambassadors and members of the diplomatic corps of several countries based in Riyadh also attended the celebration.

Addressing the gatherings at the celebration, Ethiopia's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Lencho Bati, stated that Adwa is the victory of all the black people around the world, stressing the need to replicate in the efforts to bring Africa from poverty and underdevelopment.

He further reaffirmed the commitment of



Ethiopia to enhance its bilateral ties with Ethiopia in trade, investment, tourism and people to people relations.

Amb. Lencho also assured that Ethiopia's readiness to bolster overseas employment cooperation with Saudi Arabia.

## EPA to bid farewell to veteran...

Born on March 20, 1966 in Sudan, Eyob obtained a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in Journalism and Communication from Addis Ababa University.

Joined the EPA on March 24, 1990 as a proofreader, Eyob served the country's oldest Arabic newspaper for the next 34 years in various capacities up to Editor-in-

Chief from October 11, 2013 until his death.

Eyob was an avid journalist with a profound skill to write and edit news and feature articles that have targeted to promote Ethiopia's positive image in the Arab world and the Addis-based diplomatic community. He was widely recognized by colleagues for his professionalism and

friendly character.

Eyob was passed away on Sunday March 10, 2024 at the age of 58 and survived by a wife and two sons.

The EPA expressed its deep sorrow over the death of the veteran journalist to his family, friends and colleagues, and wished them consolation.

## Ethiopian registers incredible feat:...

globally and serving as a bridge that connects the continent with the global world.

Compared to other transport services, the Minister emphasized that the air transport service is far better and becoming backbone of the country's economic development - championing many global awards.

Affirming his commitment to further strengthen its journey, Alemu said that the Ethiopian would be the most preferable and influential airlines at the international arena in the near future.

In the same vein, in his stay with CNN in relation to the company's fleet expansion and additional Boeing aircrafts, Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mesfin Tassew said that the Ethiopian has long been using the Boeing

Airplanes since the company commenced services, thus, recording a fruitful growth and enjoying partnerships.

Although its population represents about 18% of the world, Africa's traffic constitutes merely 2% which indicates that its air transport is still below the global standard, the CEO pinpointed.

As to Mesfin, fragmentation in the transport sector, high cost of operation, monopoly of services, and soaring price of fuel and restriction of traffic are among the contributing factors that lag the aviation industry behind.

"Furthermore, we have several but very small airlines in different parts of the continent they are not self-sufficient by

their own, and most of them are owned by the governments and they have governance issues," he emphasized.

"The African Aviation industry should be liberalized to steadfast the development of air transport service in the continent," the CEO commended.

He also indicated that the group has projected to reach 271 aircrafts by 2035 out of this some 120 are ordered. Besides, the company's fleet expansion expects a new model of aircraft to be reliable.

The Ethiopian Airlines has ordered about twenty 777-9 aircrafts in which eight of them are firm while the rest are options and purchase rights, it was learnt.

## Ethiopia's sea ...

quest to secure sovereign access to the sea.

Ethiopia should not be holder of undue burdens and it should not be a victim of other countries' internal burden. Diplomatic tasks to inform the reality have been carried out during the past six months and it was almost successful, he added.

"Direct access to the sea is a matter of our stability and national security that is why we are questing for seaports which is very legitimate."

FM Taye also said that Ethiopia, as a sovereign state, needs solid economy that is supported by stable transaction. Accordingly, the country's quest for sea access is not against factual settings.

He further highlighted Ethiopia's readiness to engage in additional negotiations over its seaport aspiration and on the Abbay Dam. "We had been in negotiation with Egyptians for four rounds. Similarly, we are ready to resume the negotiation whenever they want."

"Ethiopia has no history of embracing foreign commands and dictations. But, it will negotiate in some cases for the benefit of all."

Meanwhile, the minister mentioned Ethiopia's commitment to advance the cooperation with continental and regional blocs to resolve existing instabilities.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) tried to mediate Sudanese warring parties for several times. Ethiopia will have strong cooperation with the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) to resolve the case, Taye remarked.

Recently, political science and international relations expert Lakew Regassa told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the current government's meticulous approach in the Abbay Dam negotiation and port deal will keep the country's longstanding success in Africa's diplomacy.

According to the expert, the country has maintained its success in Africa's diplomacy in Abbay Dam negotiations and concluding a port deal with Somalia.

"The coming of Abay Dam into reality would showcase how Ethiopia is paving its way to diplomatic and economic prowess," Lakew emphasized.

## Ethiopia attracting Southern African ...

Ambassador Rashid who is also a Non-resident Ambassador to Zambia and Mauritius, added that his Embassy is working to attract tourists from Zimbabwe and Southern Africa nations to visit the newly built Adwa Museum in Addis Ababa.

He mentioned that there is an improved air connectivity between Zimbabwe and Ethiopia that will be a good opportunity to boost tourism between the two.

"Ethiopian Airlines has more than twenty direct flights per week to the major cities of Zimbabwe namely Harare, Bulwayo and Victoria Falls cities and that will be an stimulus to promote tourism between Ethiopia and Zimbabwe and regional nations," Ambassador Rashid said.

He further stated that the Embassy is engaging in Harare in promoting and marketing campaigns across various platforms, including social media, travel

websites, traditional media outlets, highlighting the historical significance and cultural richness of the Ethiopia's Adwa Museum.

Moreover, the Ambassador expressed that the Embassy is organizing joint cultural events, exhibitions in Zimbabwe that showcase Ethiopian history, heritage, and tourist attractions, with a specific focus on the Adwa Museum.

Ambassador also highlighted the need

to facilitate cultural exchange programs between Ethiopia and Zimbabwe, inviting Zimbabwean artists, historians, and cultural influencers to visit the museum and engage in cultural exchanges, partnerships between tour operators, hospitality providers, and cultural organizations, to promote cross-border tourism initiatives and collaborations and simplify visa processes for tourists traveling between the two countries to encourage more visits.

# Opinion

## The genesis of ethno-anarchic extremism in Ethiopia, solutions thereof

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

The emergence of ethnocentric extremism with its ramifications is not a new phenomenon in Ethiopia. What is actually new is the emergence of deceptive blend of strategy linking it up with self-determination and democracy.

In Ethiopia, political extremism emerged through a historical process that dates back to the early 50s and 60s with the emergence of ethnic based movements, the advent of the political involvement of the students unions here and overseas against the defunct feudal - bourgeois regime of the former emperor Haile Selassie and peasant uprisings against the feudal order.

The emerging petty-bourgeoisie sub-class that developed in Ethiopia through the conveyor belt of modern education and nascent capitalism in the country set the socio-economic basis for elitist political demagoguery that plagued the student movement in towns and cities across Ethiopia. The political credo of Stalinist theory of self-determination of nations up to and including cession was blended with a historical paper written by Walelegene Mekonen. The acceptance or rejection of Leninist and Stalinist understanding of revolution became the demarcation between what the students called revolutionary and saboteur.

The student movement itself, although maintained common stand on issues of land to the tiller and ending the gerontocratic autocracy did not have a clear strategy on how a revolutionary transformation in the country could be achieved. Some advocated for guerilla warfare in the rural areas while other intended to focus on urban guerilla both of which have never been achieved by the students themselves.

The 1974 Ethiopian Revolution which was staged 50 years back in February as an offshoot of the student movements here and abroad, the general global economic crisis, growing grievances from the peasants, labor unions precipitated into a spontaneous mass upsurge that seriously lacked any level of political leadership.

The military which was far better organized than any civilian formation usurped power from the popular mass who was the active participants in toppling the feudal order. Later on the Derg was formed through what Marina Ottaway and others called "the creeping coup". In response to this, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) staged urban guerilla units which killed hundreds of government and civilian individuals in the most extremist manner forcing the Derg to conduct what it called "Red Terror" in which a generation of youth were brutally exterminated.

Consequently, various ethnic based movements including TPLF, OLF, and ONLF cropped up in the political arena taking up arms in the apparent quest for self-determination and liberation. Of particular importance was the establishment of TPLF in 1975 which issued a controversial document entitled Tigray Manifesto which claimed to establish Greater Tigray by incorporating into the would be empire all territories in which Tigrigna speaking people live. This was meant to deal a greater blow to the unity and territorial integrity of the country and deliberate devolution of Ethiopia's statehood and replace it by ethnic based principalities that are managed under Tigray Empire. Later on in 1995, the basic elements of Tigray Manifesto were incorporated into the Federal Constitution duly summarized in Article 39 which provided for self-determination of nation up to and including secession.

Thus, deliberate and wrong interpretation of the provisions of the Constitution, led to the establishment of even more ethnic based exclusive political organizations which exclusively focused on the establishment of ethnic territorial and exclusive federalism that was based on language and exclusive cultural self-assertion.

Therefore, loopholes and misconceptions on the provisions of the constitution, elitist petty-bourgeoisie propaganda on social media, hate based politicking and the age old TPLF irredentist agenda culminated in the tragic massacre of ENDF offices who were in a restive situation more than two years back. The unfortunate war in the northern part of the country which took hundreds of thousands of lives and unfathomable destruction of public and private property,

Here it must be clear that political elites who are in the payroll of global social media outlets are burgeoning themselves by fanning extremist and hate ridden propaganda which was apparently audible and partible to the rural population particularly in Amhara and Oromia states.

The elite propagandists are busy in misinforming not only the international community but also the so called human rights organizations who compile their reports through telephone conversation with sources that they cannot clearly identify for authenticity.

The gun tottering forces that are being indoctrinated by jungle fascist politicians are out to deny the ordinary citizens in Amhara and Oromia from cultivating their lands, blocking roads to disrupt normal communication, killing unlike minded persons in the name of democracy, self-determination and taking power at gun point. They think that they can overtake the country in few days giving false promise to

their followers,

The extremist in this country capitalize on economic challenges that the country and in fact the rest of Africa are facing. They falsely claim that inflation and skyrocketing of prices of goods and services is brought by the deliberate non-challance of the government. They make their own emotional and angry analysis of the economy of the country outside the realms of economic laws and the dynamics of regulations on international trade and global economic profile.

The ideological basis of extremists and narrow nationalists in Ethiopia is a mix of neo-liberalism, Maoist belief in the gun politics and anarcho-ethnicist and fascist understanding of the political reality in the country. Ideological negativism and nihilist rejections of any positive development in the country including self-reliance and export of wheat and accession to sea route and acquiring of ports is evident among extremists and narrow nationalists.

What is the motive behind the political support that extremists are providing to some religious leaders in the country? Their main intention is to ignite religious controversies and thereby instigate religious war in the country as a tool for creation of total crisis in the country.

Over the last several years, extremists have been trying to use the youth groups in the country to de-spiritualize religious holidays in the country in their attempts to use religious holidays as a forum for fanning their propaganda and harboring insults and defamations on the elected leadership of the country.

These rejectionist groups ally with all forces and groups who are out to disrupt the unity and territorial integrity of the country and cooperate with international commercial media who spread also news with no care for verification from the government or any authentic source in and out of the country.

Although extremists claim that they are ready to liberate their respective regions, to date, they have failed to develop any kind of strategy paper or a document that could clearly explain their political program even at the regional level. On the other hand, these jungle politicians and so called liberators are so divided among themselves that they have even established a zone of each group that frequently fight over funds they receive from their supporters abroad who do not even care to ask what is being done with the funds they release for them.

The groups illegally collect funds from the rural population by force and even restrict their movements tampering with their rights to move from one place to the other even in the region.

They consider the ENDF as a force that

belongs to several commanders and deny that it is a national army out to defend internal law and order as well as ensuring the rule of law.

Looking back at the timeline of the Ethiopian Revolution which was started 50 years back in February, the hopes and aspirations for democracy, good governance and prosperity which Ethiopians wished to see is still on the horizon. Yes, some basic changes have resulted from the revolution including the nationalization of rural and extra houses in urban area but still the basic problems that the people of Ethiopia have sought to end are still lingering. Democratic rights, the rule of law and good governance is being challenged by terrorist groups, extremists and all kinds of gun tottering factions that are looting public and private properties, killing innocent civilians, burning houses and public amenities.

Despite these overarching challenges, there is still hope for Ethiopia. The country has at least a responsible government, patriotic population that is completing the construction of GERD and other mega projects and abundant but yet untapped natural resources that can be used for the development of the country. Extremism and terrorism cannot be subsiding by itself. The entire electorate in the country should be able to support the government and the ENDF in restoring peace and stability across the country.

The people of Ethiopia need to stand together to retain the gains the country has so far attained and help to accelerate the reform program in the country by fighting off extremist, narrow nationalist and those fabricate and spread false information that could retard the promising progress of the country.

The current situation in the Horn of Africa demand that all citizens stand in unison instead of resorting to ethnic squabbling that will only do a disservice to the wellbeing of the people of Ethiopia. The international community and all partners across the world need to continue supporting the National Dialogue Commission which is approaching the final state of the conduct of the event.

The road to the full socio-economic development of this country may appear to be torturous but if the people of Ethiopia remain united as they have shown in the Battle of Adwa, poverty and destitution could be history as peace and stability will be restored.

Extremism is an outdated political strategy and terrorism has proved to be against the interest of the peoples of Ethiopia.

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

# Editorial

## Ethiopia's praiseworthy efforts to strengthen continental integration

Endowed with a number of rivers and other energy sources, mountainous locations suitable to generate wind energy and even geothermal sites, Ethiopia is, these days, working for feasible energy interconnection via sharing electricity to neighboring countries and beyond.

The country is incontestably advancing towards growth and prosperity through well exploiting its untapped energy sector, enriched natural resource potential and even its tourism realm. The former is the cardinal driver for all sorts of change, in fact.

It is peculiarly focused on, and the country has been endeavoring to get East African neighboring nations and even the entire continent interconnected through power share channeling through suitable grids like lighting Tanzania through Kenya.

Ethiopia has so far agreed for energy sale for Sudan, Djibouti and Kenya so as to beef up a win-win approach apart from consolidating regional integration. As energy secured from hydropower, wind, geothermal and other related sources is a quite renewable one, it is of paramount importance in coming up with climate resilient and sparkling ecology and eco-friendly economy beyond quenching the local energy demand.

The appealing step Ethiopia is taking now can be taken as strongbond to further glue regional cooperation. Ethiopia's effort to well expand the energy sector would also be of a viable means to rein the pervasive power interruption through which many countries of the African continent are highly challenged, and their industries are seriously compromised not to produce in full swing, too.

Ethiopia should therefore capitalize on expanding the ongoing energy development with a view to timely and promptly completing its projects, be they are light or mega ones, thereby confidently resolving all the socio-economic hurdles that have potentially hindered growth and change.

True, Ethiopia's projects peculiarly on the energy sector are a living proof in this regard as they help the nation share energy to neighboring countries. Yes, its move towards bolstering the energy sector is undertaken beyond addressing energy crunch at home. Nation's current initiation with regard to energy continental interconnection has simply depicted that the country has definitely had potential to get prospered and help its neighbors be prosperous, too. Since a ray of hope has been glimmered in Ethiopia, East African states and the whole continent as the former has shown firm commitment to expedite, expand and share energy potentials to all the latter as much as it can. Yes, it is time to deal with defies in relation to power outage, interruption and sluggish pace of economic development following its severe shortage.

Undeniably, a lot has to be done regarding power security despite all activities revolving around such a mammoth project are daunting and trying as well. In principle, the issue of power needs to be well addressed prior to other undertakings since it is the basis for all. It is with this understanding that Ethiopia has given due focus to the sector and even finds itself at the grade of backing up others in terms of providing them with power/energy sources.

Notably, Ethiopia is working towards addressing the impacts of power shortage through various projects, green development initiatives and mechanisms to well exploit the water, geothermal, wind and other potential sources of energy.

Of course, the country has been registering remarkable outcomes in relation to energy development, resource utilization thereby coming up with economic growth through extensive utilization of energy although it has not benefited out of the wealth as it deserves so far. Recognizing the fact that the nation has highly gifted with a number of means to ensure energy, the government is working to record robust change in power production in the years to come.

In sum, as the energy sector has contributed a lot to economic growth and entirely drives prosperity wheel well, neighboring countries have to establish firm relations with Ethiopia to grow together.

# Opinion

## Involvement of all stakeholders in national dialogue is mandatory

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Since a reform government took power, it is crystal clear that various political, economic and social measures had been taken in the country to uplift from where it was. This reform activity has been and is carried out while the country was under political unrest due to the differences and disagreements. The disparity occurred in various parts are growing to internal conflict and others volatility troubles are also worsened and shifted themselves to war.

The country has paid all time high price especially in connection with the war that broke out in the northern part of the country. Apart from claiming the lives of millions, the war forced civilians to leave their villages and exposed to violation of their rights. In the same fashion, people in other parts of the country were also victims of the mishap created due to wrong narratives and interpretation as well as interest of heroism.

All these things which have been with us for long are a source for our conflict and disagreement. In order to solve all these problems, the national dialogue commission is doing a lot of work. The Commission has a vision of solving the causes for conflicts between and among various parties.

Two solid years elapsed since the commission was established and acting as a legal entity. Since its inception, it has carried out preparations apart from collecting inputs which are imperative to make the dialogue a success. Apart from taking lessons from the best practices of countries that have had much experiences, the commission has also learned from the failures of other countries as well.

Except Amhara and Tigray states, various tasks have been carried out to involve all concerned parties in the national dialogue and respond to their quests. So far, it is believed that important inputs were gathered.

The national dialogue, which is expected to be held in Ethiopia, would incorporate various segments of the society including youth, women, community leaders, government workers, teachers and others. And the commission has prepared criteria for that.

Council of Ethiopian Civil Association, Council of Ethiopian Political Parties, Council of Ethiopian Religious Institutions, Ethiopian Teachers Association and other institutions should be cooperative to make the national dialogue process effective.

Same kind of agendas collection strategy is expected to put in place at federal

level. Likewise, various tasks have been carried out to involve Ethiopian Diaspora and Second Generation Diaspora in the national dialogue.

Transforming itself from one stage to the other, the commission begins to collect agendas or talking points. They are now identifying present and accumulated evils that forced people in the country to internal conflicts which results in local displacement, injury and death and after that it would organize a platform to find solutions. The commission is expected to identify the possible issues which lead the people to endless disagreement, quarrel and mistrust as well as endless conflicts before it organizes discussion forums that would bring solutions.

Though the commission has made fruitful tasks, the conflicts broke out here and there is a daunting challenge for it to perform its tasks according to the schedule. In order to solve the problems, conflict brewers and/ or others who striving day and night to bring chaos should refrain themselves from such deeds. They instead make themselves ready to provide response for public queries.

The commission has now transforming itself from chapter of identify, taking points to selection of participants in the dialogue. Though this is considered as a positive measure, in order to engage in the main chapter i.e. dialogue and solving the problems observed in the country, it requires to have the engagement of the society at large and the due support of political parties as well.

The national dialogue would create an opportunity for the people to discourse on its problems. The political parties and others with untold grievance would have a chance to deliberate on their problems and come up with pertinent solutions for the country in general. With no doubt, the dialogue would be a remedy for the disagreement and mental or physical damage. As the solution of the problem is found at the hands of all people, all parties should contribute their share for its success.

By and large, the successful accomplishment of the national dialogue requires to have the due participation and engagement of the society at large. The political group, who takes armed struggle as the only solution, must show their readiness just before the dialogue begins. As they eagerly expect the day that the consultation begins, the people at large should contribute its role for the successful accomplishment of the dialogue.

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



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The Ethiopian Herald

# Business & Economy

## Diversifying market opportunities in coffee birth place

BY LAKACHEW ATINAFU

The crucial role of auction markets and vertical integration in enhancing coffee production and empowering smallholders has become the cardinal concern of the government and actors in the coffee sector to curb illicit trade and thereby benefit the producers in Ethiopia.

Coffee is not merely a beverage; it is a commodity that plays a significant role in the economic and social fabric of many countries including Ethiopia. As the birthplace of coffee, Ethiopia boasts a rich coffee heritage and is renowned for producing high-quality Arabica beans. In recent years, the Ethiopian coffee industry has witnessed the emergence of auction markets and vertical integration, which have proven instrumental in bolstering coffee production, supporting smallholders, and promoting traceability. This article explores the importance of auction markets and vertical integration in Ethiopia's coffee sector, particularly in relation to smallholder empowerment and traceability.

Auction markets have emerged as vital platforms for coffee trade in Ethiopia. The most prominent auction market is the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX), which was established in 2008. The ECX acts as an intermediary between coffee producers, exporters, and international buyers, providing a transparent and efficient mechanism for price discovery and trade.

The auction system allows coffee to be traded on a standardized basis, ensuring fair prices and reducing information asymmetry in the market. By facilitating direct engagement between buyers and sellers, auction markets contribute to increased income for smallholder farmers and incentivize quality improvement.

Smallholder farmers form the backbone of Ethiopia's coffee industry, comprising approximately 95% of the coffee-growing population. Auction markets have played a pivotal role in empowering these farmers by providing them with equal opportunities to access the market. In traditional coffee marketing systems, smallholders often faced challenges such as limited bargaining power, price manipulation, and lack of market information. Auction markets have mitigated these issues by ensuring fair competition, enabling smallholders to sell their produce at competitive prices. This, in turn, has led to improved livelihoods, increased investment in productivity enhancement, and greater economic stability for smallholder communities.

Vertical integration refers to the coordination and consolidation of various stages of coffee production, from farm to cup. It involves the integration of activities such as cultivation, processing, branding, and retailing, resulting in enhanced quality control, efficiency, and traceability. In Ethiopia, vertical integration

has gained momentum, particularly in the realm of traceability coffee. Traceability refers to the ability to track coffee beans' journey from the farm to the consumer, providing information about its origin, processing methods, and social and environmental sustainability. By embracing vertical integration and traceability, Ethiopia has been able to establish itself as a producer of specialty coffees, commanding premium prices in the global market.

Vertical integration allows for greater control over the entire production process, ensuring consistent quality standards. Traceability further enhances quality assurance by enabling producers to implement sustainable farming practices, maintain product integrity, and respond to consumer demands for ethically sourced coffee.

With traceability, Ethiopian coffee can distinguish itself in the global market by highlighting its unique flavors, cultural significance, and sustainable production methods. This differentiation creates a competitive advantage, attracting discerning consumers who are willing to pay a premium for high-quality, traceable coffee.

Vertical integration facilitates direct relationships between coffee producers and buyers, fostering trust, collaboration, and long-term partnerships. This direct engagement benefits smallholders by providing market access, knowledge transfer, and increased visibility, leading to improved incomes and better livelihoods.

Traceability coffee assures consumers that their purchase supports ethical and sustainable practices, such as fair trade, organic farming, and environmental conservation. This transparency fosters consumer trust, loyalty, and a sense of social responsibility. Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority (ECTA) disclosed that the vertical coffee market linkage is benefiting farmers, export associations, and coffee suppliers thereby avoiding manipulators.

Authority Director General Adugna Debela (PhD) told The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the Authority is working on alternative approaches to legal coffee producers and suppliers in order to benefit them and the country sustainably as well.

Accordingly, he said, the Authority is establishing a platform of vertical integration system in which the farmers directly provide their coffee product to the international market, creating close relation amongst farmers and coffee suppliers, facilitating an environment for suppliers to involve as producers, and widening the benefit of women through "Women in Coffee" schemes.

The Authority secured 620 million USD from coffee export of the planned 1.75 billion USD to be achieved this fiscal year, he said, adding that the Authority is striving to achieve its target taking advantage of the

suitable season. He further stated that 80% of the coffee pruning that has been carrying out on 500,000 hectares is achieved.

Adugna expressed that the pruning is significantly helpful to increase the productivity and production of coffee by three folds whereas improving the quality by 30% to 40%. The effort has paid off as the international coffee market was reduced last year by 32% while the quality of Ethiopian coffee increased by 18%.

He remembered that the vertical coffee market linkage was commenced three years ago and gained merely 700 million USD whilst the authority secured 1.42 billion USD from exported 300,000 tons of coffee in 2022.

Nowadays, the vertical coffee market reaches 80% up to 90% coverage compared with the ECX system. Besides, the coffee plant coverage increased from 600,000 hectares to 1.2 million hectares at present following the direct market linkage approaches.

"The persistence of a long market chain (complexity), bureaucratic red tape, and illicit trade are among the serious challenges that hindered to ensure quality coffee product to the international market and traceability is under question over the past many years," he noted.

Ethiopian Coffee Exporters' Association President, Desalegn Jena, for his part said that the international standard for specialty coffee requires scoring over 85% qualities. Therefore, encouraging the vertical market and stakeholders' integration should be done to get adequate benefit from coffee sector.

Zerihun Kamiso, Sidama State Coffee Providers' Association President agreed with the integration process and said that encouraging scientific coffee market system, ensuring competitive advantages, and providing world standard coffee should be a priority issues to benefit the country from its popular cash crop.

In Ethiopia, there are over 600 coffee exporters applying the vertical scheme and supply their product to the international market while they are expected to be led by knowledge and research to get adequate benefit from coffee product and be competent internationally, it was learnt.

The Ethiopian coffee industry has witnessed remarkable advancements in recent years, driven by the establishment of auction markets and the adoption of vertical integration practices. Auction markets have empowered smallholders, ensuring fair competition and improved incomes, while vertical integration and traceability have positioned Ethiopian coffee as a premium product in the global market. By continuing to invest in auction markets and promoting vertical integration, Ethiopia can sustainably enhance its coffee sector, benefiting both smallholders and the country's rich coffee heritage.

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**By embracing vertical integration and traceability, Ethiopia has been able to establish itself as a producer of specialty coffees, commanding premium prices in the global market**

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# In the Sphere of Diplomacy

## *Ethiopian Airlines:* Emblematic diplomat

BY EYUEL KIFLU

Ethiopian Airlines, the national flag carrier of Ethiopia, has emerged as a vital force in the country's economy and plays a significant role in the aviation sector throughout Africa and beyond. With its expanding network, strategic partnerships, and substantial contributions to the continent's development, the airline has come to represent Africa's remarkable aviation capabilities.

Recognized as a key driver of Ethiopia's GDP, Ethiopian Airlines holds the distinction of being Africa's largest and most profitable airline, consistently contributing to the nation's economic progress. In recent years, the airline has experienced remarkable growth in passenger numbers, destinations, and cargo operations, resulting in a positive impact on Ethiopia's overall GDP. It contributes around 5.7 per cent country's GDP share. In addition flying to the four corners of the world, the airlines has also become Ethiopia's symbolic diplomat.

The airline's extensive route network connects Ethiopia to major cities across Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Americas. This connectivity not only facilitates trade and tourism but also enhances Ethiopia's global image as a major hub for business and travel. Ethiopian Airlines' efficient operations and strategic partnerships have attracted foreign investments, benefiting various sectors of the Ethiopian economy, including hospitality, logistics, and tourism.

Moreover, Ethiopian Airlines holds immense significance for African countries, serving as a catalyst for regional integration and economic cooperation. The airline has been at the forefront of efforts to improve air connectivity within the continent, allowing for easier movement of people and goods across borders. Its commitment to opening new routes and increasing flight frequencies has fostered economic and cultural exchanges among African nations and beyond. Furthermore, the airline's contribution to maintaining diplomatic relations between countries is an additional benefit for Ethiopia.

One of Ethiopian Airlines' notable contributions to the continent lies in its stake share in different African countries. The airline has successfully acquired equity stakes in several African carriers. For instance, it holds a 40% stake in ASKY Airlines, a regional airline based in Togo with a strong presence in West and Central Africa. Ethiopian Airlines also holds a 49% stake in Malawian Airlines, the national carrier of Malawi, since its launch in 2013. Additionally, the airline has a 49% stake in Tchadia Airlines, the national airline of Chad, which was established in 2018 and also it has stake in other countries carrier. These partnerships have not only enhanced the operational efficiency of these airlines but also promoted collaboration and knowledge sharing, leading to overall growth in Africa's aviation sector.

Furthermore, Ethiopian Airlines has played

**One of Ethiopian Airlines' notable contributions to the continent lies in its stake share in different African countries. The airline has successfully acquired equity stakes in several African carriers**

a crucial role in supporting the economic development of African countries through its cargo operations. The airline has facilitated the export of African products, including fresh produce, flowers, coffee, and textiles, to international markets. This boost has had a positive effect on the agricultural and manufacturing sectors of various African nations, creating employment opportunities and driving economic progress.

In addition to its economic contributions, Ethiopian Airlines has been actively involved in humanitarian and philanthropic

endeavors across Africa. The airline has played a significant role in delivering relief supplies during natural disasters, supporting healthcare initiatives, and providing transportation for medical emergencies. Such initiatives have earned Ethiopian Airlines a reputation as a responsible corporate citizen committed to the well-being of the continent.

As Africa continues to strengthen its position in the global aviation industry, Ethiopian Airlines stands as a shining example of African excellence and ambition. With its robust infrastructure, expansive network, and commitment to innovation, the airline is contributing to the transformation of Africa's aviation landscape, ensuring that the continent's economic growth is supported by a world-class airline.

Recently, Ethiopian Airlines reached an agreement with Boeing to purchase 20 Boeing 777 X9 aircraft, marking the first of its kind in Africa. This deal has been commended by the U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ervin Massinga made, who believes it will greatly strengthen the economic relations between Ethiopia and the United States. The ambassador recently stated that the aircraft purchase agreement between the Boeing Company and Ethiopian Airlines will move the strong relationship between the two institutions into a new phase. "Not only this, but the agreement is also beneficial for the growth of the economies of Ethiopia and the U.S."

During the Ethiopian Airlines Group signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Boeing Company, the CEO of Ethiopian Airlines Group, Mesfin Tasew, emphasized the significance of this order, stating that it is the first of its kind in Africa and will elevate the airline to new heights.

Boeing Company Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing Brad McMuller said that the companies are strategic partners for a long. "We plan to work together based on the demand of the airliner."

According to ENA report the Ethiopian Airlines has also signed an agreement to purchase a total of 84 passenger aircraft from Boeing and Airbus in November 2023. The airline aims to increase its annual revenue to \$25 billion USD by 2035 and carry 67 million passengers annually.

Additionally, Ethiopian Airlines has received numerous aviation awards from different organizations and has been recognized as the Best Airline in Africa for six consecutive years. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the airline demonstrated remarkable resilience and was the only profitable company in Africa, distinguishing itself among global airlines. With over 75 years of successful operation, Ethiopian Airlines has become the leading carrier in the continent and has built a global brand.

According to reports, Ethiopian airlines, as a flag carrier boasts an extensive network of over one hundred and fifty destinations across five continents. With a fleet of over one hundred and forty aircrafts the airline stands out as a leader in the continent's aviation industry. Presently, Ethiopian airlines operate 20 Airbuses A350s, 44 Boeing 737s, 20 Boeing 777s, 29 Boeing 787s, 32 Bombardier Q400s, and 3 Boeing 767s. This impressive fleet enables the airline in Africa to provide unparalleled connectivity and service to passengers worldwide.

In conclusion, Ethiopian Airlines remains a vital contributor to Ethiopia's GDP, a symbol of Africa's aviation prowess, and an engine of economic growth on the continent. Through its expanding network, stake share in different African countries, and commitment to regional integration, the airline continues to promote trade, tourism, and cooperation among African nations. As it continues to soar to new heights, Ethiopian Airlines serves as a testament to Africa's determination to shape its destiny in the global aviation industry.



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# Creating a generation of transformative African leaders

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

Through regional and continental as well as global institutions, leaders introduce both short and long term objectives. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2030 by the United Nations and also Agenda 2063 'Africa We Want' by the African Union are some of the prominent set objectives that world leaders put their hands on in order to achieve them.

Realizing a desired objective, leadership wisdom and idea creation are the driving machines to get to the point. To this end, cultivating leaders that can create a better idea and action should be the query that needs to be answered. Again, platforms that can support the cultivation process should be built.

Recently, the United Nations (UN) and the African Leadership Excellence Academy (AFLEX) have signed a Letter of Intent to collaborate in advancing academic and thought leadership and the production and exchange of ideas to drive progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Ethiopia and the wider African context.

During the signing ceremony, Ramiz Alakbarov (Ph.D.), United Nations Assistant Secretary-General and UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, and Mr. Zadig Abreha, Chief of the African Leadership Excellence Academy, represented the two parties to sign the Letter of Intent.

According to the press release, the two parties will collaborate on the six major transformative entry points with the potential for catalytic and multiplier effects on the SDGs, significantly contributing to their achievement. These entry points encompass: food systems, energy access and affordability, digital connectivity, education, jobs and social protection, and climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. The collaboration will also involve close cooperation with the Ministry of Planning and Development and sectoral ministries.

Enhancing the capacity and skills of civil servants and other stakeholders in social policies jointly is the key aspect of the collaboration included in the agreement. This effort will concentrate on areas such as planning, communication, idea generation, and fostering a culture of dialogue. The ultimate aim is to nurture a new generation of transformative leaders who will champion the achievement of the SDGs in Ethiopia and Africa.

Addressing the significance of the



collaboration, as to the press release, Ramiz Alakbarov stated, "This partnership will serve as a framework for identifying and nurturing the next generation of leaders who must lead Ethiopia's development narrative, particularly with a focus on young people and marginalized groups. Leadership grounded in the African context and aspirations are indispensable for realizing the SDGs in Africa."

AFLEX Chief Mr. Zadig Abreha on his part said, "AFLEX aspires to become a place where academic rigor meets worldliness. Also, here in AFLEX we aspire to become bridge builders amongst the academia, civil society, the public and private sector, the leaders of African countries, generation of African leaders and Africa and the globe. With this view in mind, together with institutions like the UN systems we will work towards generating world class leaders for both Ethiopia and the continent at large. And with this effort, we can safely say that we can achieve agenda 2064 and SDGs. In doing so, Africa shall make 22nd century a truly African century!"

"We are grateful for the kind assistance and unparalleled commitment exhibited by Dr. Ramiz for the inking of this pioneering letter of intent which I would rather name it as a memorandum of

action. I would like to express my deep gratitude for the invaluable support and unwavering dedication displayed by Dr. Ramiz in the process of formalizing this groundbreaking letter of intent, which I believe is more fittingly referred to as a memorandum of action," added Zadig.

By the same token, Leulseged Tadesse, Director General of International Organizations Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told *The Ethiopian Herald* exclusively that Africa needs leaders that can amplify a continental shared and common vision through a platform with reinvigorated pan-Africanism with AFLEX platform. The important thing is how we are going to forge common and shared vision in Africa.

The director also mentioned that to have the desired common vision and identity, we need a platform and AFLEX is going to give that, adding, "The African continent and leaders could take the advantage of the AFLEX platform to come together and deliberate upon the challenges that Africa continuously faces."

"If Africa has a shared vision, then it will help Africa to promote common position in different multilateral settings. The current global order should be reformed, and we need to provide concrete idea."

Africa needs leaders that could share their ideas to come up with practical solutions. Ultimately, leadership is the key in order to put Africa in its rightful place at the global level, the director added.

As to the director, Sululta, where AFLEX is founded, is to come out as the place of dialogue and come together to go out of the box and think ahead of the curves." In addition, United Nations system, the director further elaborated, is a real partner for Africa through the 2030 agenda and the implementation of our continental vision because the UN system supports member states to implement their national strategies.

"The agreement signed between the UN and AFLEX would forge a new partnership and support the whole continent to promote a shared vision and a common agenda through AFLEX. That will put Africa's interest at the center of international stages. AFLEX would be at the service of the whole continent. So, we are working with our partners in order to further transform AFLEX for continental dialogue," the director elucidated.

Similarly, Ramiz Alakbarov, on his part said to the newspaper, "We do believe that it is a high time to incorporate Africa in the high tables of the world. Those decisions and reforms of the UN institutions are extremely pressing."

Ramiz noted that in Ethiopia, in the country level, we are working with the leadership of the country and continent to bring together knowledge and UN skills, and also bring them into a conversation and knowledge exchange.

"AFLEX is the most vanguard institution that is cultivating the culture of debate-pluralism and debating different ideas from various perspectives. It offers us a perfect platform. It has the required leadership, thinking, infrastructure, and right skill set to develop," added Ramiz.



# Society

## *Seqota Declaration: A promising initiative to curtail stunting, tackle malnutrition*

BY TEKLE TESFALIDET

In a nation-wide effort to transform child health and nutrition, and combat the long-standing challenges of malnutrition, Ethiopia unveiled the groundbreaking Seqota Declaration in July 2015. With an unwavering determination to eliminate child malnutrition and achieve a zero stunting rate by 2030, this ambitious program has emerged as a ray of hope for the country's youngest generation. Spearheaded by the Ministry of Health, the Seqota Declaration has made remarkable strides, largely thanks to the invaluable contributions of the Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI)/ the National Information Platform for Nutrition (NIPN), and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

These organizations have played a pivotal role by generating evidence to assess the program's implementation status, enabling informed decision-making at higher levels of government. Through their steadfast commitment to evidence-based research and active participation in decision-making processes, EPHI and NIPN have been instrumental in driving the Seqota Declaration towards unprecedented success.

The Seqota Declaration (SD) is an innovative commitment by the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) to end child stunting by 2030. It is implemented nationwide, targeting areas with the highest malnutrition rates in consultation with regional governments. The SD aims to eradicate child malnutrition in Ethiopia with a phased approach: innovation phase (2015-2020), expansion phase (2021-2025), and scale-up phase (2026-2030). The primary goal is to eliminate hunger, ensure food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture for overall development. For SD implementation, the government has allocated the necessary budget from its treasury, supplemented by resources from nutrition partners. The Ministry of Health coordinates the Seqota Declaration with the support of a Federal Program Delivery Unit, which facilitates coordination and engagement among multiple sectors and stakeholders in nutrition.

According to the SD document, initially, the program focused on the Tekeze Basin in Amhara and Tigray states, covering 40 Woreda's. The declaration took its name from the town of Seqota, the capital of the Wag Hemra Zone in Amhara State, which faced severe famine in the 1980s.

To assess the impact of the initial expansion phase of the Seqota Declaration (SD) and inform evidence-based decision-making, researchers from EPHI/NIPN, and IFPRI conducted an impact assessment. This rigorous assessment, utilizing the Lives Saved Tool (LiST) modeling, was carried out from May to October 2023. It provided



invaluable insights into the progress achieved in reducing childhood stunting and mortality through the implementation of the SD.

The assessment revealed that within just one year after the initial expansion of the SD into 240 woreda's, the program successfully prevented a total of about 60,000 cases of stunting and 2,900 cases of mortality. Looking ahead, projections were made to estimate the potential impact of further expanding the SD program. Projection assessments showed that further expansion of the SD would significantly reduce the rate of stunting and mortality.

These remarkable findings received high praise and commendation during a collaborative high-level government meeting held sometime back. The gathering, which involved the former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ministers of the multi-sectoral ministries, state presidents, and regional bureau heads, aimed to evaluate the performance of the 2022-2023, approve the budget for 2023-2024, and introduce a transformation roadmap for nutrition. The attendance of key stakeholders, such as the Federal Ministry of Health Nutrition Coordination Office, regional administrators, urban city administrators, mayors, and sector heads, reflected the government's comprehensive approach to addressing nutrition challenges.

The Chair of the meeting, the former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Demeke Mekonnen, expressed admiration for the results based on the conclusive findings of the impact assessment. Additionally, the former Deputy Prime Minister emphasized the need for sustained efforts to achieve the program's ultimate goal. The importance of community participation and leadership throughout the implementation process was also underscored.

On her part, the former Health Minister, Lia Tadesse (MD), lauded the achievements and emphasized the importance of expanding the Seqota Declaration from its current reach of 240 to 700 woreda's in the coming years.

Lia further emphasized that expanding the Seqota Declaration's coverage to 10 percent of the country's total area, based on additional studies, and could potentially save 80,340 stunted children within a year.

The results achieved so far have had a big impact on government's decisions and policies. Ethiopia has shown its dedication to addressing nutrition challenges and improving the health of its people by allocating a 696 million Birr for the expansion of the Seqota Declaration during 2023-2024. Notably, several regional states have allocated funds to support the initiative, further emphasizing the widespread recognition of its importance. The expansion program of the projects is making a remarkable contribution to various aspects, including ensuring food security at the household level, promoting local development, creating job opportunities for the youth, and ensuring female participation and benefits.

Here, it is important to emphasize the significance of the study findings, as they have provided robust support for the decision to allocate significant funding towards expanding SD activities into additional woreda's. Moreover, these findings offer valuable insights to higher officials, enabling them to gain a better understanding of the status of SD implementation in relation to the planned activities.

To further strengthen evidence-based decision-making and prioritize health system and nutrition research, researchers at EPHI/NIPN Ethiopia are persistently dedicating their efforts to generating timely, relevant, and high-quality evidence. Ensuring the widespread adoption of evidence throughout the research process is crucial. This requires emphasizing the importance of timeliness, relevance, engagement with decision-makers, and maintaining high quality. Proactively involving decision-makers in the research process facilitates the optimal utilization and application of evidence, thereby cultivating well-informed decision-making in the realm of health and nutrition.

Furthermore, concurrent to their work in

generating timely information, EPHI and NIPN Ethiopia have actively engaged in advocacy campaigns aimed at raising awareness about the critical importance of nutrition and the Seqota Declaration. They have utilized various platforms, including media engagements, public events, their website, social media channels, policy briefs, and community outreach initiatives, to promote understanding and garner support for improved nutrition outcomes.

Through these multifaceted approaches, they have not only sought to disseminate knowledge but also foster a broader understanding of the significance of nutrition in achieving positive health outcomes. By actively engaging with the public, policymakers, and communities, EPHI/NIPN Ethiopia continues to play a vital role in promoting awareness and garnering support for initiatives that aim to improve nutrition on a larger scale.

As the country strives to eliminate stunting and improve nutrition, collaborative efforts and evidence-based approaches are crucial for achieving success. In this regard, researchers from EPHI/NIPN and IFPRI are untiringly working to deliver high-quality evidence in a timely manner. Unlike traditional approaches that poorly involve policymakers in the research process, they actively engage decision-makers.

In conclusion, the Seqota Declaration serves as a testament to Ethiopia's resolute dedication to eliminating child stunting and enhancing the welfare of its children. However, the realization of such commitments hinges solely on evidence-based decision-making. The declaration exemplifies the utmost importance of basing policy choices on robust evidence and has showcased the transformative potential of collaboration between research institutions and decision-makers. As Ethiopia continues on its path to eradicate child malnutrition and address other health challenges, the invaluable contributions of EPHI and NIPN will persist as crucial drivers in attaining the ambitious objectives outlined in the Seqota Declaration and other health and nutrition

# International

## AU expresses deep concern over security threats to Africa's development

African Union (AU) has expressed its "deep concern" over prevailing security perils across Africa as major impediments to the socio-economic development of the continent.

The statement was made by the AU's Peace and Security Council in a communique issued Saturday that followed its recent meeting, which dwelt upon the current situation in the conflict-hit eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Reiterating its deep concern over the scourge of conflicts across different parts of Africa, the council said these conflict and insecurity situations are obstructing the socio-economic development of the continent.

Against this backdrop, the council underscored the 55-member continental organization's strong commitment to realizing its 50-year continental development blueprint, Agenda 2063, with particular emphasis on its flagship peace and security aspirations, including silencing the guns in Africa by 2030.

It further stressed the need to realize African leaders' recent pledge to achieve the goal of a conflict-free continent, to make peace a reality for all of Africa's citizens and not to bequeath the burden of conflicts to future generations.

Addressing the 37th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the AU last month, AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat expressed similar concern over peace and security challenges in Africa.

Faki specifically highlighted recurrent conflict situations, unconstitutional changes of governments and political and institutional instability as factors jeopardizing the continent's stability, peace and development.

He noted concerning security challenges in the Horn of Africa, which threaten the sovereignty, integrity, security, and fundamental interests of all countries in the region, saying that the Great Lakes Region of Africa is particularly affected by a worsening security crisis, while the Sahel region is facing a security vacuum following the withdrawal of the United Nations mission from the region.

## Africa Faces a Decisive Moment to Shape a New Future – The Africa CEO Forum 2024

**Kigali, Rwanda)** – As global crises cast long shadows, Africa stands at a critical crossroads: Will the continent remain on the sidelines of history or will its leaders band together to forge a new path?

This pivotal question will drive the 2024 Africa CEO Forum, set for 16 and 17 May in Kigali, Rwanda. This year's theme, *At the Table or On the Menu? A Critical Moment to Shape a New Future for Africa*, underscores the important juncture at which the continent finds itself amidst global economic shifts and challenges.

This year's 11th edition of the landmark Africa CEO Forum marks more than a decade of unparalleled gatherings of Africa's most influential leaders, innovators, and policymakers.

The Forum will tackle four transformative agendas: leadership, digital transformation, continental integration, and financing. Through a series of panel discussions, workshops, and

roundtables, participants will explore strategies to achieve the highest public policy standards conducive to growth; to ensure African business is at the forefront of disruptive innovation; to leverage Africa's collective weight through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA);

and to creatively overcome obstacles to financing Africa's ambitions. Designed to spur actionable solutions, the summit will accelerate the rise of new African success stories.

Amir Ben Yahmed, President of the Africa CEO Forum, emphasises, "We call on our community of leaders shaping the future of Africa to recognise the structural and enduring consequences of the actions they take at this critical time. The forum will be a crucible for innovative strategies and partnerships, propelling the continent into the opportunities of tomorrow."

Sérgio Pimenta, IFC's Vice President for Africa, said, "Turning Africa's \$3 trillion GDP into \$30 trillion by 2050 will require an unbridled African private sector, enabled by the continent's policymakers to forge partnerships that create markets, increase intra-African trade and advance investment on the continent."

The Africa CEO Forum is the continent's premier gathering, uniting Africa's top executives, global investors, and government leaders annually. In partnership with IFC, this year's flagship event will host more than 2,000 public and private sector decision-makers, including over 900 CEOs.

Confirmed attendees include high-profile individuals such as H.E. Wamkele Mene, General Secretary of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), Makhtar Diop, Managing Director of IFC, Mesfin Tassew, Group CEO of Ethiopian Airlines, Jean-Pascal Tricoire, Chairman of the Board of Schneider Electric, James Mworio, Group CEO & MD of Centum Investment, Sudhir Ruparelia, Chairman of Ruparelia Group, Clare Akamanzi, CEO of NBA Africa, Rostam Aziz, CEO of Taifa Gas, Hardy Pemhiwa, President & CEO of Cassava Technologies or Patricia Poku Diaby, CEO Plot Entreprenise Ghana, Karl Olutokun Toriola, MTN Nigeria's CEO, Faith Mukutu, CEO of Zambeef, Diane Karusisi, CEO Bank of Kigali, Patty Karuaihe-Martin, CEO of NamibRe. Their presence underlines the forum's status as a critical convener for those looking to shape Africa's business landscape.

In addition, several Heads of State are expected to attend, further signifying the Forum's pivotal role in fostering high-level dialogue and partnerships. These leaders will join forces with attendees to contribute to a collective endeavour that promises to chart a new course for Africa's economic future.

## Oil prices slips amid concerns over Middle East, China demand

LONDON, (Reuters) - Global benchmark Brent slipped on Monday, dipping below \$82 a barrel, as persistent geopolitical concerns in the Middle East and Russia collide with jitters about softening demand in China.

Brent futures were down 31 cents at \$81.77 a barrel as at 1222 GMT, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) slipped 34 cents to \$77.67.

Both benchmarks ended the week lower on bearish Chinese data that signalled weaker demand in the world's leading crude importer.

Brent closed down 1.8%, although the contract has remained above \$80 a barrel for just over a month. Meanwhile, WTI ended 2.5% lower.

"The oil complex is in a wait-and-watch mode over the Gaza war and its cascading conflicts, with a question-mark over Israel's military plans, now that the Muslim holy month of Ramadan is starting without a

ceasefire and hostage deal," said Vandana Hari of Vanda Insights.

Hopes for a ceasefire appeared to have stalled. No dates have been set for further meetings with mediators in Cairo, a Hamas official told Reuters.

Over the weekend dozens of drones were downed by U.S., French and British forces in the Red Sea area, after Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis targeted bulk carrier Propel Fortune and U.S. destroyers in the region, the U.S. military said.

On Monday, an explosion in the vicinity of a vessel 71 nautical miles southwest of Yemen's port of Saleef was reported.

The Houthis have been attacking ships in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden since November in what they say is a campaign of solidarity with Palestinians during Israel's war against Hamas.

China's imports of crude oil rose in the first two months of the year compared with the same period in 2023, but they were weaker

than the preceding months, data showed on Thursday, continuing a trend of softening purchases by the world's biggest buyer.

Meanwhile, mixed signs from U.S. data last week prompted some traders to adjust positions.

U.S. job growth accelerated in February, but a rise in the unemployment rate and moderation in wage gains kept the anticipated June interest rate cut on the table.

U.S. inflation data is due on Tuesday.

On the supply side, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its allies, collectively known as OPEC+, agreed early this month to extend voluntary oil output cuts of 2.2 million barrels per day into the second quarter.

"With OPEC+ extending its voluntary production cut agreement until the end of second quarter, this could tighten the market as demand recovers from its seasonal lull," ANZ Research analysts said.

## Egypt says land sale, IMF accord will ease budget problems

Egypt's primary budget surplus will rise to above 3.5% in the fiscal year that will begin on July, finance minister Mohamed Maait said.

Egypt has taken major steps towards lowering its budget deficit by selling real estate as well as agreeing a support package with the International Monetary Fund, its finance minister said on Sunday.

Egypt's primary budget surplus will rise to above 3.5% in the fiscal year that will begin on July, finance minister Mohamed Maait told a news conference on Sunday.

The primary surplus does not include interest payments, which in the seven months to end-January accounted for well over half of all expenditure and have kept Egypt deeply in deficit.

The finance ministry last month forecast a primary general budget surplus equal to 2.5% of gross domestic product for the current fiscal 2023/24 year.

Egypt agreed in February to sell the development rights to Ras al-Hikma, a prime Mediterranean resort destination, to Abu Dhabi for \$24 billion and expects more than \$20 billion from an IMF-led package

signed last Wednesday.

The package includes \$3 billion in funding from the World Bank, Maait said.

"The positive part is the Ras al-Hikma deal, a not-small portion of which will enter the general budget in pounds," Mohamed Maait told reporters. "The total deficit will be less than targeted because of Ras al-Hikma."

Maait said the budget had been hurt by a drop in Suez Canal and other revenue, while expenditure had surged because of a sliding currency and higher interest rates on Egypt's debts.

As part of the IMF package, Egypt devalued its currency to around 50 Egyptian pounds to the dollar from 30.85 pounds and raised its key overnight interest rates by 600 basis points.

A chronic shortage of dollars has led to an immense back-up at ports. Since January, Egypt has released \$13 billion worth of goods from ports, Maait said.

Maait said the government would continue a programme of budget tightening as well as pursuing further sales of state assets and was aiming to keep the country's debt at under 90% of gross domestic product.

# Planet Earth

## Implementing Proclamation contents ensures forest development goals, global environmental targets, generating incomes

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

A legislative framework outlining the guidelines for the sustainable management of forests in a certain area or country is known as the Forest Development, Conservation, and Utilization Proclamation. Usually, it addresses issues including development, use, conservation, and forest preservation.

Ensuring that forests are maintained to balance environmental, social, and economic demands is the primary goal of such a declaration. This might involve taking action to stop deforestation, encourage reforestation, control logging, save biodiversity, and so on.

Since the proclamation provides a legal framework for the sustainable management of forests, ensuring that resources are used to meet current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, planning and regulating forest development have several encouraging implications and are crucial for sustainable forest management.

The proclamation is also key to conserving the biodiversity of the country. Because it includes provisions for the protection of biodiversity within forests, ensuring the conservation of plant and animal species and their habitats. Furthermore, by regulating activities such as logging, mining, and land conversion within forested areas, the proclamation helps protect the environment from degradation and ensures the maintenance of ecosystem services such as water regulation, carbon sequestration, and soil conservation.

Nowadays, forest development supports the community on a socioeconomic level by outlining ways that local communities may sustainably profit from forest resources, including through revenue-sharing programs or community-based forest management efforts. Additionally, the proclamation lays out guidelines that organizations, companies, and government bodies engaged in forest management must abide by. To guarantee adherence to these guidelines, it also lays out enforcement procedures.

Besides, forest management by proclamation demonstrates the country's international responsibilities. A Forest Development Proclamation that complies with international forest management agreements and conventions displays a country's global commitment to sustainable development and environmental preservation. It is also essential for protecting the country's biodiversity since it contains clauses that guarantee the preservation of plant and animal species as well as their ecosystems by protecting biodiversity inside forests. Furthermore, the proclamation guarantees

the preservation of ecosystem services like water management, and soil conservation by prohibiting activities like logging, mining, and land conversion inside wooded regions.

More significantly, the proclamation discusses carbon sequestration—the technique of removing carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the atmosphere and storing it to slow down global warming. This can be accomplished by technological means, such as carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology, or by natural processes, such as planting trees. Carbon sequestration lowers the atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases and slows down global warming by taking CO<sub>2</sub> out of the atmosphere and storing it in vegetation, soil, or geological formations.

Carbon sequestration plays an important part in Ethiopia's attempts to combat climate change and promote sustainable land management practices. Ethiopia did its utmost to sequester carbon through afforestation and replanting, notably through initiatives like the Green Legacy Initiative. The country also employs agroforestry methods, which entail incorporating trees and shrubs into agricultural landscapes and are advocated in Ethiopia to improve soil fertility, biodiversity, and carbon sequestration. Farmers may improve their livelihoods and sequester carbon by planting trees on their farms.

In light of the significance and effects of carbon sequestration and forest development, the Council of Ministers examined and adopted the legislative frameworks of the "Proclamation of Forest Development, Protection, and Use" during its 27th regular meeting. This new proclamation is essential for the growth, preservation, and protection of Ethiopia's forests as well as for putting legal restrictions on the country's carbon sales. Furthermore, the proclamation seeks to advance fair use of forest resources for the benefit of current and future generations, sustainable forest management, and biodiversity protection.

According to the Proclamation, the forest sector plays a vital role in mitigating the negative consequences of climate change and promoting sustainable forest development, conservation, and exploitation. As a result, the Proclamation plays an important role in addressing environmental, social, and economic issues created by the country's high degree of forest degradation. Furthermore, forest development, protection, and use have an important role in reducing soil erosion, desertification, and loss of biodiversity. The Proclamation also plays an important role in balancing demand and supply for forest products, supporting agricultural production, and guaranteeing food security.

Experts in the area also stated that the new

forest development, conservation, and usage proclamation will make Ethiopia's carbon sales legally binding and promote private sector participation. Furthermore, it enables the growth and conservation of Ethiopia's forest resources by placing carbon stock into the world market and creating an economy that is not immune to climate change. It is also critical in growing Ethiopia's forest resources and raising revenue from carbon sales.

Dr. Yitebitu Moges, Ethiopian REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) Program Coordinator, stated that there was no legal framework in place to conduct carbon sales in Ethiopia. However, the new proclamation will play a critical role in growing Ethiopia's forest resources and raising revenue from carbon sales.

In addition, the legality of forest development, usage, and carbon sales has been considerably addressed by the proclamation that the Council of Ministers approved at its 27th regular meeting. Hence, the proclamation is important not only to expand forest resources and to obtain revenue but also to address the operational legality gap, he emphasized.

Ethiopia's Forest Development Senior Forestry Specialist and the National Green Legacy Initiative Program Coordinator Dr. Adefires Worku said that the proclamation is imperative and appropriate to manage the actual results that are gained currently from forest development in a proper and legal system.

The new proclamation plays a vital role in promoting the industry's growth and enhancing private-sector engagement. It is also critical for sustainable forest management and balances economic, social, and environmental demands. Besides, it, which includes provisions for biodiversity conservation within forests, serves to conserve Ethiopia's unique flora and fauna, including indigenous species. This as a result will help the country to get additional income from carbon sales, he noted.

Indeed, preparing and approving the proclamation is critical for mitigating the harmful consequences of climate change through various measures because forests are important in climate change mitigation since they sequester and store carbon. The proclamation is also a significant step in demonstrating Ethiopia's efforts to mitigate climate change via sustainable forest management.

Nevertheless, the government and the concerned bodies must firmly enforce the contents of the proclamation via strong commitment and institutional checks and balances. This, in turn, helps to achieve national forest development goals and global environmental targets while also generating considerable currencies from carbon sales.

**Nowadays,  
forest development  
supports the community  
on a socioeconomic  
level by outlining ways  
that local communities  
may sustainably  
profit from forest  
resources, including  
through revenue-  
sharing programs or  
community-based forest  
management efforts**