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ERCS ink partnership agreement with ICRC

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA- The Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS) and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) signed yesterday a Partnership Framework Agreement to work together on various areas of mutual concern.

Accordingly, the two parties signed the 2024 Operational Cooperation

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Ethiopia on move to adopt AI policy

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDISABABA- As the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) grows at the global level, policy adoption on the subject is becoming almost obligatory to Ethiopia, the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) said.

The IFA held a discussion forum on AI and its impact on foreign relations here yesterday.

Cognizant of the AI's growing impact on

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Jafar Bedru



Ambassador Eshete Tilahun



Brigadier General Wassihun Nigatu

Karamara manifests Ethiopians' zeal for sovereignty: War veteran

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopians have to build patriotic sentiment and ensure the sovereignty of their motherland by drawing lessons from the victory of Karamara, a veteran army officer said.

The country has commemorated the 46th anniversary of the victory of Karamara that it had achieved over the invading Somalia forces on the 5th of March 1978.

Regarding the Day, Brigadier General Wassihun Nigatu who had firsthand experience at the battle, said that Ethiopians must learn from the Karamara and other

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Center recognizes parties discharging nat'l duties

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – Bella Medical and Rehabilitation awarded yesterday different stakeholders who have made great contribution in assisting its efforts to provide medical support for those injured during the North Ethiopian conflict.

In his opening remark, Armed Forces Comprehensive Specialized Hospital Commander Brigadier General Hailu Endashaw (MD) said that the awardees have made continuous support to people who have sustained physical damages for the sake of their country.

Despite a number of challenges, the center has provided the necessary treatment for more than 3,670 citizens who were injured in the northern conflict and has helped them to recover.

Before obtaining its present name, the center was called Army General Hospital, Emperor Haileselassie I Hospital, Assistance Coordination Center, Communication College and Special Boarding School at various times.

Colonel Maiza Zeleke, who is in charge of the General Service of the Bella Medical and Rehabilitation Center, said on the occasion that the center in collaboration



with various parts has provided better treatment for people who have sustained physical injuries due to the two-year conflict.

The Ethiopian Diaspora Association Vice President Demeke Negassa indicated the association has been supplementing the country's development activities.

Besides, the association is working in

promoting Ethiopia's national interest and protecting the country from any threats through cooperative effort. "For instance the association played a significant role in protecting the country during the northern conflict."

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Sister Root Wondwosen,

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An African victory, an inspiration for artistic creativity

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UN Environmental Assembly call for action to address planetary triple threat

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Spreading integration in East Africa

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News

Council of Ministries reviewing second-quarter performance

The Council of Ministers began yesterday the evaluation of the performance of the second quarter of the 2023/24 fiscal year in the presence of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD).

The evaluation started by focusing on the performances presented regarding the four sectors of administration and justice, social and economy.

Premier Abiy has started evaluation forums to develop a culture of performance in government institutions, according to information from Office of the Prime Minister.



Collaborative effort vital to address cyber insecurity: INSA

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA-Addressing the challenges of cyber insecurity requires holistic approach involving government, private sector and international organizations, the Information Network and Security Administration (INSA).

The two-day cyber security and digital transformation conference that is being organized by INSA and Cyber-Security Professionals Association was kicked off yesterday.

Speaking at the occasion, INSA Director General Tigist Hamid stated that developing countries like Ethiopia are struggling with access to adequate digital infrastructure, insufficient fund to build robust cyber-security frameworks, implement comprehensive cyber-security related laws.

Different sources predict that by the end of 2024, the cost of cyber-attacks on the global economy would top to 10.5 trillion USD. This shows how cyber-security becomes critical concern that needs special attention from researchers, academicians, institutions and associations to confidentially ensure the protection and security, she added.

The director general further highlighted that the quantity and complexity of cyber-attacks has also escalated at national level. "In Ethiopia, 4,623 cyber-attempts were recorded during the first half of the current fiscal year."

In the same period, the percentage of the highest risks of cyber attempts are more than doubled to 150% as compared to the first six months report of last year. Financial sectors, media outlets, critical government organizations, and higher education institutions as well as healthcare centers were the major targeted institutions.

Tigist also noted that in 2024, the cyber-

security landscape continues to present significant challenges. "Thus, we need to reassess our security strategies and policies while becoming more adaptive and proactive to stay ahead."

Thus, the major objective of holding such international conferences is primarily to serve as a platform facilitating the exchange of knowledge, information and learning, empowering professionals and association.

"Collaboration with such associations helps to develop and advocate cyber security policies, overcome cyber related challenges that the nation is currently facing. It would also establish networking hub that will encourage cooperation with public and private sectors, academia, industry, and international organization," she remarked.

Cyber Security Professionals Association's President Birhanu Beyene (PhD) on his part said the conference which is unique in its type, timely hybrid conference on cyber security and digital transformation is vital to address the challenges in digital transformation.

"Just like our forefathers and foremothers who fought back the mighty colonizers in Adwa, we the new generation shall defend and secure the digital assets and sovereignty of Ethiopia and Africa."

He went on saying: "It is with this spirit the Ethiopian cyber-security association is established and closely working with key stakeholders, INSA, MInT, universities, enterprises and national and international partners with similar goals. Though organizing this conference is huge milestone in our journey we also know that we need to work more.

Birhanu further highlighted that over 12 research papers would be presented on sideline events which are expected to attract policy dialogue among academicians, business owners and professionals.

Five universities launch digital multimedia studios

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - Five public universities have inaugurated digital multimedia studios to enhance access to quality education for all students through harnessing digital learning platforms.

The five universities that inaugurated digital multimedia studios last Monday are Addis Ababa University, Bahir Dar University, Dire Dawa University, Hawassa University and Jimma University.

The launched project is a five-year initiative focusing on thematic areas of human capacity development that aims to reach 35,000 instructors and 800,000 students, develop two model courses that serve as model practices in an online education, e-learning resource center and establish state-of-the-art digital multimedia studios.

During the inauguration of the national digital multimedia studio Addis Ababa University Interim President (AAU), Samuel Kifle (PhD) stated that the board members of AAU have outlined a four-year strategic plan targeting instructors and students to create a conducive learning environment.

He said this initiative helps to recruit model graduate students in the university and is paramount to go further. It also ensures the sustainability of higher education institutions through supporting them technologically to assure quality of education.

MasterCard Foundation Country Director for Ethiopia, Samuel Yalew on his part stated that the plan is aimed at enabling 10 million youths to create and get jobs in the country.

He added the quality of education and relevant skills are needed to achieve the nation's development.

The inauguration five digital multimedia studios are pilots and need to operate by using such resources and these five universities need to help each other and create a better workforce to nation and world and to expand the experiences to other universities, he elaborated.



Samuel Kifle (PhD)



Samuel Yalew

"Instructors' needs to be updated with technology to implement properly designed instructions. Arizona State University will share its experience, facts of the state of the arts of multimedia studio and contribute a lot and universities need to use properly latecomer advantage, guide in good manner," Samuel said.

Head of Administrative and Infrastructure Development at the Ministry of Education, Solomon Abreha (PhD) noted that quality of education is a key problem in Ethiopia and highly affects students' skills and knowledge to get jobs so that it needs to be improved.

Higher education institutions have great skill gaps, and do not fulfill the work force market thus they need to create and recruit productive students with this project. "These forces us to work focusing on a digital oriented education teaching learning process and this helps to get out of the trouble we are facing," he said.

The e-learning for Strengthening Higher Education (e-SHE) will be implemented by the Ministry of Education in partnership with MasterCard Foundation, Arizona State University Shayashone plc. and 50 Ethiopian public universities.

News



Getachew Ta'a

ERCS ink partnership...

Agreement (OCA) and three-year (2024-2026) partnership Framework Agreement (PFA).

Speaking at the signing ceremony, ERCS Secretary General Getachew Ta'a said for several years, the Society has stood hand in hand with the ICRC to prevent and alleviate human suffering caused by man-made disasters and conflict.

"Our partnership is unwavering commitment, dedication, and compassion towards those in need and we serve humanity with compassion, neutrality, and impartiality and collaboration with the ICRC shows the spirit of solidarity and cooperation that defines the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement."

Getachew added, "Together with the ICRC, we will embark on joint initiatives focusing on public health, water, hygiene, sanitation, and community livelihood support and we will work in hand and hand to promote and uphold international humanitarian law, strengthening our regional and zonal offices to effectively implement these crucial principles."

The implementation plan outlined for the fiscal year 2024 underscores the commitment to humanitarian actions. With an allocation of 207.4 million Birr the ERCS utilizes the funds effectively and efficiently to address the most pressing needs of communities.

This budget support will enable the Society to enhance its ambulance services, provide essential first aid and strengthen the engagement of its invaluable volunteers, and deliver vital food and non-food assistance to those displaced by conflict, the secretary general elaborated.

He further highlighted that in 2023 alone, the ERCS partnership with the ICRC enabled the former to provide cash assistance, household items, and food to over 400,000 people, and vaccinating over two million livestock to safeguard livelihood of affected communities.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, ICRC Delegation to Ethiopia Head Nicolas Von Arx said that the signed partnership framework agreement helps how and in which areas the parties are going to work together to ensure vulnerable communities' access to food, water, medical facilities and other kinds of humanitarian aid.

"We support the people who are affected by violence and conflict and our plan is really to be where we are most needed in areas of Oromia, Amhara, Tigray, Somalia and others and ensure timely delivery of humanitarian aid," the head remarked.

Bureau launches HPV vaccine campaign for girls aged 14

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA-Addis Ababa Health Bureau (AAHB) has launched a cervical cancer prevention vaccine (HPV) campaign for teenagers aged 14.

At the launching program held yesterday, AAHB Head Yohannes Chala (MD) said that the Human Papillomavirus Vaccine (HPV) which prevents cervical cancer launched in Addis Ababa from March 4 to 8, 2024, for only teenage girls aged 14 years.

It is planned to vaccinate 31,485 teenage girls in the vaccine campaign so that 142 vaccination teams are organized and deployed to make it accessible in schools, he stated.

The vaccine is also accessible at any health facility thereby the girls who currently are out of schools could be vaccinated in their nearby health institutions, he added.

AAHB is toiling efforts to prevent cervical cancer considering the multifaceted problems the disease is causing to women and the society, according to the Head.

Yohannes stressed that cervical cancer is mainly caused by sexually transmitted human papilloma virus and it is the second most dangerous and fatal disease in Ethiopia after breast cancer.



This year, as to the Head, girls aged 14 learning in 820 schools in the city will be vaccinated.

Addis Ababa Education Bureau Head Zelalem Mulatu (PhD) on his part said that since cervical cancer is a serious health threat, giving the vaccine to teenage girls will greatly contribute to the process of producing a responsible and healthy generation.

Appreciating the Health Bureau for its

support to make universal health services accessible in schools, Zelalem called on all educational leadership professionals and the community to play their part to improve the accessibility of the vaccine.

In Ethiopia, 5,000 women die of cervical cancer every year and studies show that four out of five women over the age of 14 are exposed to the virus that causes cervical cancer in their lifetime.

Center recognizes...

an awardee, said, "The honor is unique to me because I helped those who fall for the sake of their country. The award also motivates me to do a better job for the future."

Investors, members of the Ethiopian Diaspora Association, medical professionals, Yeka Sub city administration officers and others are the recipients of the awards for serving their country during the North Ethiopian conflict, it was learned.

Karamara manifests...

historic victories over foreign enemies about the vitality of unity and safeguarding sovereignty.

He told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the victory of Karamara was a pivotal triumph for Ethiopians that they achieved by sacrificing their lives.

The Karamara battle was held to evacuate the invading Somalia's forces and to ensure the sovereignty of Ethiopia, Wassihun said while recalling his participation in the war two times.

The current generation must learn patriotism and unity from the victory of Karamara, he noted and urged citizens to stand together to secure the sovereignty of the country all the time.

Elaborating on Ethiopia's invaluable role in realizing peace and security in the region, Brigadier General Wassihun mentioned that the Ethiopian national army is playing a major role in the fight against Al-Shabaab.

It is to be recalled that SiadBarre, the military regime that ruled Somalia for 21 years, waged war against Ethiopia with the vision to establish "Greater Somalia" that targets annexing all Somali-speaking nations by seizing Ethiopia's territory.

Mobilizing hundreds of thousands of militias, Ethiopia fought back and chased the invading army and captured all the areas that were occupied by the Somali army on the 5th of March 1978.

Ethiopia on move to...

foreign relations of countries, the Ethiopian Government is assessing policy instruments to capitalize on the system, the IFA General Director Jafar Bedru stated in his opening remark.

According to Jafar, Ethiopia, as a developing country, is facing threats posed by AI. On the other hand, the IFA, as a policy-formulating institution, has been researching how Ethiopia could fight challenges and have fair benefits from dividend of AI legacies.

"As development varies from place to place, it is inevitable that there would be some countries dominating others. The

would-be adopted policy also needs to consider all causes that AI will pose."

Head of the Office of Foreign Affairs Minister Ambassador Eshete Tilahun also indicated that developed nations have employed AI on military and diplomatic apparatuses which aggravate the inequality among countries.

The AI has posed insecurity, cyber-attacks, misinformation and disinformation. All threats that are being posed by the new technology should be governed by the strong and new legal framework, he added.

The UN has already begun an international negotiation to endorse the law and Ethiopia also deserves to take a role and share the benefit from such activities. Accordingly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is following the progress to amend national law which could serve as a framework to engage in international negotiations.

As to Ambassador Eshete, international law will be fair if developing countries like Ethiopia will make meaningful participation in the formulation process. "The Ethiopian government has taken national policy adoption, then it will advocate for equity in AI."

Opinion

Conditional assistance vs. poverty eradication

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Conditionality of aid is related to the practice of attaching conditions to the support provided by donors. The assistance may be financial, human and material aid for economic and social development of the recipient country. Donor countries, international organizations, or financial institutions may impose certain conditions to ensure that the aid is used in line with their goals, values, or priorities. The conditionality may be different depending on the objectives of the donor countries or institutions.

Some common types of conditions associated with aid include policy reforms; good governance, human rights, environmental sustainability, poverty reduction, health and education. Donors may have their requirement on recipient countries to undertake certain economic, political, or social reforms. These reforms are major conditions for receiving donor assistance. They may include measures to enhance good governance, reduce corruption, or liberalize markets.

International donors may demand progress in good governance, transparency and accountability. These measures would ensure that aid funds are used properly, efficiently and effectively. These may imply strengthening institutions, promoting the rule of law, and combating corruption.

The strengthening of institutions presupposes the availability of skilled personnel with the objective of serving, for example, the Ethiopian people. The low level of application of the rule of law opened the avenue for misuse of power and authority by corrupt local officials. In this situation, combating corruption has become difficult, leading to the abuse of economic resources. Such abuse has caused the erosion of human rights. On the other hand, donor assistance may be conditioned on the commitment of the recipient country to upholding human rights standards. For donors, this implies addressing issues such as freedom of speech, gender equality, or minority rights in developing countries, including Ethiopia.

Provision of assistance and aid by some donors may depend on conditions related to environmental sustainability. This requires the recipients to prepare and adopt policies for promoting natural resources conservation. However, this is conditioned on responsible resource management within countries such as Ethiopia.

Another important condition for providing donor assistance has been poverty reduction. Donor aid may be attached to poverty reduction objectives in Ethiopia. This requires designing and implementing programs that directly benefit the poorest segments of the Ethiopian population. There

are also other conditions related to health and education. These conditions might ensure that aid is used to improve healthcare and education systems in the country. However, it is critical to stick to specific targets for improving access, quality, and outcomes in these systems. The above mentioned conditionality may encourage positive changes and ensure the effectiveness of donor assistance. But, critics argue that very strict conditions of donors can infringe upon the sovereignty of recipient countries and may not always be aligned with their specific needs and priorities.

There are other thorny issues related to conditional assistance by donors. These refer to the type of financial or resource support provided by governments, international organizations, or other entities. The recipient country or organization may be tied to certain specified conditions. These conditions are mainly specified in agreements or contracts between the donor and the recipient.

The conditions are designed to ensure that the funds or resources are used in consistency with the objectives and expectations of donors. As mentioned earlier, some of the other conditions attached to donor assistance include performance targets which are related to economic indicators, social outcomes, or other measurable criteria. Donor funds are disbursed on the achievements that are based on these criteria. If aid receiving countries fail to meet the conditions, they may lose funds for running development projects as per agreement entered with the donors.

Donors may attach strict conditions to the implementation of specific projects related to the stated objectives. Based on these objectives, programs are prepared indicating purposes and activities to be performed by implementing agencies. These agencies have to be strengthened with skilled personnel and experts to fulfill the stated programs. For example, a donor providing funds for a health project may require the recipient to meet certain healthcare delivery targets. These have to be accompanied by periodic monitoring and evaluation reports. These reports have to show performance levels, problems encountered and lessons learnt. Based on these reports, donors may require the recipient country, including Ethiopia, to adhere to international standards. International conventions such as human rights agreements or environmental protection standards have to be strictly observed. Failure to stick to these conditions hampers future development assistance by donors.

Earlier, monitoring and evaluation has been slightly mentioned with regard to the fulfillment of objectives of donor assisted programs and projects. Donors may insist on regular monitoring and evaluation of the use

of funds, skilled personnel and experts in specific sectors. It ensures that the assistance is having the intended impacts on targeted communities and social developments. It guarantees that resources are used efficiently and effectively.

While conditional assistance can be a tool to ensure that donor assistance is used effectively and in line with the donor's objectives, it has been subject to criticism. It is argued that strict conditions may infringe on the sovereignty of recipient countries, including Ethiopia. The conditions may fail to consider the local context and requirements. Striking the right balance between accountability and respecting the autonomy of the recipient is an ongoing challenge in international development assistance. Conditional assistance by donors should seriously consider the reality on the ground. The need and requirement of the Ethiopian people, for example, should be given priority over some irrelevant objectives of donor assistance.

The only strategy to avoid irrelevant donor assistance is strict and appropriate poverty reduction policy. Eradicating poverty in Ethiopia is a complex challenge that presupposes an all-rounded and sustained effort from various institutions, including the government, NGOs, international agencies, and local communities. In this respect, there are some strategic issues that need serious attention to address poverty in Ethiopia.

Economic development strategy that promotes sustainable economic growth is crucial. It focuses on key sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and services. This needs to be accompanied by investment in infrastructure, including transportation, energy, and telecommunications, to improve connectivity and support economic activities. Agricultural transformation enhances productivity through the adoption of modern farming techniques. It requires improved seeds and efficient irrigation systems. It also demands provision of credit, market information, and extension services to improve the livelihoods of Ethiopian farmers.

Ethiopia is promoting education and skills development through encouraging investment in these areas. These investments empower the labor force with the necessary inputs for better employment opportunities. Also, promoting education for girls and women is given emphasis to ensure gender equality and break the cycle of poverty. Healthcare and social services would help in improving maternal and child care. Such efforts do contribute to the well-being of the Ethiopian people in both the rural and urban areas.

The implementation of social safety nets and programs also assist vulnerable groups, including the elderly, disabled, and orphaned children. However, access to these

services presupposes the development of infrastructure in the country. There is a need to build and upgrade rural infrastructure, such as roads, water supply, and sanitation facilities, to improve living conditions and promote economic activities.

To reduce dependence on donor assistance, it is crucial to strengthen local governance and institutional capacity. Enhancing governance demands reduction or elimination of corruption for ensuring that resources are effectively and efficiently utilized for poverty reduction purposes. Strengthening government institutions responsible for poverty alleviation and social development is a major step in the direction of self-reliance. These institutions have to be supported with financial means. They have to have free access to finance in line with the government financial regulations. This requires expanded access to financial services, including microfinance, to empower individuals and small businesses. These measures would enable them to invest in income-generating activities. They also call for community engagement, involving them in the planning and implementation of poverty reduction programs and projects. These measures would ensure that local initiatives are culturally appropriate and address the real needs of each community.

In case there is a shortage of funds and skills to manage poverty reduction programs, international collaboration may be solicited from donors. But, this comes under the strict control and supervision of the government to check if donor support is not replacing domestic efforts. Collaboration with international partners, organizations, and donors is only for the required resources, expertise, and support for poverty eradication initiatives.

Ethiopia has experience with regard to donor assistance for poverty reduction, but poverty has become more rampant than ever before. It should be realized that eradicating poverty is, of course, a long-term process that requires a sustained and coordinated effort across several fronts unlike in the past that registered extensive poverty in the country. It is, therefore, necessary to guide donor interventions to the specific needs of different regions and communities of the country. Also, tailored and continuous monitoring and evaluation are necessary to assess the impact of initiatives and make necessary adjustments for improved effectiveness. Finally, needs should not be created in Ethiopia to justify conditional donor assistance with hidden objectives.

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

Editorial

Standing together to achieve greater causes

The month of March marks two of the most outstanding military victories in Ethiopia's history. On 2 March 1896 Ethiopians scored the glorious Victory at the Battle of Adwa over the Italian troops which is handed down the generations that followed as the most inspirational historical milestone.

Another key military undertaking by the gallant Ethiopian forces was achieved in what is known as the Ogaden War over Somalia's expansionist forces.

A couple of days after commemorating the 128th Anniversary of the Victory at Adwa, Ethiopians have continued to mark the 46th anniversary of the Victory of Karamara over the expansionist Somali army of Siad Barre in 1978.

The victories, apart from ensuring the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ethiopia, have practically demonstrated Ethiopians' unity, togetherness and a deep-rooted sense of patriotism to sacrifice their lives and protect their country from invading forces.

In truth, Ethiopia's enemies always aspire to disturb the peace and security of Ethiopia and realize their daydream when they think that the country is occupied with its own internal affairs or face challenging moments.

It was with this miscalculation that the Siad Barre administration attempted to invade Ethiopia in 1977. At the time that the country did not come out of the fog of the revolution that overthrew the monarchic reign of Emperor Haileselassie I. It was also highly bombarded by the protracted civil war in all directions. The Siad Barre administration made a historic mistake as it strategized to take advantage of the country's chaotic situation and encroached deeper into the borders of the country and took control of some areas.

The one thing that Siad Barre failed to know was that no matter what and in whatever a situation they may be in, Ethiopians are always determined to pay the ultimate sacrifice to protect their country from the enemy. The territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ethiopia is their top priority and their prime issue they do not negotiate on it.

As historical chronicles stated, following the call made by the government [the Derg Regime], to defend Ethiopia's sovereignty from the invading Somali army, hundreds of thousands of people from all segments of the society flocked spontaneously to safeguard the territorial integrity of the country at all costs. And solely in a short period of time, over 300,000 militia forces were mobilized and trained; subsequently, Ethiopia managed to successfully reverse the Somali invasion.

As forefathers humiliated and destroyed the invading Italian army at the Battle of Adwa, the Ethiopian militias repeated history by thwarting the invading Somalia force at Karamara and aborting its long sought dream of establishing the great Somalia by violating the territorial unity and sovereignty of Ethiopia.

The Victory of Karamara is another success story in which Ethiopians have displayed their indomitable spirit and unwavering commitment to uphold Ethiopia's territorial unity and sovereignty.

The glittering successes scored in both battles transcend generations and continue to inspire many not just on victory days, but every day and even for centuries.

On top of that, this generation should learn from the wins - to put Ethiopia first and protect the country's sovereignty, regardless of any differences. Understanding that the wars were fought to protect Ethiopia's sovereignty and to let fellow Ethiopians live with dignity in peace as well as deliver a free Ethiopia to the next generation, this generation should stand together for greater causes, sacrificing our own interests and putting aside our differences.

Opinion

Green investment as the way forward for Africa's clean, green growth

BY STAFF REPORTER

Africa's ministers of finance as well as experts in finance, development and climate issues, among others are deliberating finance and development issues in the Zimbabwean City of Victoria Falls. Dignitaries and experts have stressed on key issues that need to be focused to pave the way for clean and green development of the continents economy via withstanding impending problems.

Addressing the conference of Ministers (COM 24) Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa has called for innovative, green investment strategies to foster Africa's economic growth, according to a Press Release from UNECA.

For African countries to benefit from the transition to sustainable green economies, which is estimated to generate \$3 trillion by 2030, innovative instruments to foster climate action and address the current debt crisis are needed.

Government and institutional representatives at the opening of the Ministerial segment of the 56th Session of the Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe made a resounding call for a broad range of innovative instruments such as debt-for-nature swaps, regional blue bonds, regional carbon markets and the use of natural capital accounting.

Emmerson Mnangagwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, said, "The effects of climate change are increasingly constraining African countries from exploiting their rich natural resource endowments, in a sustainable manner, leading to diminishing returns along economic value chains. The adoption of multi-pronged pathways is thus crucial for inclusive green economies. These must not only aid in poverty eradication, but also safeguard ecological thresholds that support human development, health and well-being.

"African countries should therefore innovate ways climate financing mechanisms, proactive mobilize financial resources from both domestic and international sources to facilitate the adaptation," he said.

He added that there is need for cooperation and partnership between governments and the private sector to forge the growth investment strategies for inclusive green economies that benefits our communities and stressed the need to focus on a people centred development philosophy that leaves no one and no place behind; one that builds synergies among nations and promotes balanced development across the continent.

Claver Gatete Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) said Africa stands at a pivotal moment, facing many obstacles like food insecurity, fiscal constraints, escalating debt burdens and the adverse effects of climate change.

"It is important for countries to accelerate their regional integration initiatives through the full implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area and the Single African Air Transport Market to drive competitiveness and reduce the cost of doing business across the continent," said Mr. Gatete.

He noted that African debt has increased by over 180 per cent since 2010, and twenty-one countries are now at risk of, or in, debt distress. This is notwithstanding the annual loss of at least 5 per cent of GDP because of climate change.

The global financial architecture, he said, needs

to be fixed. To work for everyone and reflect the new dynamics and hopefully the recent membership of the African Union in the G20 will resolve this.

"The conversations on governance and conditionalities, no matter how difficult, must be top priority. The ambitious \$500 billion SDG Stimulus call by the United Nations Secretary-General is a recognition of how far we must go for justice and equity," he said adding that the issue of unfair risk perceptions and credit ratings that offer Africa limited borrowing options must be addressed.

"We should not accept that only two African countries have investment grade rating, and 22 countries are unrated."

The ECA Executive Secretary noted that countries should focus on deepening domestic resource mobilisation for sustainability.

"External borrowing has become costly, unreliable, and untenable. Therefore, reforming our tax systems and derisking the business environment are unavoidable imperatives. There is need to invest in capital market development to provide long-term resources for private sector investment," he said.

Monique Nsanabaganwa, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission said Africa is navigating the delivery of its blueprint agenda 363 in global environments, causing tremendous challenges to African economies, with ripple effects on social political spaces as well.

"We need to continue to explore synergies that will pull national, regional and Continental resources through investment in Africa and Stock Exchange in order to secure long term financing of agenda 2063," said Ms. Nsanabaganwa adding that countries should enhance the role of the private sector as a source of green financing.

"Our policies must amplify the impact of capital to ensure that Africa's private stock of assets contributes to green transition and inclusive development," she said.

Mthuli Ncube, Minister of Finance and Investment Promotion, Republic of Zimbabwe for his part said limited fiscal space, increasing public debt, economic fragility, conflict, insecurity in some parts of Africa, and the negative impact of climate change are some of the biggest challenges the continent is facing today.

"Domestic resource mobilization is a crucial source of finance for progress to the establishment of the single African Air Transport market to promote movement of people and goods across Africa," said Mr. Ncube.

"Countries should implement the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement (AfCFTA) to stimulate manufacturing and increase trade on the continent."

He said that resource mobilization and economic strategies emanating from the conference will help countries strengthen their policies minimize the negative impact of climate change.

Rebecca Amuge, Ambassador of the Republic of Uganda to Ethiopia and Chair of the outgoing Bureau said to fund sustainable development objectives, countries must invest in inclusive green transition priorities, harnessing innovative financing mechanisms, and leveraging Africa's abundant natural resources. This necessitates not only the adoption of green policies but also the reform of the global financial architecture to reduce Africa's debt burden and facilitate inclusive economic growth.

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

Unlocking region's lucrative investment opportunities for economic growth

BY HIZKEL HAILU

The Somali Regional State in Ethiopia is emerging as a promising economic hub, offering a wide range of investment opportunities. With a vision to bolster economic growth, the region has created a favorable environment for both domestic and international investors, spanning industries such as agriculture, manufacturing, and services. The Somali Region Investment and Industry Office has been actively promoting collaboration with diaspora, domestic, and foreign investors, issuing licenses, and establishing channels of support.

These efforts have yielded significant results, attracting substantial investments and fostering job creation. The state presents a wide array of investment opportunities across various industries, including agriculture, manufacturing, and services. Ibrahim Ahmed, the Industry Sector Deputy Head of the Investment and Industry Office, has emphasized the region's potential for business expansion and development. Currently, the region hosts 309 industries, indicating its readiness for investment and growth.

Over the past six months, the investment office has issued 171 investment licenses, reflecting the increasing interest in the region. These investments have already made a substantial impact, with investors registering 3.6 billion birr. The influx of capital into the Somali Region has resulted in the creation of 6,116 job opportunities. Of these, 2,907 are permanent positions, ensuring long-term stability, while 3,209 are temporary, catering to immediate labor market needs. The region's industrial growth and the active involvement of diaspora investors have significantly contributed to job creation and economic development.

"The Region has successfully attracted the engagement of diaspora investors, with 14 members of the diaspora community participating in various projects such as water and tin factories, car assembly plants, and other large-scale ventures. The active involvement of the diaspora community highlights the trust and confidence placed in the region's growth potential. Their contributions not only drive economic growth but also strengthen the ties between the diaspora and their home region, fostering a sense of pride and shared success".

As to him, the Region has been investing in infrastructure development to support economic growth. This includes the construction and improvement of roads, bridges, ports and other infrastructures, which not only facilitate the movement of goods and services within the region but also enhance connectivity with



Somali region investment is diversified

neighbouring regions and countries. The improved infrastructure opens up new avenues for investment and trade, attracting businesses and investors looking to take advantage of the region's strategic location.

Moreover, he added that the region is possessing significant potential for renewable energy generation, particularly in wind and solar power. The region's vast open spaces and favourable climatic conditions make it an ideal location for renewable energy projects. Investing in renewable energy not only contributes to environmental sustainability but also provides opportunities for businesses and investors to tap into the growing global demand for clean energy solutions.

Office's Investment Sector Deputy Head Zeineb Haji, for her part mentioned that a lot of fruitful activities have been undertaken in order to attract investment. As to her, mobilization works are being undertaken in and out, adding that they have made mobilization in different foreign countries in order to attract investors. Accordingly number of diaspora participation in the region is increasing from time to time. Diasporas have 90 % contribution for the investment in the region, she added.

The recently signed MoU between Ethiopia and Somaliland has further enhanced the region's industrial development prospects. This agreement is expected to contribute significantly to the region's progress and the overall advancement of the nation.

For her, the region boasts rich cultural heritage, historical sites, and scenic landscapes, making it a potential tourist destination. Investing in the tourism and hospitality sectors can help unlock the region's untapped potential, create employment opportunities, and boost the local economy. The development of hotels, resorts, and tourist infrastructure, along with the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, can attract domestic and international tourists, leading to increased revenue and economic growth.

"Investing in human capital is crucial for long-term economic growth and

sustainability. The Somali Region has been focusing on improving education and vocational training programs to equip its workforce with the necessary skills and expertise. Collaboration with educational institutions, both domestic and international, can help in developing a skilled workforce capable of meeting the demands of various industries and sectors, further attracting investment and facilitating economic growth".

The perception of citizens across the region regarding the benefits of agriculture has undergone a significant change. The regional government is actively working to increase agricultural productivity, which is vital for economic development. Abdi Aden, the Crop Production Development and Protection Director at the State's Bureau of Agriculture, has highlighted the efforts being made to increase production across the region.

Plans have been put in place to cover 11,000 hectares of land for irrigation and winter wheat production. In the past six months alone, 559 hectares have been covered by irrigation, with an expected wheat production of 16,770 quintals from irrigation projects and 122,900 quintals from winter rain. These agricultural activities contribute to the overall economic development of the region and the nation as a whole, he added.

According to him, the region's proximity to neighboring countries presents opportunities for regional integration and trade. Strengthening trade relations, improving cross-border infrastructure, and harmonizing trade policies can lead to increased trade volumes and investment inflows. The region can serve as a gateway for businesses looking to access markets in the Horn of Africa and beyond, further stimulating economic growth and development.

Cognizant of the fact that agriculture plays a vital role in the region's economy, he added that investing in sustainable agriculture practices, modernizing farming techniques, and promoting agribusiness can enhance productivity, increase value-added processing, and improve market access for farmers. This not only contributes to food security but

also creates employment opportunities and boosts rural incomes, driving economic growth in the region, he added.

According to the officials, the Investment and Industry Office is also offering incentives for investors, like duty-free investment and license service excellence, among others. The Investment and Industry Office is offering various incentives to attract investors. These include duty-free benefits, investment license service excellence, and other advantages. The provision of incentives underscores the region's commitment to creating a conducive investment climate and encouraging business growth, they noted.

All things considered, the Somali Regional State in Ethiopia offers fertile ground for investment with its burgeoning industrial growth and active engagement of diaspora investors. According to the officials, the region's investment potential spans across sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and services.

The region offers a range of investment opportunities across various sectors, including infrastructure, renewable energy, tourism, human capital development, financial and business support services, regional trade, and agriculture. Through leveraging these opportunities and implementing favorable policies and incentives, the region can attract more investments, stimulate economic growth, create employment opportunities, and contribute to the overall development and prosperity of the nation.

Through the issuance of investment licenses and the provision of incentives, the Investment and Industry Office actively supports and encourages investment. The recently signed MoU with Somaliland further enhances the region's industrial development prospects. Additionally, the region's commitment to increasing agricultural productivity contributes to economic progress. As the Somali Region continues to attract capital, foster job creation, and drive economic growth, it is well on its way to becoming an economic powerhouse, benefiting both the region's development and the nation's prosperity.

Art & Culture

An African victory, an inspiration for artistic creativity

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

Although war cannot be considered an artistic engagement, there is nevertheless art in the way war is waged. From Carl von Clausewitz to Lu Hsun and philosophers like Nietzsche and even Niccolo Machiavelli, including many military experts and analysts speak of the “Art of War” proper, meaning the tactics, techniques and strategies involved in a war, ancient or modern.

However, it is one thing to conduct war in an artful manner and a different thing to get inspiration for art works from wars or conflicts. The Napoleonic wars in France have inspired great artists to paint huge frescos and murals in admiration of the emperor’s various glories and conquests that went beyond Europe and into Africa, such as in Egypt. People who have never ventured into war theaters can nevertheless get an idea of what war looks like from realistic paintings of actual engagements.

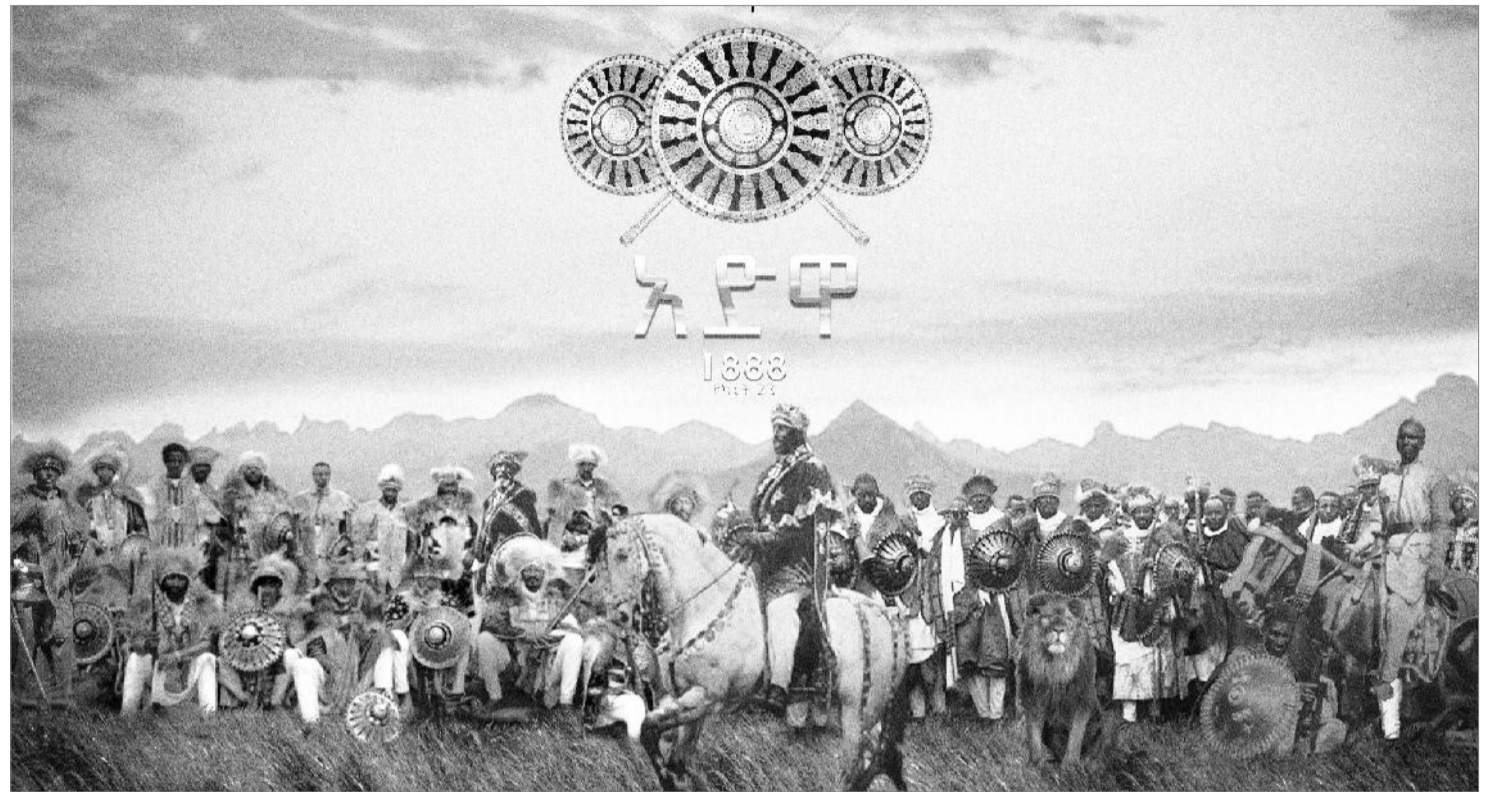
In Africa too, various battles wedged by Africans, mainly Ethiopians and South Africans, have given inspiration to works of art and literature. Writing about the inspirations the Battle of Adwa has given to artists as portrayed in contemporary Ethiopian creative works, an observer wrote that “the results show that the creative works imagine the times before the Battle of Adwa as Biblical Ethiopia and a temporarily disturbing nature. The battlefield is depicted as a spiritual landscape and a grain of wheat. The significance of Adwa is transfigured as a boundless space and a flowing river.”

Almost all nations have their moments of glory and historical achievements to their credit. However, their significance mostly remains confined to their national boundaries, unable to transcend time and space, geography or history. The history of the struggles of black people for self-determination has always been a struggle for the assertion and reassertion of their blackness and their aspirations for freedom from alien, mostly white, domination either on the basis of race, economic supremacy or political oppression.

Africa is not only a land of origin but also the originator of the struggle for human dignity, racial equality and the right to live, think and dream according to its aspirations. From available sources, it is estimated that Africa is one of the oldest continents in the world. According to reliable sources, Africa is believed to have been created between 3.6 and 2 billion years ago. The earth is believed to be 5 or 6 billion years old.

Africa’s status as an ancient civilization is a long established fact. According to some sources, “it is an open secret that Africa” was the cradle of humankind and civilization.” Africa is so ancient and its civilization so original that the origin of the name Africa itself is subject to dispute. “The origin of the name ‘Africa’ is greatly disputed by scholars. Most believe it stems from words issued by the Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans. Important words include the Egyptian word *Afru-ika*, meaning Motherland; the Greek word *Aphrike*, meaning “without cold” and the Latin word *aprica*, meaning “sunny”.

Like any continent, Africa was home to people who were not touched by civilization and “before civilization men lived in a state of



nature with no rules of development witnessed today. Before development and civilization, the African continent had a different environment with different weather patterns.” To add one more important detail, it is believed that Africa as a continent was first discovered by the Portuguese. The ten oldest countries in Africa are Ethiopia, Egypt, Liberia, Mali, Sudan, Eritrea, South Africa and Nigeria. It is important to note here that Ethiopia is ranked top of the list of ten oldest African countries.

It is against this background that Africa’s struggle for survival and nationhood should be considered and as part of its process of identity formation, the struggle for independence has been its defining metric. When we speak of Africa’s struggle for independence, we are bound to be led to the first history of its resistance against foreign invaders. One of the resistance war the Zulu of South Africa waged against foreigners dates back to 1879. “In 1879 the British fought a war against the Zulu kingdom. The Zulus resisted bravely and were only defeated after a series of particularly bloody battles that have gone down in the annals of colonial warfare.”

The Zulu war against the British is considered the oldest African resistance war against foreign invasion. As such, it was also an African war fought as a resistance war against the first colonialists. By the same token the Battle of Adwa was an anti-colonial war fought against Italian invaders in 1896. The difference between the Zulu war against the British and the Battle of Adwa against the Italians is that the first ended up in the defeat of the Zulu kingdom while Adwa was the first African victory against a European colonial power.

When it comes to the Battle of Adwa, its impacts, significance and inspiration is wider and deeper as compared to the Zulu war against the British simply because it was a war that climaxed in victory. The other important point is that although the Zulu war was the first African resistance war, it is not as famous as the Battle of Adwa for the same reason. We rarely hear or read about the Zulu war while the Battle of Adwa has been a never ending fascination not only for Africans as a source of pride but also for Europeans as a historical event that has inspired generations of scholars

and researchers to ask the vital question of how a backward African country could defeat an advanced industrial European power.

This is the bitterest pill most European scholars could not swallow so easily and still find it difficult to reconcile with this historical fact. They are forced to accept the facts simply because they have no way denying or evading or rejecting the historical fact that the Italians themselves have been forced to swallow whether they liked it or not. Wars are concluded in a few days, as the Battle of Adwa was won by the Ethiopians or it can last for weeks or months and even years. Yet their impacts and significance continue to reverberate for centuries as Adwa is still fresh in the hearts and minds of most Ethiopians who did not fought in the battle of course before it has become part of the collective national consciousness.

Adwa has military, economic, social and political significance that has not yet been fully studied or fully investigated by different generations of local and foreign scholars. Adwa is so vast and so deep that it cannot be fully grasped within a couple of centuries. As time passes, new aspects and new features are bound to emerge or be discovered. The fascinations are interminable as the outcome of the battle itself is enigmatic. Adwa, like any great battle and victory has also impacted the arts and literature and continues to do so in this century.

A few attempts were made to capture the significance of Adwa with films, paintings, and music but all these efforts have not yet scratched the surface of Adwa’s inspiration. Haile Gerima is perhaps the best cinematographer who kept the memories of Adwa alive with his film by the same title. While Haile Gerima’s efforts are highly commendable, it can be said that Adwa could also be the subject of a hundred epic films had we have the capacity to produce them.

European nations have captured their epic battles with films that have been celebrated globally. Napoleon’s defeat at the Battle of Waterloo in the hands of the British led by Wellington is one among many such epic battles that have graced the silver screen. In Russia, Sergei Einstein has made a classic film about

the revolution that was entitled “battleship Potemkin” depicting or capturing the sailors’ rebellion that was a pivotal moment in the revolutionary process. There will certainly come a time when Ethiopian filmmakers will also live up to the challenge of turning Adwa into an internationally acclaimed epic movie.

Many books have been written by foreign and Ethiopian authors, explaining the causes and effects of the Battle of Adwa from different perspectives. Some of the most prominent books are, “The Battle of Adwa” by Paulos Milkias Getachew, a book by the same title published by Reymond Jonas, “The Battle of Adwa: African Victory in the Age of Empire” and others. It would be unrealistic to expect that any book, however extensive in its treatment of the Battle of Adwa, would exhaust the topic and theme of this African victory with far-reaching consequences.

Prominent historians and political scientists within and outside Africa are still writing about Adwa and its significance. Students are encouraged to research these immense historical events in their graduation theses. Yet, what is still lacking is a comprehensive history of the Battle of Adwa, which needs to be researched and written by prominent intellectuals in many fields of study with the support of national institutions such as the Ministry of Culture.

Such a work would not only be a great service to posterity but also a work that would clarify current misunderstandings that largely emanate from incomplete knowledge or information about the war and the factors and actors that shaped it. The history of the Battle of Adwa should be a factor of cohesion and unity and not that of division because it is an African victory that belongs to all Africans and black people all over the world. Adwa is also part of Africa’s culture, art, literature, history, economics, and politics. As such, the African Union should consider the prospect of naming Adwa Day, which would be marked all over Africa, with a view to putting our history in the service of Africa’s total liberation and as an inspirational factor for present and coming generations.

Global Affairs

UN Environmental Assembly call for action to address planetary triple threat

The Sixth United Nations Environmental Assembly (UNEA-6) ended with delegates calling for firm actions to address the triple planetary crisis of climate change, nature loss, and pollution.

The assembly also reaffirmed its call for “environmental multilateralism” in seeking solutions to the threats, noting that time was running out fast before the threats could besiege the planet and make life a bigger nightmare, especially for the underprivileged.

The concept has been part of the main messages amplified by United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) Executive Director Inger Andersen and part of its clarion call as well.

Also topping their calls is the plea for countries to remain on course in implementing the principles of the Paris Agreement, with many noting that the pact provided an ambitious roadmap to boldly “tame the climate crisis” by cutting greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

While delegates at the five-day assembly at the UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, which ended on Friday, March 1, 2024, observed with satisfaction that efforts at curbing plastic pollution could soon become a reality, some expressed concern that a Ministerial Declaration issued at the end of the event was not explicit on the urgency of actions needed to end the plastic crisis, nor did it mention the legally binding agreement on ending plastic pollution.

The agreement is currently under negotiation, and parties meet in Montreal, Canada, in April, where a deal could be reached.

“We emphasize the importance of advancing integrated, science-based approaches, informed by the best available science and the traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples as well as local communities, in order to strengthen resilience to current, emerging, and future challenges and promote global solidarity.”

“We recall General Assembly resolution 76/300 of July 28, 2022, on the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment,” the five-page ministerial statement read.

The 21-point document issued at the closing of the event was also emphatic on the need for effective, inclusive, and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, reaffirming “all the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.”

The ministers of environment from



United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) Executive Director Inger Andersen

182 member states acknowledged the threats posed to sustainable development by global environmental challenges and crises, including climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, as well as desertification, land and soil degradation, drought, and deforestation.

The gathering passed a record 15 resolutions and two decisions, as proposed by various delegations, with some being hailed as very critical, while others were viewed as crucial and timely.

Raising the most curiosity is a resolution by Ukraine, calling for “environmental assistance and recovery in areas affected by armed conflicts,” which was endorsed despite being introduced on Thursday. The country is involved in armed conflict with Russia, and has been exposed to risks, including nuclear accidents, by the fighting.

On its part, Saudi Arabia sponsored one calling for “strengthening international efforts to combat desertification and land degradation, restore degraded land, promote land conservation and sustainable land management, contribute to land degradation neutrality and enhance drought resilience.”

Others included resolutions on considering environmental aspects of minerals and metals, the call for circularity of a resilient and low-carbon sugar cane agro-industry, promoting sustainable lifestyles, an appeal for action on sound management of chemicals and waste, action on highly hazardous pesticides fronted by Ethiopia, and a call for action on combating sand and dust storms by Iran.

“I am proud to say this was a successful Assembly, where we advanced on our core mandate: the legitimate human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, everywhere,” said Leila Benali, UNEA-6 President and the Minister of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development

of Morocco. “As governments, we need to push for more partnerships with stakeholders to implement these mandates. We need to continue to partner with civil society, continue to guide and empower our creative youth, and also with the private sector and philanthropies,” the minister added.

Decisions arrived at the assembly are “most often” followed by actions and UNEP and member states will initiate actions based on the resolutions, assured Andersen, UNEP’s Executive Director.

At the same time, the assembly was told that more than a third of the world’s population is drowning in garbage, with over 2.7 billion people not having their waste collected, largely in the developing regions of the world.

Out of the number, 2 billion people are living in rural areas, while 700,000 of them are in urban areas, a new United Nations report launched at the assembly revealed.

The report, Turning rubbish into a resource: Global Waste Management Outlook 2024 (GWMO 2024) revealed that an estimated 540 million metric tons of municipal solid waste, an equivalent of 27% of the global total waste, was not being collected, with only 36% and 37% of the refuse generated in Sub-Saharan Africa and Central and South Asia regions, respectively, being collected.

This was in sharp contrast to the situation in developed and upper-middle-income countries, where almost all of the waste was collected, at admirable rates of between 83% for the Caribbean, and 99% for North America. This is against a global average waste collection rate of 75%, the report, further revealed.

It predicts that the waste generated is set to grow in volume from 2.3 billion metric tons in 2023, to 3.8 billion metric tons by 2050, worsening the burden of managing it.

“In 2020, the global direct cost of waste management was estimated at USD 252 billion. When factoring in the hidden costs of pollution, poor health, and climate change from poor waste disposal practices, the cost rises to USD 361 billion,” it notes.

“Without urgent action on waste management, by 2050, this global annual cost could almost double to a staggering USD 640.3 billion,” it adds.

So far, no country in the world, including the developed ones, has managed to ‘decouple’ development from waste generation, with the two going hand-in-hand as they always have, noted lead author Zoë Lenkiewicz.

“We recommend that the world needs to integrate the principles of just transition and circularity to better manage waste. Note with concern that many countries need to build their national expertise in waste management,” she said.

At the same time, the global production and consumption of material resources have grown more than three times over the last 50 years, growing at an average of more than 2.3 percent a year, despite the increase being the main driver of the triple planetary crisis.

The consumption and use of the resources are largely driven by demand in upper-income countries, with the extraction and processing of material resources including fossil fuels, minerals, non-metallic minerals, and biomass accounting for over 55 percent of GHG emissions, and 40 percent of particulate matter health poisoning in the environment.

Their extraction and processing, including that of agricultural crops and forestry products, accounts for 90 percent of land-related biodiversity loss and water stress, and for a third of GHG, while the extraction and processing of fossil fuels, metals, and non-metallic minerals, including sand, gravel, and clay, account for 35 percent of global emissions.

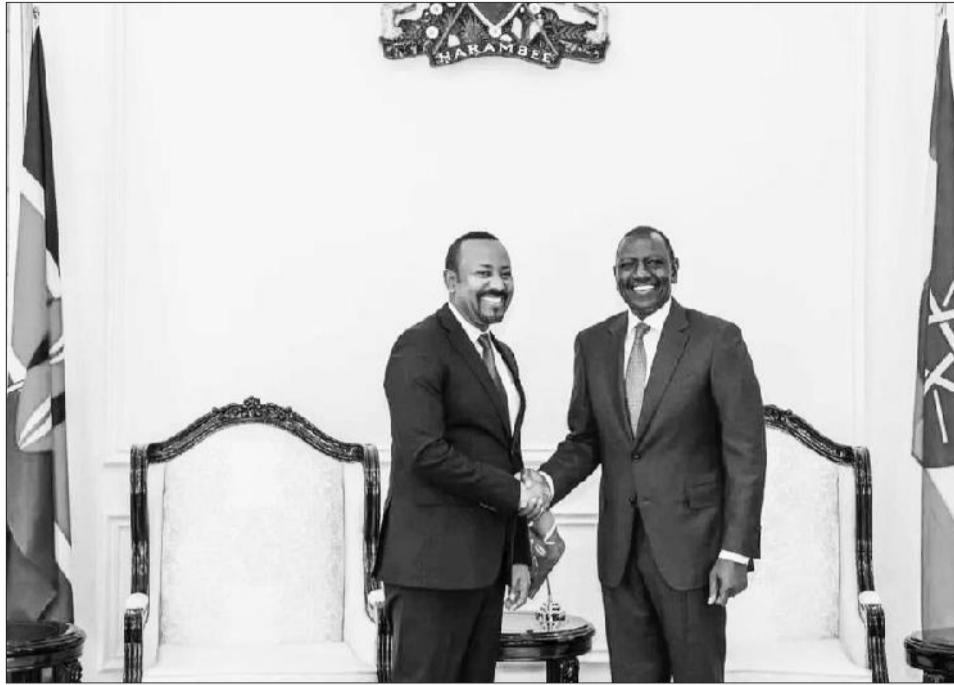
Despite this, resource exploitation could increase by almost 60% from 2020 levels by 2060—from 100 to 160 billion metric tons—far exceeding what is required to meet essential human needs, according to the UNEP report, Global Resources Outlook 2024 – Bend the trend: Pathways to a Liveable Planet as Resource Use Spikes tabled at the event.

Meanwhile, UNEA-6 has elected a new president to preside over UNEA-7, Abdullah Bin Ali Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority of Oman, who takes over from Benali.

Over 5,600 people from 190 countries participated in the proceedings held between February 26 and March 1.

SOURCE: INTER PRESS SERVICE

Law & Politics



Spreading integration in East Africa

BY EYUEL KIFLU

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed undertook a working visit to Kenya and Tanzania last week, accompanied by First Lady Zinash Tayachew. This visit underscores Ethiopia's longstanding relations with these two brotherhood countries in East Africa.

On February 27, 2024, Abiy arrived at Jomo Kenyatta airport and received a warm welcome from President William Ruto. He embarked on a two-day state visit, which commenced with a gracious welcome and a tour of an ICT park in Nairobi. The tour, led by President Ruto, highlighted the involvement of youth in AI technology.

During his visit, Prime Minister Abiy was officially welcomed by President William Ruto at the State House of Kenya. This ceremony marked the beginning of a significant engagement, during which both leaders and their delegations engaged in extensive discussions on various subjects, including bilateral, regional, and multilateral issues. They acknowledged the deep historical relations and economic connections between their nations, committing to further strengthen cooperation. This meeting signifies a pivotal moment in enhancing diplomatic and economic ties, promising a future of increased collaboration between Ethiopia and Kenya.

According to the Prime Minister Office report, the leaders of the two countries also embarked on a tour of the KETRACO Converter Station in Suswa, Narok County. This station marks the end point of the export from Ethiopia's Wolaita Sodo 500 KV HVDC Converter Station.

It is worth noting that in January 2023, Kenya began importing hydroelectric power from Ethiopia. This development came after the two countries, through

their utilities, Ethiopia Electric Power (EEP) and Kenya Power, signed a power purchase agreement (PPA) in 2022. Ethiopia's efforts to export electricity to East African countries and beyond are in line with regional integration and the countries' commitment to achieving Agenda 2063.

It is recalled that over the years, the two countries have developed cooperation mechanisms such as the Ethio-Kenya Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) and the Joint Border Administrators' and Commissioners' meetings, which have held 36 and 32 meetings, respectively. These mechanisms have fostered regular high-level engagements, including visits between the heads of government and officials.

The two nations have long enjoyed a strong and enduring relationship, with historical ties that span centuries. These two East African nations have collaborated in various fields, including trade, security, and diplomacy.

During a recent interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Moi Lemoshira, the Kenyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Director General of Political and Diplomatic Affairs, announced that his country has extended the LAPSSET Corridor Project. Also, the two nations have agreed to extend the agreement that allows Ethiopia to utilize land at Lamu Port. The FM emphasized that several activities are underway to support each other and develop the infrastructure linking Lamu Port in Kenya to the Ethiopian border town of Moyale.

At the recently concluded 36th Ethio-Kenya Joint Ministerial Commission Meeting in Addis Ababa, the two countries discussed the full implementation of previously signed agreements. Kenya reaffirmed its commitment to expedite infrastructure-driven interconnectedness with Ethiopia to ensure mutual growth and benefits. The meeting aimed to

review bilateral relations, evaluate the implementation of memorandums of understanding, and chart the future path of the comprehensive Ethio-Kenya partnership. Given the significant benefits of infrastructural integration for both countries, it received prime attention.

In a similar vein, after concluding his two-day visit to Kenya, Prime Minister Abiy headed to Tanzania for a three-day state visit. He received a warm welcome from higher officials, the Ethiopian ambassador to Tanzania, and Tanzanians holding the flags of both countries, accompanied by traditional dances upon his arrival at the Julius Nyerere International Airport.

Addis Ababa and Dar es Salaam have a longstanding historical and diplomatic relationship, bolstered by leaders such as the late Haile Selassie of Ethiopia and Julius Nyerere. These two leaders tirelessly worked towards the liberation of the African continent and the establishment of the African Union (AU).

Prime Minister Abiy's recent visit to Tanzania further solidifies the longstanding relationship between the two countries. The premier was received by Tanzanian President Samia Suhulu for official talks at the State House in Dar es Salaam during his state visit to the East African nation. The discussions covered a wide range of bilateral and regional issues, with a commitment to multifaceted cooperation.

Ethiopia and Tanzania have long enjoyed a strong relationship, and recent developments have only served to strengthen the ties between the two East African nations. In a series of meetings and agreements signed between the two countries, leaders have reaffirmed their commitment to cooperation and collaboration in various areas.

According to Prime Minister Office report following the bilateral talks, three Memoranda of Understanding

(MOUs) were signed, covering culture and arts, agriculture, and electricity trade. According to Tanzanian media reports, Prime Minister Abiy's visit to Tanzania is expected to deepen security and economic cooperation between the two countries. The state visit will also bolster joint efforts to combat human trafficking. Additionally, the visit will open up markets, investment, and trade in key sectors, particularly agricultural products such as coffee and tea. It will also serve as a platform for exchanging experiences in the livestock sector, given that Ethiopia is ranked first in terms of having a large number of cattle, while Tanzania holds the third position.

The bilateral talks between the two sides are anticipated to create new opportunities for trade, leading to an increase in trade volume between Ethiopia and Tanzania. Tanzania is also expecting to attract Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) from Ethiopia, and vice versa.

The visit will further strengthen cooperation among security organs of the two countries in curbing illegal immigration, as they work collaboratively with other international immigration bodies to dismantle human trafficking networks, the Tanzania based Medias reported.

Moreover, Ethiopia's position as the source of the Blue Nile and Tanzania's connection to the White Nile creates opportunities for both nations to collaborate on hydro-political issues.

Finally, Prime Minister Abiy paid his respects at a memorial ceremony held for the late President Ali Hassan Mwinyi of Tanzania. With this, he concluded his visit to East Africa countries (Kenya and Tanzania) official state visit and returned to Ethiopia. The visit has deepened diplomatic relations, fostered economic cooperation, and laid the groundwork for Ethiopia future collaboration with Kenya, and Tanzania.

Planet Earth

Promotion of food Security a pillar of Ethiopia's comprehensive economic independence

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

In a ceremony hosted by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization in Rome, Italy two weeks back, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has been awarded the prestigious FAO Agricola Medal, according to the organization, for his vision, leadership and commitment to food security and nutrition as well as the pursuit of innovative solutions in wheat self-sufficiency in the context of fast-changing and challenging circumstances. The author of this article is therefore motivated to share some ideas on the issue at hand.

Similar award was also issued to Hailemariam Desalegn some six years back. This indicates that the implementation of food security programs is decisive not only for the promotion of food self-reliance for Ethiopia but also for the entire economic growth of the country.

In another development, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and First Lady Zinash Tayachew and other government officials inspected the progress underway in the construction and Development of a massive irrigation scheme built on Wabe Shebele River in Shebele Zone Berano District.

The official definition of food security has been provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. According to the FAO, food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

How does Ethiopia feature in terms of developing food security in the country?

Food self-sufficiency and food security are crucial issues for Ethiopia, given its large population, agricultural-based economy, and vulnerability to recurring droughts and other environmental challenges.

Agriculture is the backbone of Ethiopia's economy, employing a majority of the population and contributing significantly to the country's GDP. However, Ethiopia's agriculture is predominantly rain-fed and vulnerable to climatic variability, which poses challenges to food production and security.

The Ethiopian government has implemented various initiatives and strategies to improve food self-sufficiency and enhance food security. These include agricultural development programs, investments in irrigation infrastructure, promotion of improved farming practices, and support for smallholder farmers through subsidies, credit facilities, and extension services.

Ethiopia has been promoting crop diversification to enhance resilience to climate change and improve food security. Efforts to diversify crops beyond traditional staples like teff, maize, and sorghum include promoting high-value crops such as fruits, vegetables, oilseeds, and pulses, which can contribute to dietary diversity, income generation, and nutrition security.

Ethiopia has been investing in water management infrastructure, including

dams, reservoirs, and irrigation schemes, to enhance water availability for agricultural production, especially during dry seasons. These investments aim to increase crop yields, stabilize food production, and mitigate the impact of droughts and water scarcity on food security.

Given Ethiopia's susceptibility to climate-related shocks and natural disasters, resilience-building measures are essential for ensuring food security. These include early warning systems, disaster preparedness, risk mitigation strategies, and social safety nets to support vulnerable populations during periods of food insecurity and crisis.

Despite progress in improving food self-sufficiency at the national level, there are significant regional disparities in food security within Ethiopia. Certain regions, particularly those prone to drought and conflict, face chronic food insecurity and require targeted interventions to address underlying causes such as poverty, land degradation, and limited access to resources.

Enhancing market access and improving food distribution systems are critical for ensuring food availability and affordability, especially in remote and rural areas. Investments in transportation infrastructure, market facilities, storage capacities, and market information systems can facilitate the efficient movement of food commodities and reduce post-harvest losses.

Achieving food security goes beyond ensuring an adequate supply of calories; it also entails addressing issues of nutrition security and dietary quality. Ethiopia's food security efforts increasingly focus on promoting nutrition-sensitive agriculture, improving access to diverse and nutritious foods, and addressing malnutrition, particularly among women and children.

Measures to reverse the level of land degradation and create a source of income generation for food-insecure households through a focus on biological measures, such as re-forestation and land preservation. The National Green Legacy Initiative launched by Prime Minister Abiy four years back and the consequent Yelemat Trufat Program and more than 11 irrigation schemes that are currently under construction or those completed certainly show the level on which the government has prioritized food security.

Moreover, water harvesting and the introduction of high-value crops, livestock and agro-forestry development have been conducted in various parts of the country.

Agriculture is considered to be the starting point for initiating the structural transformation of the economy. Because of this, agricultural development-led industrialization (ADLI) has been pursued as a major policy framework since 1991. ADLI assists the development of agriculture and helps expand markets for domestic production leading to increased incomes for small holders.

High population growth rates continue to undermine Ethiopia's ability to be food secure and provide effective education, health and other essential social and economic services. The central elements of the policy focus on

a multi-sector approach, improving family planning services and expanding education.

HIV/AIDS is a formidable challenge to the pursuit of food security in Ethiopia as it reduces and debilitates the productive population and society as a whole. The government has put in place a national policy and countrywide program for the whole population to control and reduce the spread of the disease.

Women have a substantive productive role in the rural sector, including participation in livestock maintenance and management, crop production, and the marketing of rural produce. Integration of gender perspectives in the design and implementation of economic and social policies, programs and projects is considered central to the national food security strategy.

This is critical to the pursuit of food security and economic development generally. Development depends on the appropriate and sustainable use of the environment and the management of natural resources. Given the high environmental degradation in drought-prone and pastoral areas, environmental rehabilitation (soil and water conservation) is an essential element.

What are the approaches of the National Food Security Strategy and why are they important?

Ethiopia has made notable strides in improving food security and agricultural development over the years, although challenges persist.

The country has implemented various initiatives to enhance agricultural productivity, including the adoption of improved seeds, modern farming techniques, and sustainable land management practices. These efforts have contributed to increased crop yields and diversified agricultural production.

Nation has invested in the development of irrigation infrastructure to mitigate the impact of erratic rainfall patterns and droughts. Large-scale irrigation projects, including the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and small-scale irrigation schemes, have expanded access to water for agricultural purposes, boosting crop production and resilience to climate variability.

Smallholder farmers play a significant role in Ethiopia's agriculture sector, accounting for the majority of food production. Government policies and programs have focused on supporting smallholder farmers through access to credit, extension services, market linkages, and input subsidies to improve their productivity and livelihoods.

Ethiopia has taken steps to improve food distribution systems and enhance market access for farmers, traders, and consumers. Investments in rural infrastructure, transportation networks, and market facilities have facilitated the movement of food commodities from surplus to deficit areas, reducing food price volatility and improving food availability.

Ethiopia has implemented community-based nutrition programs to address malnutrition and improve dietary diversity among vulnerable populations, particularly women and children. These programs focus on promoting breastfeeding, micronutrient

supplementation, nutrition education, and the cultivation of nutrient-rich crops to combat malnutrition and stunting.

Given Ethiopia's vulnerability to recurrent droughts and climate-related shocks, resilience-building measures and disaster preparedness efforts are integral to ensuring food security. Early warning systems, social safety nets, emergency food assistance programs, and investments in drought-resistant crops help mitigate the impact of food crises and support communities during times of hardship.

Ethiopia's government has demonstrated a strong commitment to addressing food security challenges through national development plans, strategies, and partnerships with international organizations, donors, and development partners. Collaborative initiatives aim to mobilize resources, build institutional capacity, and implement innovative solutions to improve food security outcomes.

While Ethiopia has made significant progress in enhancing food security, persistent challenges such as climate variability, land degradation, population growth, and poverty continue to pose obstacles to sustainable development. Addressing these challenges requires continued investment, policy coherence, and multisector collaboration to build a resilient and inclusive food system that ensures access to nutritious food for all Ethiopians.

Apart from the above mentioned achievements and challenges, Ethiopia still needs to resolve other forms of challenges that directly or indirectly affect the countries food security initiatives.

The writer is of the opinion that inflation on food prices is already a challenge followed by mismanagement of the distribution of agricultural inputs like fertilizers and selected seeds.

On the other hand, despite their potentials in contributing to the promotion of food security in the country, the extent to which microfinance institutions in Ethiopia are up to their expectations is still not clear. Food security is not only a matter of producing food but having access to food from markets. The current price of 100 kilos of teff has surpassed 10,000 birr and a piece of enjera now is birr 30. What kind of contribution can the microfinance institutions provide to potential clients in supporting them to have access to food? The author hopes they may have the answer.

Food security cannot be attained in Ethiopia by a single handed effort of the government. Civil society organizations and international NGOs operating on food security at household level need to accelerate their efforts, particularly in drought prone zones of the country.

Ethiopia is on track in attaining food security in the shortest possible time but the public needs to contribute their part by extensively participating on urban agriculture and backyard gardening in rural and outback areas.